

Bitterroot AUDUBON



APRIL 2019

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 33, NO. 8

The Little Known World of Moths

By Mat Seidensticker

To most of us moths are an afterthought at best; simply the boringly brown bugs flying frenzied around the streetlights at night. Or maybe they're the pests we sometimes buy mothballs for to keep their larvae from eating our clothes. Truth be told, some moths are boringly brown and others pests, but they represent one of the most diverse and ubiquitous insect groups on the planet, outnumbering butterflies 9-to-1. They are also considered by scientists to be the most species-rich lineage adapted to depend on living plants. As pollinators, herbivores, and prey, moths serve multiple roles in the ecology of terrestrial ecosystems and food webs. Despite this, little is known about the natural history or basic biology of many species.



Courtesy Mat Seidensticker

Researcher Mat Seidensticker will talk about these and other moth topics at Bitterroot Audubon's April program. Mat will highlight interesting moth natural history, ways to observe and identify them, challenges they face, and discuss their importance in the diet of nocturnal insectivores like Common Poorwills and Nighthawks on the MPG Ranch in the Bitterroot Valley.



Courtesy Mat Seidensticker

Mat has broad interests in research and natural history – earning a B.S., Wildlife Biology (2000) and M.S., Environmental Studies (2011) from the University of Montana in Missoula. After graduation in 2000, he worked for over a decade with the Owl Research Institute conducting field studies on Snowy, Long-eared, Saw-whet, Flammulated, Pygmy, and Northern Hawk Owls in Alaska and Montana. Since 2015, he has been helping to conduct research on Common Poorwills and Nighthawks, Flammulated Owls, Lewis's Woodpeckers, and moths with Kate Stone and the avian science team at MPG Ranch.



Courtesy Mat Seidensticker



Courtesy Mat Seidensticker

Come join Bitterroot Audubon in learning about these insects, many of which are quite beautiful and extremely important to birds and our environment in general. Meet Monday, April 15th, 7:00 P.M., at the Forest Service Building, 1801 North 1st (north end of Hamilton) west side of HWY 93. Enter the building on the west side. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. Contact Kay Fulton for additional information (360-8664).

Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS President

Spring has arrived and our migrating birds are returning. It is so wonderful to see them and talk about which bird has been seen. Scientists are guessing that with climate change some of the arriving birds we are seeing now are benefiting from the greater tailwinds that are happening now in the spring. These stronger spring winds are bringing the early birds here in better condition and they are raring to go for breeding. That could be wonderful?? (wildlife.org/climate-change-winds-may-bear-mixed-news-for-migrating-bird, January 2019) However studies are finding that they may be arriving up to a week earlier and their habitats aren't ready for them. The insects aren't here. The flowers aren't ready to bloom due to the trees leafing too early and the ground still being somewhat cool.

([www.sciencedaily.com/releases/February 2019](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/February/2019))

This study compared data from 1960 forward and found the climate change is having different impacts on different species and different ecosystems and habitats. The bottom line is nothing is predictable. "The work is important because it shows us that we cannot rely on habitat to slow down climate change impacts, even in woodlands and forests where the conditions are more stable, and which were



expected to buffer against adverse changes."

The seasons are less predictable and thus one in five bird species are struggling to time their migrations with the greenery. They've made a long migration, they get here and now they have to tough it out.

Audubon has an interactive map you can investigate that shows birds that are threatened by global warming and the percentage of their habitat loss that could happen as the climate changes. You can check out our Montana birds' potential future at <http://climate.audubon.org/geographical-search/montana>. It's not easy to look at.

So how can you help? Keep up to date with Montana Audubon's Action Alerts and respond to them. mtaudubon.org/2019/04/legislative-action-alert. Keep calling your elected officials, State and Federal – your voice does have an impact! Plant a tree, keep your cat indoors, don't use pesticides, go native with your plantings, put decals on your windows, etc.

Now have fun with our birds' migrations:

1. These real-time analysis maps show intensities of actual bird migration as detected by the US weather surveillance radar network. This is a blast! Texas was aglow when I was writing this article today, but Montana wasn't doing much. Here's hoping we start!

<http://birdcast.info/live-migration-maps/>

2. Explore data on eBird! Use the species maps (interactive maps by species), explore hotspots, arrivals and departures, bar charts on when the species are here, etc.

<https://ebird.org/explore> But watch out, this site is addictive! We love our birds!

Mailing List Policy Change

By Becky Peters, BAS President

Dear BAS Members,

The Bitterroot Audubon Board has recently voted to share our members list with Montana Audubon. Many of you are already members of MT Audubon as well and support the work they do for our state's birds and our ecosystems. If you do not wish us to share your email address and mailing address please inform Becky Peters by email: rpeters@montana.com, with the subject line - member list. We will then make sure that MT Audubon does not receive your information.

If you do not know about all the wonderful legislation, conservation, education and scientific work that Montana Audubon does for our state

please visit their website: mtaudubon.org. They reach areas and people in our state that Audubon Chapters cannot; that is why the Montana Audubon chapters created MT Audubon back in 1976.

"Montana Audubon strives to ensure the long-term survival of our state's native birds, other wildlife and their habitats over time. We place our conservation focus on at-risk ecosystems such as riparian areas, wetlands, sagebrush country and native prairies. Working collaboratively with landowners, government agencies and other entities, Montana Audubon uses the best available science to encourage and implement sound conservation management of our state's incomparable natural heritage." Please consider supporting them.

Thank you, Becky Peters

Calendar of Events

- Apr 13:** Welcome Back Waterfowl Day, Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-2PM
- Apr 15:** Audubon Meeting/Program "The Little Known World of Moths" by Mat Seidensticker, Forest Service/DNRC Building, Hamilton, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.
- May 20:** Audubon Meeting/Program "Amazing Costa Rica" by Betsy Ballard, Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM
- Jun 7-9:** Wings Across the Big Sky Birding Festival, Glasgow, MT

Bitterroot Audubon Sponsors Warden Training

By Kate Stone

Many of you know that I've been serving on the Trapping Advisory Committee, a citizens' group convened by MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to offer recommendations to the Wildlife Commission related to trapping. One of the "interests" I represented included the many people concerned about injury and death to non-target species, including many raptors. Our committee discussed many topics related to non-target captures, but one need identified by game wardens is that wardens are often called to capture or transport injured wildlife, and they have very little training to keep both themselves and wildlife safe. To that end, I offered to assist wardens in developing a training program that teaches them how to capture, handle, and transport raptors, make an initial assessment and

stabilize, and ultimately transport to a willing veterinarian or rehabilitation center. The debut of this program will occur at a gathering of 60+ wardens from several "great plains" states in late April. Rob Domenech from Raptor View Research Institute and Brooke Tanner from Wild Skies Raptor Center will join me for this event. All three of us could think of nothing else we'd rather do than travel to Ekalaka, MT in late April. Think of the birds we'll see!

Bitterroot Audubon has graciously donated up to \$2000 to purchase the supplies (e.g., gloves, nets, carriers) that wardens will need to deal with injured raptors. THANK YOU!! This donation sends a pretty important signal to the wildlife enforcement community that we very much appreciate their work, and would gladly provide the help we can to make their jobs easier and safer.

How can you help?

- Bring old towels/sheets to the Bitterroot Audubon meeting on Monday, April 15. They are useful for various parts of the capture, transport, and rehab process.
- Make a donation to Wild Skies Raptor Center (they handle all of our Bitterroot Birds!!), Raptor View Research Institute, or Bitterroot Audubon.
- Email me if you'd like to be trained to capture, handle, and transport raptors found injured in the Bitterroot Valley. We'll be trying to develop a network of local volunteers over the next few months (kroestone@hotmail.com).



Courtesy Kate Stone
Injured animals like this Great Horned Owl are often captured and transported by our local game wardens.

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: *How do birds like albatrosses, which spend months at sea, survive without fresh water to drink?*

Answer: Because salt water has approximately three times the salt content as bird body fluids, special adaptations have been required for birds like albatrosses to survive. Many marine bird species have enlarged nasal glands, called salt glands, to regulate the salt content in the blood. The salt glands are located above/between the eyes. Seabirds drink seawater and the nasal glands remove the salt, resulting in a waste fluid containing about 5 percent salt. Depending on the bird species, the salty waste is either dribbled from the bill or is forcibly expelled from the nostrils.

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

Nominate a Conservation Leader for a 2019 Montana Audubon Award!

By Montana Audubon

Nominations are now being accepted for Montana Audubon's 2019 awards. Consider nominating someone you know for *Conservationist of the Year*, *Environmental Educator of the Year*, *Citizen Scientist of the Year*, or a *Lifetime Achievement award*! Nomination forms can be found on our website: mtaudubon.org/about/awards/. The deadline for nominations is **May 20, 2018**. Please submit via email (preferred) to info@mtaudubon.org or by mail to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Award winners will be announced at our Bird Festival banquet in Glasgow on June 8.

Award Categories:

- **Conservationist of the Year.** For an individual who has provided significant wildlife conservation achievement in Montana.
- **Environmental Educator of the Year.** For a person who has shown outstanding achievement in educating others about birds, other wildlife, and conservation of habitat.
- **Citizen Scientist of the Year.** For a person contributing significantly to our knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats through monitoring and observations.

- **Lifetime Achievement Award.** For an Audubon volunteer who has dedicated extraordinary effort, time and energy to shape the activities and successes of a local Audubon Chapter and/or Montana Audubon.

Audubon issues at the 66th Legislature – One month to go!

By Montana Audubon

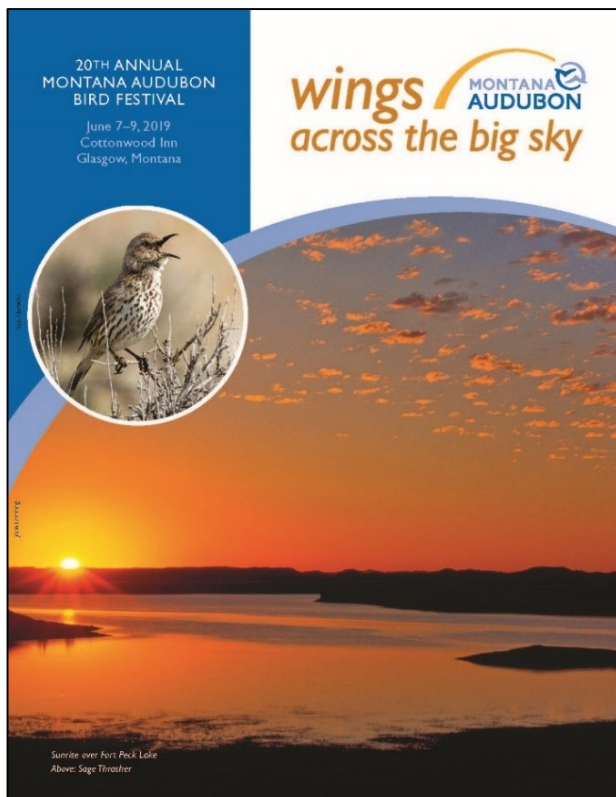
Monday, March 25th was the last day any bills could be introduced this session and March 1st was the transmittal date for all revenue or appropriation bills. Each revenue and appropriation bill that had not passed through one chamber has been “killed”. However, this has not stopped the remaining bills from moving forward at a rapid pace. The feeling of urgency among our elected officials to complete their work has been increased significantly. Appropriations will be making its way onto the Senate floor by the time you read this; we have been watching this process to make sure Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and important habitat programs like Habitat Montana do not face significant budget changes. At this time, all of our cherished habitat programs are intact. However, this time of year legislators make compromises and tough funding decisions, especially when big-ticket items like Medicare are in question.

Wildlife issues are still at the top of our docket. We have been focusing attention this month on SB 299 — revisions to the Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Act. We are working to include provisions to ensure net-gain in conservation for the iconic sagebrush species, and to ensure the strength and collaborative nature of the Montana Sage-grouse conservation efforts put forth since the Governor's Sage-grouse advisory council in 2013. Many of the bad provisions within SB 299 have been amended out of the bill, but there is still work to do. Fortunately, HB 752, a bill that would have required the MT Sage-grouse Oversight Team to immediately put together plans to mitigate predators that prey on sage-grouse, failed to pass the committee. We all know predator mitigation programs are expensive, time consuming, and often ineffective. Putting up a levee changes the flow of water downstream no less than removing one predator from the landscape can increase the presence of others. Beyond this, removing predators impacts the number of small-bodied herbivores around like the mice, ground squirrels, pygmy rabbits, and Jack rabbits that impact overall

vegetation density across a landscape (things directly impacting sage-grouse vital rates like chick and nestling survival).

Beyond birds, we are working to defeat HB 332, a bill that gives county commissioners authority over the transfer of wild bison, and HB 279, a bill that allows “ethical wolf trappers” to be reimbursed for costs incurred while trapping wolves. This amounts to a bounty on wolves! And while we have a lot of lobbying and negotiating to do for these bills, we can celebrate that we successfully killed two bad wolf bills; one that would have allowed night hunting of wolves, and a trapping bill that would have invited conflict between road and trail users by removing trap set-back regulations on gated roads. Finally, we continue to monitor one bad energy bill, SB 331 that would allow NorthWestern Energy to buy a portion of Colstrip Unit 4, and one really good energy bill, SB 245, or “CPACE”, a bill that would provide business owners and agricultural producers access to 100% upfront financing to make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to their properties. With all of these issues still in motion, we will continue to reach out to via our action-alert network to share how you can help and information about our forthcoming veto letters, so please make sure to share your email!

The session is, as always, slated to end by the close of April, so we are getting close!



Montana Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

Montana Audubon will host its 20th annual Wings Across the Big Sky bird festival at the Cottonwood Inn, in Glasgow on June 7th-9th, 2019! This longstanding, community event celebrates Montana’s native bird species and typically draws hundreds of wildlife enthusiasts from across the state and beyond. For 2019 the festival lead sponsor is American Prairie Reserve (APR).

Online registration is now OPEN and our stunning, full color brochure can be downloaded on our website: mtaudubon.org/birding/montana-bird-festival/

Register today: *field trips are filling up fast!* Hope to see you on Montana's vast eastern prairies in June

News and Notes

BAS Board Member Elections

Election of BAS officers and board members for 2019–2020, Monday, May 20, 2018.

Chapter Members Renewal Deadline

If you are a BAS chapter-only member, your membership fee (\$15) is due. Please send payment to:

Bitterroot Audubon Society
PO Box 326
Hamilton, MT 59840

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.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook and Instagram

If you use Facebook or Instagram, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and “Like” us!



Osprey nest with baling twine.

Courtesy Mike Daniels

WELCOME BACK WATERFOWL DAY



PHOTO BY EUGENE BECKES
GREAT BLUE HERON AND AMERICAN WIGEON

CELEBRATE SPRING BY WELCOMING THE WATERFOWL AND OTHER MIGRANT BIRDS BACK TO THE BITTERROOT VALLEY

WITH THE BITTERROOT AUDUBON SOCIETY
AT THE LEE METCALF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
ON SATURDAY, April 13, 2019
FROM 10:00 to 2:00

Bring your binoculars if you have them. Scopes will be provided for close-up views. Audubon members will be available on the road between the ponds just west of the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge visitor center to help you identify the birds you see. Bring your whole family to see the birds in their beautiful spring plumage. Treats will be provided by Bitterroot Audubon Society members.

Bird Shots



Snow Geese flying over Hamilton, MT, March 22, 2019.

Courtesy Reine Hilton

BITTERROOT AUDUBON
PO BOX 326
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

Officers

| | | |
|------------|----------------|----------|
| President | Becky Peters* | 369-5210 |
| Vice-Pres. | Mike Daniels* | |
| Secretary | John Ormiston* | 360-9530 |
| Treasurer | Jim Story* | 493-9813 |

Directors & Committee Chairs

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
| IBA Program & Conservation Programs | Micki Long Kay Fulton* | |
| Website | Kate Stone* | 381-1115 |
| Education | Betsy Ballard* | |
| Nwsltr. Eds. & Distribution | Sara Ashline* baseditors@gmail.com Karen Griffing | |
| Hospitality | Rosan Stover | |
| Membership | Heather Miller* | |
| Publicity | Dave Lockman | 777-2929 |
| Rep. to MT Audubon | Becky Peters* | |
| Scholarship | Skip Horner* | 642-6840 |
| Aud. Adv. | Betsy Ballard* | |
| Field Trips | Michelle Long* | |
| At large | Judy Hoy* | 777-2487 |
| At large | Susan Nelson* | |
| At large | Michele Falivene (Mimi)* | |

* 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 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



Audubon

Renew or Sign up
for your
National Audubon Membership at
Audubon.org