

Bitterroot AUDUBON



MAY 2013

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 27, NO. 9

Birds of Costa Rica

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

Recently, Montana Audubon sponsored a Birding Tour to Costa Rica and two of our Bitterroot Audubon members, Bill and Becky Peters, had the pleasure of joining a lucky group of birders. At BAS' May meeting, they will share some of their stories and amazing pictures. Following is a brief excerpt of what they will tell us:

“The Montana Audubon Tour to Costa Rica was such a hit that we are hoping to go again in a few years. We started off with a boisterous raft tour of the Pacuare River in eastern Costa Rica before the birding tour. The 9-day tour started in the Cloud Forest, went west to the Pacific Ocean, then south along the coast and back up through the central area of Costa Rica. Costa Rica has about 19 Eco Zones. The tour hit 8 of them! The beauty of the country as well as the diversity of the wildlife and the botanical elegance overwhelmed us.



Some highlights were the sloth that kept trying to cross the road, the Pygmy Kingfisher with an attitude, an uncomfortable walk across a bridge with no guard rail over a crocodile infested river, the knowledge and

helpfulness of the fellow birders, our excellent tour guides, and a Swarovski scope that was swept off the boat and sank into the river. Thanks to all the wonderful photographers, we will have pictures of a variety of birds, such as: Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Common Pootoo, Northern Jacana, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, of course the Resplendent Quetzal, and many more!”

Bill and Becky Peters retired to the Bitterroot Valley in 2009, after having their house waiting for them here since 1993. Bill is a former family physician and a current substitute urgent care physician in Spokane. Becky is a former school counselor and elementary teacher. They became instantly enamored with birding thanks to Kate Stone. From there they eagerly joined BAS and eventually became Master Naturalists with the Montana Natural History Center. Bill's favorite new purchase is a scope and Becky's favorite new purchase is a birding vest – so they are definitely becoming better bird groupies!

Please join Bitterroot Audubon, Monday, May 20th 7:00 P.M. at the Forest Service/DNRC Building, 1801 N. First St. (Hwy. 93, north end of Hamilton). Enter the building from the west side. The public is invited. For further information, contact Kay Fulton, 642-3794.

“HUMMINGBIRDS: MAGIC IN THE AIR”

**A PBS NATURE Program Special Screening:
Thursday, June 6, at 7:00 PM, at the Lee Metcalf
National Wildlife Refuge – Visitors' Center**

Calling all Hummingbird Lovers: National Audubon needs your help with their new Citizen Science program to monitor Hummingbirds, called “Hummingbirds at Home.” It is designed for anyone who loves these birds, to join in by observing and reporting data beginning this Spring. The goal is to collect data that will help scientists and researchers

understand how to protect and preserve these incredible birds.

As a kick-off to this project, Bitterroot Audubon Society has acquired a special edition DVD of the PBS NATURE program, "Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air." Following this amazing 50-minute film, BAS will provide you with the information you need to participate in the monitoring program. Please join us for the beginning of something great! The public is invited. Lee Metcalf Refuge is just north of Stevensville on Waterfowl Lane. Contact Kay Fulton (642-3794) for further information.

Join us for Highway Cleanup on June 2nd

Our semi-annual highway clean-up project will take place on June 2 at 1PM. Meet on the west side of Highway 93, near mile marker 64, south of Stevensville. Please come out and help us pick up! We'll supply orange vests and trash bags for everyone, but bring your own gloves. For questions, contact Fred Weisbecker at 546-8067.

Letter from the President

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

Last month I wrote about the Legacy Ranch subdivision proposal and once again I want to make sure that all of you, who value our birds, our wildlife and our environment, make your voices heard. The Ravalli County Planning Board approved the proposal and has sent it on to the Ravalli County Commissioners. The approval was in spite of the overwhelming public comment in opposition. Hopefully, the Commissioners will listen to the citizens!

The Commissioners have scheduled the following hearings:

- **June 3rd (Monday), Commissioners Conference Room, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**
- **June 3rd (Monday), Lone Rock School Gym, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm**
- **June 4th (Tuesday), Commissioners Conference Room, 9:00 to 5:00**
- **June 5th (Wednesday), Commissioners Conference Room, 9:00 to 5:00**

Bitterroot Audubon Society is greatly concerned about the negative impacts the proposed Legacy Ranch subdivision will have on bird habitat in the Bitterroot Valley. Of special concern is the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area (IBA) which presently encompasses the length of the river from Woodside Crossing to Lolo but the river does not stop there. It

flows north into the Clark Fork River and the Clark Fork IBA. In other words, negative impacts on the area around the Lee Metcalf Refuge could potentially affect the Clark Fork IBA as well. Extensive research has been compiled delineating the concerns of BAS. Please feel free to contact me with your questions and suggestions (642-3794).

In Memoriam: Steve Powell 1951-2013

By John Ormiston, BAS Secretary

Steve Powell, born on April 22, 1951, passed away four days short of his 62nd birthday on April 18, 2013.

The significance of his birth and death coinciding with the celebration of Earth Day should not be ignored. Steve studied Engineering at Stanford University and was a founding member of the Big Sky Mudflaps. He managed Powell Surveying, founded by his father L M Powell, for over 40 years. His fertile, inquisitive mind was not bound by any of the routines of life; he truly loved and lived natural things and the arts well beyond the bounds of a successful, well known band and a surveying business. Above all Steve was a facilitator of land conservation in the Valley where he was born and loved with all his heart. He served the Bitter Root Land Trust in every conceivable way; Founder, Board President, Executive Director, Lands Program Director, moral compass, and guiding visionary. He did it all with a calm, elegant, grace that exemplified everything he ever tried. He surveyed land lines and located corners on most of the private properties in the Bitterroot. His work allowed him to quietly help numerous landowners seek and find a conservation solution for lands families worked for generations. He leaves a legacy of open spaces, working agriculture, and wildlife habitat as a lasting gift to our community.

Steve was not a birder, but he often had questions for me about a bird he had seen and couldn't identify. He was a keen observer and always noted the salient characteristics. We had great conversations about birds but I'm not sure I was a big help in identifying his bird. One of the memorable days I spent with Steve was on a Peregrine Falcon viewing trip to an eyrie near Painted Rocks Reservoir. There were 5 of us on the trip and the nature gods shined on us. We were at the viewing site for over 4 hours on a glorious July day and Peregrines (if I remember correctly there were three fledglings and their parents) were in sight the entire time. We saw food exchanges, acrobatic flying and heard begging calls constantly from the hungry teenagers. When I had the opportunity to visit



with Steve during the last week of his life on this planet, he recalled for me the joy he felt that day. It was a special day with a special man and friend. Steve cannot be replaced in our community, but I can assure you the Bitter Root Land Trust will do everything we can to continue his legacy of protecting open lands, working agriculture and wildlife habitat for the benefit of future generations.

Raptor Field trip

By Kate Stone, BAS Member

On April 18th, eleven people joined the raptor crew from Raptor View Research Institute to count migrating raptors on the MPG Ranch near Florence. Strong north winds in the afternoon limited the raptor flight. The group spotted 25 raptors, including 5 Rough-legged Hawks. As of April 29th, the crew has counted 1,591 raptors, including 394 Red-tailed Hawks, 176 Rough-legged Hawks, and 152 Sharp-shinned Hawks. They also spotted 149 Turkey Vultures. In the last week of April, they detected four Broad-winged Hawks and five Ferruginous Hawks. They will keep counting through the middle of May.



Courtesy Kate Stone

Participants at the MPG raptor migration field trip.

Swift Night Out-May 18th.

By Kate Stone, BAS Member

Join observers throughout the Pacific Northwest as they document the migration of Vaux's Swifts by counting their presence at known roost sites. Our roost site is a chimney located in the Hamilton Fire Hall. Participants should gather in downtown Hamilton at the corner of South 3rd and State Street at 8 pm and plan on observing for approximately an hour and a half. Please bring a portable chair. For more information on Vaux's Swifts, their migration, or Citizen Science efforts to monitor them, see the Vaux's Happening website: www.vauxhappening.org.

Would you like to "adopt" this roost and count swifts for a night during the migration season? If so, please contact Kate Stone (381-1115).

100 Osprey nests in the Bitterroot?

By Kate Stone, BAS Member

Do you think there could be? We do! Please help Bitterroot Audubon count the number of Osprey nests in the Bitterroot by sharing any nest locations. We are particularly interested in nests only visible from the river or from private lands. The person who submits the 100th nest will get a prize!

To submit a nest location, please email contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org with the following information: Area description, with closest town, street address, or river area and current Osprey activity

We will send you a datasheet to record osprey and nest information once we verify that your nest is a new one.



Courtesy Raptor View Research Institute and MPG Ranch.

This pair of Osprey recently returned to the MPG Ranch. The male overwintered on the west coast of Mexico and the female overwintered on the border of Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

Avian Wildlife Photography Workshop

By Sara Ashline and Karen Griffing, BAS Editors

The Teller Wildlife Refuge was the location of a bird photography workshop on March 29 & 30th sponsored by the Bitterroot Audubon Society. After a brief welcome by Lauren Rennaker, Development Manager of the Teller, local photographers and Bitterroot Audubon members Sara Ashline and Nathan DeBoer began with a Friday evening class at the Teller Slack Barn focused on camera settings, equipment, methods, tips and tools for making photographs of birds. On the following day the participants went on a field trip in the surrounding area to practice the techniques discussed the previous evening. The instructors accompanied the students to offer individual mentoring and to answer questions. Thanks to the Teller Wildlife Refuge for offering access to the facilities for this workshop. The bird photography workshop will be offered again in the summer. Please contact Sara Ashline at sareevt@gmail.com for more information on the photography workshop.



Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

Say's Pheobe.

Bitterroot Audubon Society is going GREEN

By Sara Ashline and Karen Griffing, BAS Editors

Beginning September 2013, Bitterroot Audubon will be delivering the monthly newsletter electronically. If you are still receiving the newsletter via standard mail, please send us your email address to receive your newsletter via email. Starting in September, we'll send a meeting reminder by postcard, but the full newsletter will be sent to your email address and is always available at www.bitterrootaudubon.org. This will allow us to reduce printing and mailing costs and waste, while offering full color pictures and expanded coverage of Bitterroot Audubon activities. For those without computer access, we will continue to mail you an individual copy of the newsletter; please send a note to Bitterroot Audubon, PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840 requesting this service. Look for further information this summer. Please send your email address to Susie Duff at audubonmembership@gmail.com to begin receiving your newsletter electronically.

News and Notes

2014 Calendar Calling all Bitterroot photographers!! The 2013 calendar was so successful that we are going to make one for 2014! If you would like to enter your bird photos (limit of 3, please) make sure they are of high resolution, at least 300 dpi. The chosen photographs will be printed at 8.5" W by 10" H. Send to:

bitterrootcalendar@gmail.com. The deadline for submission is May 31st, 2013.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook! If you use Facebook, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and "Like" us!

Call for Photos Bitterroot Audubon is seeking images of birds for a feature in our newsletter: *Bird shots*. If you have taken a great photo and would like to submit it for consideration, please email the jpeg image, with a brief description, to BASeditors@gmail.com.

Calendar of Events

May 18- Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-12PM

May 18- Swift Night Out, Hamilton Fire Hall, 8PM

May 20- Audubon Meeting, Forest Service/DNRC Building, Hamilton, 7PM, **Board Mtg. 5PM-** Board member elections.

May 31- Deadline for 2014 Calendar Submissions

Jun 2- Highway Clean-up, Hwy 93 Stevensville, 1PM. Contact Fred Weisbecker for details 546-8067

Jun 6- Hummingbird Screening, Lee Metcalf NWR, 7PM

Jun 7-9- Montana Audubon Wings Across the Big Sky Festival, Lewistown, MT

Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT New to birding? Beginner Bird Walks at the refuge sponsored by Bitterroot Audubon and Five Valleys Audubon are held the third Saturday of each month. Meet at the Refuge Visitor's Center on May 18th at 10AM for a two hour bird walk. Bring binoculars if you have them. Contact the refuge at [\(406\) 777-5552](tel:4067775552) for more information.

Election of Officers Bitterroot Audubon Society's annual meeting will take place as part of our regular chapter meeting on May 20th, and will include an election of officers for the upcoming year.

Rare Baikal Teal Spotting The first tentative state record sighting of the Baikal Teal was reported April 28th, 2013 near Blue Mountain, south of Missoula.

Bird Shots



Courtesy Carol Babel

Black-necked Stilt, Lee Metcalf NWR, May 1st, 2013.

Bitterroot Audubon Society
Post Office Box 326
Hamilton, Montana 59840-0326
bitterrootaudubon.org



BYRON WEBER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
2013-2014 APPLICATION for \$300 per semester

In memory of Byron Weber, teacher, naturalist, leader and conservationist

Byron is remembered for his passion for living things. This passion fueled his entire life. He made learning about our natural environment accessible and meaningful. Encouraging all ages to explore, respect and preserve the splendid natural world around us was how Byron lived and worked. It is in this spirit that the Byron Weber Memorial Scholarship will be awarded by Bitterroot Audubon. The scholarship committee will decide on a qualified candidate after all applications have been submitted and requirements have been met.

ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ Currently attending a Montana College/University (4 year degree program)
- ◆ At least a sophomore status
- ◆ Majoring in a Natural Resource Field
- ◆ Good academic standing
- ◆ Bitterroot Valley resident desired

APPLICATION

To complete the application the student must provide:

1. Current transcript—an official copy.
2. 2 letters of recommendation. One letter must be from a professor familiar with the applicant's work.
3. A list of programs, activities, employment, organizations, or community service in which the applicant has been involved.
4. An essay in response to the following question: (500 words or less)
What would you consider to be currently the single most important issue in the Natural Resource Field or your chosen major?
5. In 2 sentences, explain how this scholarship will support your further studies.
6. A signed copy of the non-plagiarism pledge below.

I hereby certify that, except for material directly cited in quotations, the enclosed essay is an original work composed by me.

Name _____ Date _____

Please send, FAX or e-mail completed application and required documents to:

Skip Horner, Scholarship Committee or Skip Horner at Skip@cybernet1.com
2612 Dry Smith Rd.
Victor, MT 59875
FAX 406.642.6841

Applications must be postmarked no later than August 1, 2013



Wings Across the Big Sky | Lewistown, MT June 7—9th

See wonderful birds, wildlife, and habitat in Central Montana! Wings Across the Big Sky still has many wonderful field trip options from which to choose. Join fellow birders in the heart of the state for field trips, a visit from live raptor ambassador birds, and presentations on state and worldwide conservation efforts.

Owl bet this trip will be amazing! 15SU American Prairie Reserve Join a guided tour of the American Prairie Reserve and hear firsthand about this ambitious conservation project. The tour will weave through the Reserve as we learn about the project's progress and the area's wildlife, focusing on birds. We'll see migrating shorebirds taking up residence alongside birds that stay year-round. We'll explore sagebrush grasslands and riparian corridors. Stops will include a conservation bison herd, an active prairie dog town with Burrowing Owls and raptors, and ponds with shorebirds and ducks.

Not interested in worms? Not an early bird? 11SA Carters Pond Later morning trip! Carters Ponds are prairie reservoirs between the Moccasin and Judith Mountains, north of Lewistown. Common waterfowl include American Wigeon, Ruddy Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler and grebes. Falcons, eagles, Savannah Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, and shorebirds are also seen.

Fishing for a good catch? 2SA/2SU Big Springs State Fish Hatchery Big Springs State Fish Hatchery is 7 miles south of Lewistown. Springs bubble up supporting greenery and giant willows. A leisurely walk takes you through grassy hills and shade trees. Watch for Belted Kingfishers, woodpeckers, crossbills, grosbeaks, sparrows and warblers, and duck and goose families. Tour the hatchery and feed the fish!



Wing your way to an oasis! 16SU Zortman Area You'll find yourself in a different setting from the prairie as you travel to Zortman, located in a mountain range surrounded by an ocean of grass. The Little Rockies are called the Island Mountains by local tribes. Quaking aspen, pine and fir provide habitat for Cooper's Hawks, Western Tanagers, Dusky Flycatchers, Red Crossbills and Saw-whet Owls. The cliffs attract White-throated Swifts. You'll see how a mountain oasis can attract birds and bird-watchers!

We hope to see you in the center of Montana June 7—9th!



**Learn much more online at the Wings Across the Big Sky website!
Visit Mtaudubon.org.**

BITTERROOT AUDUBON
PO BOX 326
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HAMILTON MT
PERMIT No. 50

Officers

President	Kay Fulton*	642-3794
Vice-Pres. & Conservation Chair	Fred Weisbecker*	375-9317
Secretary	John Ormiston*	363-5464
Treasurer	Jim Story*	961-4689

Directors & Committee Chairs

Programs	Kay Fulton*	642-3794
IBA Program	Sherry Ritter	777-7409
Website & Field Trips	Kate Stone*	381-1115
Education	Leslie Nyce* bas4education@hotmail.com	
Newsltr Eds &	Sara Ashline* baseditors@gmail.com	
Distribution	Karen Griffing*	961-0181
Hospitality	Rosan Stover	
Membership	Susie Duff*	961-5455
Publicity	Dave Lockman	777-2929
Rep. to MT		
Audubon	Becky Peters*	
At large	Judy Hoy*	777-2487
At large	Skip Horner*	642-6840
At large	Campbell Massey	381-0197

* Board Member

EMAIL: contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org
WEBSITE: www.BitterrootAudubon.org

Chapter Only Membership

The Bitterroot Audubon Chapter Only Membership is \$15/year. These members will be supporting local chapter activities, receive the newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____

Check this box to receive full color email-only newsletters delivered to your inbox.

Send this application with \$15 to:



Bitterroot Audubon Society
PO Box 326
Hamilton, MT 59840-0326

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Become a member of the **National Audubon Society** and **Bitterroot Audubon** [Chapter Code C1ZN580Z]. You will receive *Audubon* magazine, *Bitterroot Audubon Newsletter* and a membership card. *Introductory membership is \$20.*

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

Send this application and your check to:



Audubon

Membership Data Center
PO Box 422250
Palm Coast FL 32142-2250