

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



MAY 2015

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 29, NO. 9

## **GARDENING FOR POLLINATORS: Getting to Know Our Montana Native Bees**

*By Leah Grunzke*

The plight of the European honeybee has become a familiar story to many of us in recent years, but did you know that Montana is home to hundreds of native bee species that play an equally important role as pollinators? Bitterroot Audubon in partnership with Sustainable Living Systems invites you to their May 18th meeting to learn from Botanist, Leah Grunzke, about the wild bees in our area and discuss what we can do to help their populations thrive. She will cover the life cycles and patterns of honeybees, bumblebees and solitary bees. She will guide us through a close examination of some of western Montana's major native bee species. Most importantly we will learn how to cultivate healthy pollinator habitat in our own backyards, including garden plant selection and options for building nesting sites. There will be a variety of native bee houses on display, as well as mounted insect collections to help hone our identification skills.



*Bee house.*

*Courtesy Leah Grunzke*

Leah received her Bachelor of Science in Horticultural Science from Montana State University. As a botanist focusing on Rocky Mountain native

plants and pollinators, Leah has over a decade of experience in education and community outreach program development. Working with organizations like the Montana Natural History Center, the Flagship After School Program, Missoula County Extension and the University of MT Natural Areas Department, she is committed to building ecology-based experiential education opportunities for youth and adults alike. From helping schools and nonprofit organizations create outdoor classrooms to leading field trips in the wild places of western Montana, Leah strives to foster a sense of discovery and appreciation for land stewardship and conservation issues. She is also an avid photographer of Montana's native flora, and uses salvaged forest products to build Wild House of Bees native pollinator nests. You can see her work at [www.floramontana.org](http://www.floramontana.org).



*Courtesy Leah Grunzke*

*Pollinator on a wildflower.*

**Come join Bitterroot Audubon and Sustainable Living Systems, Monday, May 18th 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, on Wildfowl Lane, north of Stevensville. The public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton, 642-3794, for more information.**

## Letter from the President

*By Kay Fulton, BAS President*

First I want to let you know that I will be stepping down as President the end of June after four years. I thought it was time to share all of the fame and fortune with someone else! It has been fun and I've learned a lot but I want to focus just on being the Program Chair for a while. We have a willing volunteer to assume the President's position and I am sure this person will do a fantastic job. (See the announcement for the elections to be held at the May meeting). I want to thank the Board and all of the members who have helped me over these years.



Volunteering to help on the Board is incredibly important to Bitterroot Audubon so that we can continue to do all of the wonderful things we do, such as: education projects in the schools, workshops, field trips, citizen scientist projects, Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, Welcome Back Waterfowl, fund raising for education, scholarships and conservation projects, plus management of our budget and recording of minutes. Most important is communicating with our members and the public through our wonderful newsletters, website and Facebook. Being on the Board may sound like a lot of work, but with all the helping hands it doesn't take long. I really urge you to come help us. Almost anything can be tailored to fit your situation.

Right now, we need to find a new Education Chair. Rachel Ingram and her husband will be moving out of state. Rachel has done a wonderful job and we will miss her. This is a very important job since it is a direct link with children. Please consider taking over Rachel's role or at least helping out on education activities that arise. If you are interested in talking about serving, please give me a call at 642-3794. Thanks again, Kay Fulton

## Join BAS at the 2015 Youth Conservation and Education Expo

*By Rachel Ingram*

The 2015 Youth Conservation & Education Expo will be held on Saturday, May 9 from 10AM-4PM at the Teller Slack Barn in Corvallis. Many local sporting and conservation groups will host booths at the event with the goal of providing fun activities to educate kids about the outdoors and inspire them to get out and play. There will also be a climbing wall. Children of all ages are welcome to attend.

**Elections for Officers and Board Members will be held at the May 18th meeting. Anyone interested in being nominated please contact Fred Weisbecker, election committee coordinator, at 375-9317.**

## Vaux Swifts Saturday Nights Spectacle!

*By Kay Fulton, BAS President*

I finally had the opportunity to join some BAS members in watching the Vaux Swifts come in to the chimney at the Hamilton Fire Station around 8:20 P.M. Wednesday evening. Rosann Stover is managing the watch in Hamilton and Kate Stone is handling another site in Stevensville. You just need to show up at a location just to the north of the Fire Station around 8:00 PM. It is really entertaining and educational. Helps with your counting skills too when you are trying to count up to 200 just as fast as you possibly can! If you would like to attend one Saturday in May, please call Kay Fulton 642-3794 for more information.

## Highway Cleanup, Sunday May 17th from 1:00 to 3:00PM

*By Kay Fulton, BAS President*

Our semi-annual highway cleanup work is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>. We had to cancel the Fall day because of bad weather, so we have our work cut out for us. **Please join us on the west side of Highway 93, near mile marker 64, south of the Stevi Y.** The more help we have, the faster we can get this done. We will supply orange vests and trash bags for everyone. Dress appropriately for the weather and bring gloves. Contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794 with any questions or suggestions, or to volunteer.

## Summer Citizen Science Opportunities

*By Kate Stone*

**Common Poorwills:** This secretive member of the nightjar family may be more common in the Bitterroot than we think. Volunteers will perform listening and callback surveys for Poorwills on designated road routes primarily on the eastside of the valley. Routes will be run twice, once in May, and once in June. Participants should have a smartphone or other device on which they can broadcast a recording of a Poorwill. Surveys will be conducted from Lolo south to Sula.



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*Common Poorwill.*

**Lewis's Woodpeckers:** We know that these beautiful woodpeckers are abundant along the Bitterroot River corridor, but what is their distribution in different habitats throughout the valley? Volunteers will be performing randomly placed, road-based point counts for Lewis's Woodpeckers in three habitat types: within the 500-year floodplain, in mid-elevation areas between the floodplain and the National Forest boundary, and in forested areas burned within the past 15 years. Points will be surveyed twice in the season, from May through July. Surveys will be conducted from Lolo south to Sula.



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*Lewis's Woodpecker.*

If you are interested in participating in either of these projects, please contact me and let me know which species you'd like to survey, where you live, how far you are willing to drive to perform your route, and if you are willing to drive Forest Service/dirt roads. Thanks! Kate Stone (381-1115, kroestone@hotmail.com).

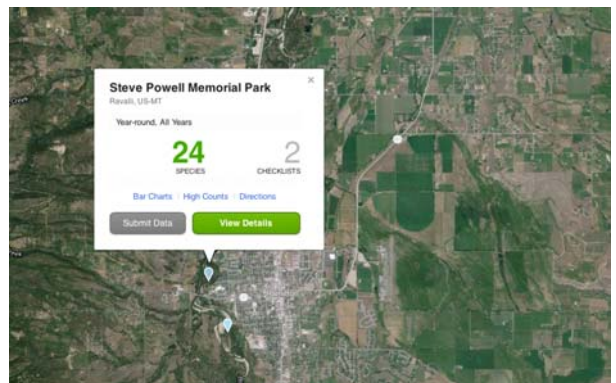
### **Steve Powell Memorial Park-new eBird Hotspot!**

*By Kate Stone*

I was asked by the Bitterroot Land Trust to do a birding station at the Steve Powell Memorial Park

dedication on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. I've birded in the park on several occasions, and was happy to record over 20 bird species in the few hours that I manned my station on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The many visitors to my station were amazed to know we detected that many species in such a short time.

Bitterroot Audubon is working with the City of Hamilton and the Bitterroot Land Trust to develop the park as a public resource, promote visitation, and enhance habitat for birds and other wildlife. One way we can all help encourage usage and direct management is to go birding in the park and share our observations. To that end, we have designated Steve Powell Memorial Park as an eBird Hotspot. This designation will highlight the location to visiting birders and allow any interested party to keep track of the species observed there. If you are in Hamilton and looking for a birding destination, trying to learn new birds, or trying to learn how to use eBird, please consider visiting Steve Powell Memorial Park and sharing your bird list with eBird.



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

### **Montana Legislative Update**

*By Amy Seaman*

With just days to go we are keeping our fingers crossed that a few 2015 legislative priorities make it to the finish line. The Sage-Grouse stewardship act has run the gauntlet and will be arriving on the Governor's desk shortly, surely a major victory for improving our state management of the species. Just this week, Department of Interior decided not to list the Mono Basin (California and Nevada) sub-population of Sage-Grouse, indicating that these home-grown state-based plans have wings to fly on in their efforts to protect vulnerable grouse populations. As the legislation within the bill is implemented we will be working hard along with the newly created Montana Sage-Grouse Oversight Team to provide whatever assistance we can and ensure

that science-based information is brought to the table.

In the last few weeks we have also successfully helped secure 12.5 million in funding for Montana's many important habitat programs such as Habitat Montana, Future Fisheries, Fishing Access Sites, Bighorn Sheep habitat, Upland Game bird and migratory bird programs. These important funds were almost stripped from the budget, but a number of sportsman, conservation groups, and individuals came together to put on the necessary pressure to make sure that fish, wildlife, and parks is properly funded.

While these successes show our efforts have been fruitful, there are still some bills that have passed through the legislative process with the potential to negatively affect wildlife, water quality, and our environment. We will work hard in the next few weeks to get these bad bills vetoed, so keep your eyes open for more information and tune in to our Facebook page to find out how you can help.

### **Bitterroot Audubon Society's 30th Anniversary and 2015 Welcome Back Waterfowl Day**

*By Judy Hoy*

Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate very well for the combined Bitterroot Audubon Society's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and 2015 Welcome Back Waterfowl Day on Saturday, April 11. Even with it being cool and sometimes quite windy everyone enjoyed themselves. We occasionally had to hold on to the spotting scopes to keep them from blowing over, but many interesting birds were seen. Attendees found 51 unique species, of both waterfowl and other birds. The most unusual species was a Lincoln's Sparrow. Other early spring arrivals were an Audubon's Warbler and a Red-naped Sapsucker. Thanks to all the people who came to view the waterfowl and other birds. You all helped to make our special 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 2015 Welcome Back Waterfowl Day a big success.

Thanks to Kate Stone, Jim Story, John Ormiston, Bob Hoy, Dave Lockman and Wayne Tree for spotting birds or helping others to find and identify birds. We much appreciate help of the staff of the Lee Metcalf Refuge, especially Deb Goslin and Bob Danley, with a big thank you to Bob Danley for his help with publicity. Thank you also to members of Bitterroot Audubon Society and refuge staff who shared their knowledge and scopes and to Dave Lockman for making the bird check-off sheet.

Special thanks to Kay Fulton, Kate Stone, Rachel Ingram, Rosan Stover, Christine Coffin, Susan Nelson, Colleen Powell & Sandra Kochis for manning the anniversary celebration site and for bringing the delicious anniversary cakes. A big special thanks to our Founders, Colleen Powell, John Ormiston and Jim Story, who delighted everyone with their presence at the event.

The birds seen by participants are: Great Blue Heron, Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Virginia Rail, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Rock Dove, California Quail, Northern Flicker, Tree Swallow, Black-billed Magpie, Common Raven, Marsh Wren, Audubon Warbler [Yellow-rumped Warbler], American Robin, European Starling, American Pipit, Lincoln's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, and Red-naped Sapsucker.

## **Calendar of Events**

**May**-Swift Nights Out, Saturday evenings in May, Hamilton Fire House, 8PM.

**May 9**-Youth Expo, Teller Wildlife Refuge, Slack Barn, Corvallis, MT, 10AM-4PM.

**May 14**-Crocodiles and Ice: A Journey into Deep Wilderness with Jon Turk, Bitterroot River Inn, Hamilton, MT, 7PM.

**May 16**-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.

**May 17**-Highway Clean-up, mile marker 64 on Highway 93, Stevensville, MT, 1-3PM.

**May 18**-Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.

**May 18**-BAS Board Elections

**Jun 5-7**-Helena, MT, Wings Across the Big Sky



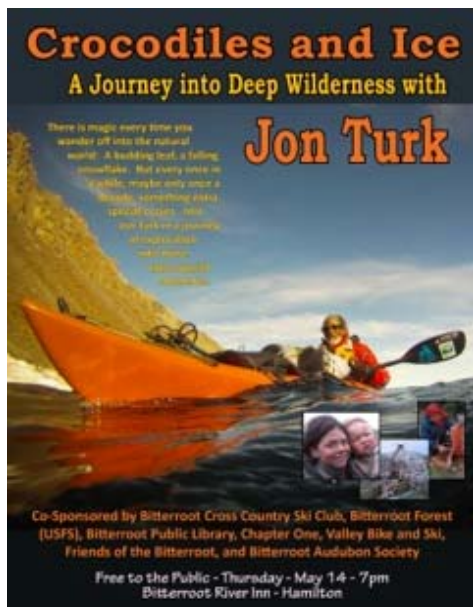
## Poorwills and Hummingbirds- The Montana eBird Challenge continues!!

By Kate Stone

In April, Montana eBird Challenge participants reported 40,005 individual birds. Top species included 15,760 American Coots, 1,834 Tree Swallows, and 1,655 Red-winged Blackbirds. Our challenge birds for the month were Brown Creepers and Long-billed Curlews. We counted only eight Brown Creepers, but reported 69 Long-billed curlews in nine counties! In May, the challenge will focus on Common Poorwills, and all hummingbird species. We will randomly select a prize winner from any person reporting these species to the Challenge. If you're not involved but would like to participate in the Challenge, please send an email to: [montanachallenge2015@mpgranch.com](mailto:montanachallenge2015@mpgranch.com).

## JON TURK: World Explorer, Adventurer, Scientist, Writer, Storyteller, Performer, & Philosopher

These are just some of the terms that describe Jon Turk who was named one of the Top Ten Adventurers of the Year 2012 by National Geographic. For forty years he has wandered through exotic and remote landscapes and returned to speak and write about his adventures, the people and environments he encountered. He has experienced many special moments, people and places. On May 14<sup>th</sup> he will share with his audience in Hamilton his insights into how all of these come together to form for him a wondrous view of the world.



This program is co-sponsored by the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club, Bitterroot National Forest, Bitterroot Public Library, Chapter One Bookstore, Valley Bike and Ski, Friends of the Bitterroot and Bitterroot Audubon. **It starts at 7:00 P.M., Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at the Bitterroot River Inn, 139 Bitterroot Plaza Drive in Hamilton. The public is invited.**

## News and Notes

### Bitterroot Audubon Society is going GREEN

By Sara Ashline and Karen Griffing, BAS Editors

Beginning Fall 2013, Bitterroot Audubon began delivering monthly newsletter electronically. If you haven't already done so, please send us your email address to receive your newsletter via email. Starting fall 2014, we'll be sending the newsletter electronically only, and it is always available at [www.bitterrootaudubon.org](http://www.bitterrootaudubon.org). 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. Please send your email address to Susie Duff at [audubonmembership@gmail.com](mailto:audubonmembership@gmail.com) to begin receiving your newsletter electronically

**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](mailto:BASeditors@gmail.com).

**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 16th at 10AM for a two hour bird walk. Bring binoculars if you have them. Contact the refuge at [\(406\) 777-5552](tel:(406)777-5552) for more information



wings  
across the big sky

June 5-7, 2015 Helena, Montana

“Living on the Wind” – what a great theme for our 2015 Bird Festival featuring keynote speaker Scott Weidensaul who will be speaking on migration patterns. He will also be signing his books which will be sold at the festival.

Field trips are filling fast, so please register as soon as possible. Register by mail, or online at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). Also—be sure to reserve your rooms at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel by calling 1-406-443-2100 or book online with the code MONT0604. (Be sure to mention that you are part of the Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the group rate if you call.)

Don't forget to submit your bird-themed limerick or haiku. Submit up to two of each to:

Jo Lace  
210 S California St  
Helena MT 59601

Or email to Janice and Jo at [jan2854@gmail.com](mailto:jan2854@gmail.com) NO LATER than May 1, 2015.

Call the Montana Audubon office at (406) 443-3949 if you have any questions about the festival or registration.

### Recognize Your Peers!

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife by presenting **Awards** at the Saturday evening banquet. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories: Lifetime Achievement Award, Educator of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Special Achievement Award. To make a nomination, download a nomination form from [www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html](http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html). Nominations are due at the office by May 22, 2015. Mail completed forms to *Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena MT 59624*.

*Please highlight the paragraph about the Awards or even place it in a different area of your newsletter. Whatever works best for you, but we think it needs to be noticed. Thank you.*

# *Bitterroot* AUDUBON



## **Upcoming May Field Trip Opportunities with Bitterroot Audubon Society**

**May 21**, Darby Park, and ponds to the north of Darby, led by Sherry Ritter. Meet at Safeway Parking lot in Hamilton at 8:00 AM. We'll be back in Hamilton at around 11:00 AM.

**May 25**, Big Hole birding with Sherry Ritter. We will leave Hamilton at about 6:30 AM and return no later than 5:00 PM. This annual trip takes us to montane forests and montane riparian areas between Lost Trail Pass and Joseph Creek, willow riparian and lodgepole pine forest at the Big Hole Battlefield, grassland and sagebrush habitat in the Big Hole, and a pond outside of Wisdom. You must register for this trip because we will limit participation to three car loads. Contact Sherry Ritter at [sherryritternature@gmail.com](mailto:sherryritternature@gmail.com) or leave a message at [406-370-4778](tel:406-370-4778). Let me know if you are willing to drive and how many total people, including the driver, can fit in the car.

**May 28**, Blodgett Overlook Trail with Sherry Ritter. Meet at the Safeway Parking lot in Hamilton at 7:30 AM. We'll be back in Hamilton no later than noon. This trail takes us through areas burned heavily and lightly during the Blodgett Fire in 2000 and ends at an overlook where we will have White-throated Swifts swooping over us.

**May 31**, Burnt Fork with Deb Goslin for birds and wildflowers. Meet at the south side of the Burnt Fork Market in Stevensville at 7:00 AM. We'll return by early afternoon.



# Bird Shots



*Courtesy Mike Daniels*

*American Dippers, Bitterroot River.*



BITTERROOT AUDUBON  
PO BOX 326  
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

### 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

IBA Program	Sherry Ritter	777-7409
Website	Kate Stone*	381-1115
Field Trips	Sherry Ritter	370-4778
Education	Rachel Ingram* <a href="mailto:zephyrmer@gmail.com">zephyrmer@gmail.com</a>	
Newsltr Eds &	Sara Ashline* <a href="mailto:baseditors@gmail.com">baseditors@gmail.com</a>	
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
Scholarship	Skip Horner*	642-6840
At large	Campbell Massey	381-0197
At large	Alex Shaffer*	

\* Board Member

EMAIL: [contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org](mailto:contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org)

WEBSITE: [www.BitterrootAudubon.org](http://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 full color e-newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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