

Bitterroot AUDUBON



OCTOBER 2016

NEWSLETTER

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Swiftling Up High and Under Waterfalls

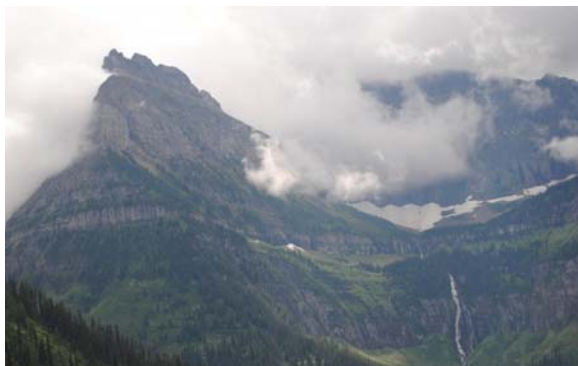
By Amy Seaman, *Biologist with Montana Audubon*



Courtesy Kate Stone

Black Swift

The Black Swift is the largest swift in the U.S. and Canada. The Breeding Bird Survey trend analysis shows a 6.3% per year decline in population from 1966 -2001. They are hard to study since they fly high in the sky to feed on aerial insects and nest on high cliffs or behind remote waterfalls. It takes unique individuals to undertake Black Swift studies. They must be adventurous, strong, fearless, comfortable in remote areas, surefooted, observant, patient and so on and so forth. All of the above describes Amy Seaman



Courtesy Amy Seaman

Glacier National Park, location of Montana's largest IBA.

and her fellow researchers. On October 17th, Amy will describe the study she and others have been doing and some of their results.

According to Amy, "This program will share the fascinating ecology of the Black Swift from its distribution, to unique nesting behavior, to its status here in Montana. I will cover the state's survey efforts including our Montana Audubon efforts over the last three years in Glacier National Park. This park is one of the state's largest "Important Bird Areas" and is home to the majority of swift colonies that we are aware of in Montana, though many more surely exist in the Mission Mountains, Flathead National Forest, and even here in the Bitterroots. Prior to our efforts, there were known locations of 13 colonies in Montana, and while we haven't made a ton of headway, we have learned a lot about how to survey in Montana's remote backcountry. Be prepared for beautiful waterfalls, blurry bird photos, interesting facts, and plenty of speculation as I share what we know about "the coolest bird."



Courtesy Amy Seaman

Black Swift Researcher in Glacier National Park.

Amy Seaman came to Montana Audubon in 2013. She works on the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program and myriad other bird conservation projects. In 2015, Amy became the lead lobbyist at

the 2015 Montana Legislative session in Helena. Amy earned her M.S in Biology in 2012 at the University of Nevada, Reno, studying the ecology of olfaction and foraging rodents in the Eastern Sierras. Her teaching experiences are varied, but include several semesters assisting field ornithology. Avian studies have been a focal point for Amy, taking her to Montana locations such as the Madison and Missouri Rivers, Charles M. Russell NWR, Bitterroot Valley, Glacier National Park, far eastern Montana and The Bridger Mountains. Amy has traveled widely throughout the west, and currently resides in Helena with her orange cat.

Join Bitterroot Audubon to learn about this fascinating bird Monday, October 17th 7:00 P.M. at the Forest Service/ Natural Resources building, 1801 North 1st (north end of Hamilton), west side of HWY 93. Enter on the west side of the building. The Public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton for more information (642-3794).

Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS President

I read an NPR

Facebook article by an astrophysics professor, Adam Frank, "Climate Change and the Astrobiology of the Anthropocene" Normally I am not a masochist and do not read articles that sttttrretch those brain cells too much but I dove in. Alas, at the end of the article I needed an upper.

I thought I would see if I could find a poem about birds during the fall for the BAS President's Letter. I discovered an early 19th century English poet called John Clare . He was a very poor farm laborer who ended up publishing volumes of poetry, especially about nature. This was perfect I thought! During his lifetime John Clare was known for "his sharp observation of wildlife, delighting and celebrating the beauty of the world." But here comes the kicker about his poems – he didn't mince words about what was happening to the land and to the wildlife because of what was called progress at the time. Due to some of his unrelenting poems he is now looked upon as the "Poet of the Environmental Crisis of 200 Years Ago!"

Hmmm . . .Everything kind of circled around on me. Anyway, here is John Clare's sweet poem about birds in the fall. Enjoy!

Autumn Birds

Poem by John Clare

The wild duck startles like a sudden thought,
And heron slow as if it might be caught.
The flopping crows on weary wings go by
And grey beard jackdaws noising as they fly.
The crowds of starnels whizz and hurry by,
And darken like a clod the evening sky.
The larks like thunder rise and suthy round,
Then drop and nestle in the stubble ground.
The wild swan hurries hight and noises loud
With white neck peering to the evening
clowd.

The weary rooks to distant woods are gone.
With lengths of tail the magpie winnows on
To neighbouring tree, and leaves the distant
crow

While small birds nestle in the edge below.



HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP! October 19, 4PM at Mile Marker 64, Stevensville, Montana

Join us for our semi-annual highway clean-up. A busy Summer on the highway means plenty of trash out there, so please come out to help our valley stay attractive. Meet on the west side of Highway 93 at 4PM on October 19 at the pull-out by Mile Marker 64. We supply high-visibility vests and trash-bags for everyone. Bring your own gloves. For answers, call Skip Horner at 642-6840.



Raptor Migration Field Trip to the Jewel Basin with Steve Hoffman: A Thrill of a Lifetime

By Kay Fulton



Courtesy Ginny Deck

Participants on the Jewel Basin Raptor Migration Field Trip.

Three of my friends (Jill Davies, Reine Hilton & Ginny Deck) and I got the opportunity to go up to the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch Site in the Swan Mountains October 25th with Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon and the Founder of Hawk Watch International. He was our private guide!! There are at least seven raptor migration sites in Montana and each has its own unique features. At 7,100 ft. the Jewel Basin Site is known for its large concentration of forest-dwelling species (Accipters). This site was first identified in 2007 and grants made it possible to conduct season-



Courtesy Ginny Deck

long surveys through 2014. The Flathead Audubon and others are continuing the monitoring. The day we went was exceptional. With the help of Steve and three other expert surveyors, we were thrilled by seeing over 225 raptors in four hours: 113 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 60 Cooper's Hawks, 281 Golden

Eagles and 11 Broad-winged Hawks plus smaller numbers of others. The overall total for the day was 245. It is just a phenomenal experience to see these birds doing what their internal clock tells them to do. And by the way, we also had a close encounter with a moose!



Courtesy Ginny Deck

Back by Popular Demand!

Local birding expert Jim Story answers your questions about birds and their habits. Jim welcomes your questions at jstory4689@gmail.com.

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: Do birds in the southern hemisphere migrate north for the winter?

Answer: Yes, some birds in the southern hemisphere migrate north for the winter, but the movement is not as dramatic or well observed as bird migration in the northern hemisphere. A major reason for the reduced migration in the southern hemisphere is that there is far less land mass south of the equator than in the north. Also, the land areas in the southern hemisphere are largely uninterrupted so there is no funneling of migrating birds along narrow pathways to aid in bird observations. Many bird species in southern continents experience "partial migration," when migration occurs in only some populations within a species.

Thank You to members of Youth for the Environment

By Colleen Powell

I want to give a special thanks to Jenny Rokosch and her group of people devoted to environmental issues, one being the houndstongue weed invasion in our valley. On four very hot July evenings they spent 2-3 hours cutting the bloomed-out houndstongue stalks and putting them into large

plastic bags for disposal. These wonderful people worked along with the land owners, who were most grateful for the help.

These special people all left their daily 8 to 5 jobs and spent after-hours pulling and cutting houndstongue. A big thank you to Allison Agostino, Riley Booth, Angela Charbonneau, Sandra Ulrich and Jenny Rokosch.

Welcome New Bitterroot Audubon Board Members!

Betsy Ballard



I was glad to be able to move to the Bitterroot in 1999 for my job with the Forest Service. I do enjoy watching and talking to the birds, lately especially the Red Tailed Hawk family that lives nearby, and the Great Horned Owl pair that was near our house last month.

Michelle Long

My Bitterroot story is similar to that of many I've met here. I first visited the valley in the early 1990s and decided then that I would retire here. I enjoyed extended stays each summer, hiking the canyons and peaks, until finally retiring and moving here permanently in the summer of 2015. To wake up each morning and see St. Mary's Peak outside the windows is somehow both exhilarating and relaxing.

Backyard feeders started my love of birds. I lived in Northeast Ohio and fed families of Cardinals, Rosebreasted Grosbeaks, and Titmice, among others



But when I hiked, I didn't really know what I was seeing and hearing. Several years ago, I took the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist course (equivalent to the Montana Master Naturalist course) and started learning. It was very exciting to see new species here in Montana. I still remember my first Varied Thrush, which posed for me on the Bear Creek trail!

Susan Nelson

I was born and raised in northern Illinois, living there until March of 2014, when I moved to Stevensville. My husband's parents and younger siblings moved here in 1987 and we have always planned to move here when we retire. My earliest memory of becoming a birder was when I was 4 years old and my mother taught me the difference between a robin and a house sparrow. I was with our Audubon group in Illinois 10 years. I hope I can be a positive asset to the organization.



News and Notes

BAS Board Member and Secretary John Ormiston reported a Blue Jay on the westside of the valley. "Last week I heard, then saw, a Blue Jay in our yard. It's not a new yard bird for us, but it is the first we've seen in at least 5 years. It's been around intermittently for the last few days. We have Stellar's Jays every day and they must be nesting somewhere in the vicinity because we see young of the year at appropriate times every year. Sometime about 10 years ago we had an obvious Stellar's/Blue Jay hybrid, seen and photographed by several observers. Does anyone else have Blue Jays?"

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

Oct 15-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT, 10AM-12PM.

Oct 17-Audubon Meeting, Forest Service/DNRC Building, Hamilton, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM

Oct 19-Highway Cleanup, west side of Highway 93, Mile Marker 64, 4PM.

Nov 19-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT, 10AM-12PM.

Nov 21-Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg., 5PM

Dec 17-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT, 10AM-12PM.

Dec-Area Christmas Bird Counts

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 October 15th 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.

Bird Shots



Courtesy Carol Babel

Great Horned Owl, Corvallis, Montana, September 2016.

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* Board Member

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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 full color e-newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: _____
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Send this application with \$15 to:



Bitterroot Audubon Society
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