

Bitterroot AUDUBON



MAY 2019

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 33, NO. 9

DISCOVER THE WILDER SIDE OF COSTA RICA: *An Uncommon and Very Personal Adventure into Remote Natural Realms*

By Betsy Ballard

Imagine signing up for a lifetime trip to Costa Rica with an ecotourism company and when you arrive you discover that you are the only participants! That's exactly what happened to Betsy Ballard, her husband and her sister in the Spring of 2017. They had a private tour with guides and a driver all provided by Natural Habitat Adventures Company. The trip included flying in a small private plane, staying in remote lodges and hotels, hiking in rain & cloud forests, floating down rivers, visiting archeological sites as well as, of course, hiking and bird/wildlife watching. On May 20th, Betsy will share some of her stories and pictures of this amazing adventure at the Bitterroot Audubon meeting.



Courtesy Betsy Ballard

Montezuma Oropendula.

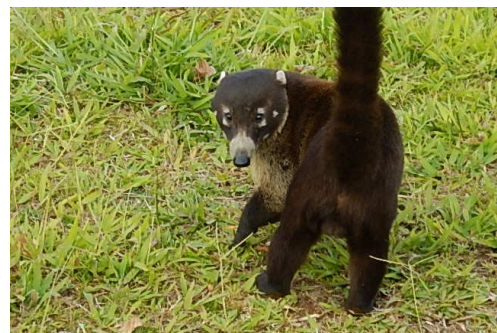
Though relatively small in size, Costa Rica is home to one of the highest levels of bio-diversity in the world. The country's cloud forests, humid lowlands, dry forests and mangrove swamps are some of the 6 ecological zones and more than 12 ecosystems that are home to more than 900 species of birds. That is more than the United States and Canada combined!



Courtesy Betsy Ballard

Resplendent Quetzal and Green Violet-ear Hummingbird

All of this is in an area about the size of West Virginia. Costa Rica is on a volcanic land bridge that united the continents we call North and South America millions of years ago, the formation of which played a large role in the diversification of avian species. Birds were able to travel and mingle; for example, hummingbirds came from the south, while birds like the jay came from the north. The populace of the country is highly literate (93%) and sincerely interested in conserving its natural resources. It may be the only country on Earth that has an organization dedicated to conducting an inventory of its entire biota.



Courtesy Betsy Ballard

White-nosed Coati.



Courtesy Betsy Ballard

Jesus Christ Lizard.

Betsy grew up in Wisconsin, near the shores of Lake Michigan. She stated that she owes her love of the outdoors to her parents who took the family on hikes and canoe trips and they became “Birders” later in life. Betsy went on to volunteer with the U.S. Forest Service and eventually got a degree in Forestry and Natural Resources. Her subsequent Forest Service career spanned 4 western states. She then spent 2 years with the Bureau of Land Management to work on the Management Plan for the newly created Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument in Utah, where she concentrated on Wilderness study areas. After the Management plan was completed, she moved to Montana to work on the Bitterroot National Forest, Stevensville Ranger District and retired 5 years ago. She is married, has a dog, 2 horses and a pair of Red-tailed hawks that nest in her front yard. Betsy is the Education Chairperson for BAS.

Come join Bitterroot Audubon on May 20th at 7:00 P.M. to hear about this very unique adventure and to see pictures of some of the birds, plants and wildlife that inhabit Costa Rica. The meeting will be in the Visitors’ Center of the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, just to the west of the Eastside Highway, north of Stevensville on Wildfowl Lane. The Public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton for more information (360-8664).

Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS President

So April showers/snow? bring on May flowers. I am guessing many of you are already busily planting and if not planting, then you are planning your plantings. I may be a broken



record but please consider **whatever you plant to be bird friendly**. Make it local, native plants, trees, shrubs, flowers. That is what is best for the wildlife. Somehow those plants just know when to bloom just right for our winged friends. If you would like some specific help check out these websites:

1. If you are planning out a garden for birds here is an article from 2009 about landscaping in Montana <http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/articles/2009/birdscaping.htm>
2. Here’s a great link on how to create hummingbird and butterfly plantings. There are some tips I never had thought of. And then of course under Protecting Wildlife #6 “Avoid using insecticides” As Judy Hoy would say, “Well yeah, duh!!”

<https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Butterfly-and-Hummingbird-Garden>

3. And this link is great with a chart of plant characteristics and their growing requirements, plus photos. Bill and I have nothing but native plants in our landscaping but then in our deck planters we add other perennials and annuals that the birds and hummers and butterflies might like that tend to be non-natives.

<http://www.thegardenhelper.com/birdplants.html>

Now on to another topic – Over the summer don’t forget to get your bird sightings into eBird, and submit them into Montana eBird if you would please! <https://ebird.org/mt/home>. It is a great way to keep track of your bird lists and contribute bird data for science! [Montana eBird](#) is a web portal managed by Montana Audubon and directly linked to the popular and global eBird platform. The site provides state-specific bird occurrence, photos and lists from around Montana as well as information about our state’s growing numbers of eBirders! Log in to [Montana eBird](#) today!

And then last but definitely not least –my President’s Letters this year have been covering the topic of Climate Change and what people can do about it so I would like to leave you with “homework” for the summer if you would like to look into these following sites that cover Carbon Footprints. Each one goes into quite the detail, so you will have to have some end of the year data ready, etc. The results from the calculators will leave you with an idea of how you and your household are doing on your impact on the world’s resources. Each site then gives you some hints on ways you can lessen your carbon footprint. This is a world-wide questionnaire. You are left with the fact

that other people in other countries do not use up the earth's resources like we Americans do so easily, so readily. Try both websites out then see if there are hopefully any changes you are willing to make. I would love to hear if you made a difference! And – yes, we can!! <http://www.footprintcalculator.org/>
<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/consider-your-impact/carbon-calculator/>

Make it a great summer!

Calendar of Events

- May 9:** Evening Winged Adventure at Skalkaho Bend, 7:30PM.
- May 12:** Birding Along the Bitterroot with Jill Davies, 8AM.
- May 20:** BAS "Celebration of Spring" Potluck/Social. 5:45-6:45PM, at the Lee Metcalf NWR Pavilion.
- May 20:** Audubon Meeting/Program "Amazing Costa Rica" by Betsy Ballard, Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT, 7PM.
- May 20:** Deadline for MT Audubon Award Nominations.
- May 21:** Highway clean-up, 5PM, meet on the west side of Bell Crossing. Call Skip for details (642-6840).
- May 27:** Birding the Big Hole with Sherry Ritter, 6:30AM.
- Jun 2:** Birding at Bell Crossing with Susan Nelson and Micki Long
- Jun 4:** Evening Birding at Larry Creek with Sherry Ritter, 6:30PM
- Jun 7-9:** Wings Across the Big Sky Birding Festival, Glasgow, MT
- Jun 8:** Flowers and Birds in the Bitterroot with Deb Goslin
- Jun 15:** Birding the Rattlesnake with Debbie Leick, 8AM

Mailing List Policy Change to Support Montana Audubon

By Becky Peters, BAS President

Dear BAS Members

This is our second notice about the Bitterroot Audubon Board decision made in March to share our member list with Montana Audubon. If you do not wish us to share your email address and mailing address with them please inform Becky Peters by email: rpeters@montana.com with the subject line – Member List. We will then make sure to inform our Membership Chair and Montana Audubon not to use your information.

By sharing your address information with Montana Audubon you will be getting their Spring and Fall Newsletters, their Bird Festival Brochures, and their Appeals. Your address information will not be kept in their database but will only be kept on a spreadsheet for these mailings.

Many of you are already members of Montana Audubon and support the work they do for our state's birds and our ecosystems. You know about their intense legislative work; their Action Alerts that keep us informed; and their education, conservation and scientific projects that have benefitted all of Montana. If you are not already a member, please find out more about this wonderful organization and visit their website: mtaudubon.org or email me if you have any questions.

Thank you, Becky Peters, BAS President

Highway 93 Clean-up

By Skip Horner

Our semi-annual highway clean-up will take place on Tuesday, May 21 at 5PM. We'll meet and park on the west side of Bell Crossing to clean the highway a mile north and south from there, miles 60 to 62. Our name is on the big highway sign there, so come out and help make us look good. Bring gloves. We'll supply bright vests and plastic bags. Questions? Call Skip at 642-6840.

Bitterroot Audubon's "Celebration of Spring" Potluck!

By Becky Peters, BAS President

Let's celebrate spring with a social! Bitterroot Audubon is going to have an end of the year **Member Potluck** at the Lee Metcalf Refuge Pavilion, Monday May 20th; set up at 5:45PM, dine and socialize 6- 6:45PM. The Pavilion is behind the Visitors Center. Everyone is welcome, member or not. Bring a friend! BAS will supply the beverages, utensils, plates and cups. You just bring any dish that you would like to make. Our Bitterroot Audubon Meeting and presentation will start at 7:00. Bring your binoculars/scope and do some birding at the Refuge before the potluck, while the Board has their meeting from 5 - 6. We'd like to know what birds you saw. If it rains, we will set up inside in the meeting room.

Evening Winged Adventure at Skalkaho Bend Co-hosted with Bitter Root Land Trust

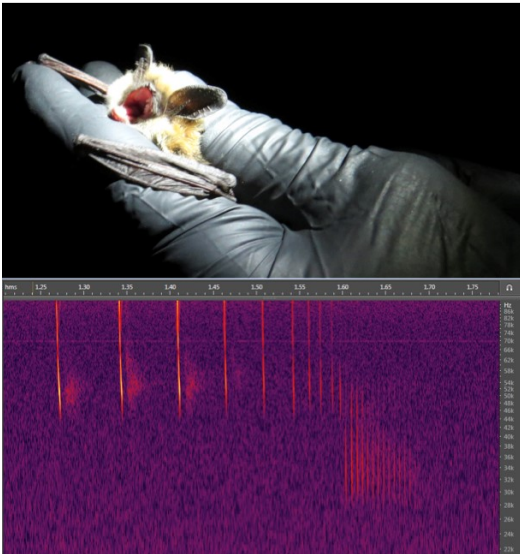
May 9, 7:30PM

By Kate Stone

Bitter Root Land Trust and Bitterroot Audubon welcome you to explore the winged creatures making their home in the *future* Skalkaho Bend Park.



Yellow warblers are one of many bird species relying on riparian habitat.



What bats might we find in the park?

Bitterroot Audubon board member Kate Stone will guide participants on a short walk through riparian habitat, noting the birds seen and heard along the way. We'll discuss the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area and how properties like the Skalkaho Bend provide the riparian habitat so important to birds and other wildlife. Once the light fades, we'll put our binoculars and field guides down and watch the skies for the emergence of bats. Kate will bring an ultrasonic microphone and iPad to allow us to see and hear the echolocation noises of bats as they fly overhead. Special software will help us identify the

bats- perhaps more than 10 species! To close the evening, we'll circle back to birding by performing callback surveys for several owl species.

Bitterroot Audubon will provide light refreshments, binoculars, and field guides.

Directions:

1. At the Golf Course Rd and Hwy 93 intersection in Hamilton turn West at the light onto Hope Ave.
2. Turn Left on S 2nd St (your first left).
3. Turn Right onto Bailey Ave (your second right).
4. Turn Left through the gate at the corner of Bailey Ave. and 5th St. (there will be a Bitter Root Land Trust sign).
5. Drive through the field on the mowed driveway until you reach the other vehicles.

Spring/Summer BAS Field Trips

By Micki Long

We hope to see you on one or more of these field trips. Most are limited in size, so please take note of registration information. Keep an eye on the website, as additional field trips may be announced in the next few weeks.

Birding Along the Bitterroot, Sunday May 12

Join Jill Davies for a few hours of birding on private property along and near the river between Victor and Woodside Crossing. We will meet in that vicinity at 8:00 a.m., exact location TBD. We are limited to 8 participants, register with Susan Nelson. snelson600@aol.com.

Birding the Big Hole, Monday, Memorial Day, May 27

Join Sherry Ritter for a day of birding in the Big Hole. We'll leave Hamilton at 6:30 AM and return mid- to late afternoon. We'll stop at several places on the way to the Big Hole and visit riparian lodgepole pine, sagebrush, and pond habitats while in the Big Hole. You'll need to sign up for this field trip because there is a limit of 12 participants in no more than 3 cars. Contact Sherry at 370-4778 or sherryritternature@gmail.com.

Birding at Bell Crossing, Sunday, June 2

Join Susan Nelson and Micki Long for a morning of casual birding at the Bell Crossing FAS, where we hope to see and hear water birds, warblers, and woodpeckers. There is a limit of 8

participants. Email Susan Nelson to register and get more details. snelson600@aol.com.

Evening Birding at Larry Creek, Tuesday, June 4

Join Sherry Ritter for an evening birding trip to the Bass Creek and Larry Creek areas. Possibilities include Bobolinks, Savannah Sparrows, Swainson's Thrushes, Winter Wrens, and American Redstart. We'll meet at the Bass Creek Fishing Access Site at 6:30 PM. Contact Sherry if you have any questions: 370-4778; sherryritternature@gmail.com.

Flowers and Birds in the Bitterroot, Saturday, June 8

Join Deb Goslin for a morning full of birds and flowers. Location, likely on the east side of the valley, to be decided. There is a limit of 8 participants. For details and to register, email Deb at dagoslin@gmail.com

Birding the Rattlesnake, Wednesday, June 15

Join Debbie Leick for a morning of birding along the Rattlesnake Trail. We will start at 8:00 a.m. and bird until 11 or 12, depending on what we're seeing. We'll look and listen for Nashville warblers and Cordilleran flycatchers, among others. This field trip is limited to 10 participants. Email Susan Nelson at snelson600@aol.com. Meeting place will be emailed to you after you register.

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: How much do male birds aid in egg incubation?

Answer: The contribution of male birds to egg incubation varies greatly among species. In most species, both parents share incubation. In some species like doves and sandpipers, the female incubates at night, while the male incubates during the day. Both parents of most woodpeckers alternate during the day, but the male incubates at night. Starlings do just the opposite, alternating during the day but the female alone incubates at night. The female does all the incubation among hummingbirds, many raptors, many passerines, and all North American polygynous species (one male mates with several females). In polyandrous species (one female mates with multiple males; phalaropes, etc.), the

males do all of the incubation.

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:

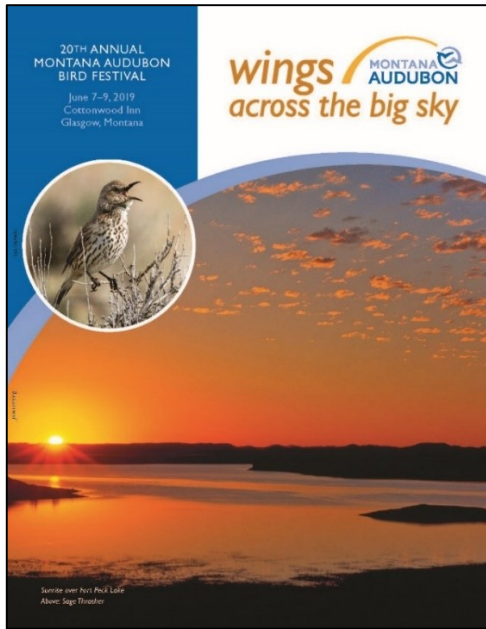
- **Conservationist of the Year.** For an individual who has provided significant wildlife conservation achievement in Montana.
- **Environmental Educator of the Year.** For a person who has shown outstanding achievement in educating others about birds, other wildlife, and conservation of habitat.
- **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.

Montana Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

June 7-9, 2019

Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, Montana

If you haven't registered for Montana Audubon's annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival yet, it's time to get busy! Slots remain on great field trips to the stunning prairie landscapes in Montana's northeastern region. The area supports numerous uncommon grassland bird species such as Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspur and Mountain Plover among others.



Featured speakers include American Prairie Reserve founder and Great Falls native Sean Gerrity, who will discuss the importance of Montana’s undisturbed, native prairies for birds and other wildlife in the Reserve region. Andy Boyce with the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute will present on the effects of livestock grazing on grassland birds. Other presenters include Kelsey Molloy with the Nature Conservancy, who will give an overview of that organization’s work in the area, and Conservation Program Manager, Amy Seaman will describe the unique avifauna of local grasslands and some of the citizen science work of Montana Audubon. Executive Director Larry Berrin will round out the festival speaker lineup with a Saturday evening presentation entitled, “State of the Birds”. To learn more about the 20th annual Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival and to register, please visit: mtaudubon.org or call 406.443.3949. We hope to see you there!



Lupine prairie.

Courtesy John Lambing

News and Notes

BAS Board Member Elections

Election of BAS officers and board members for 2019–2020 will be 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

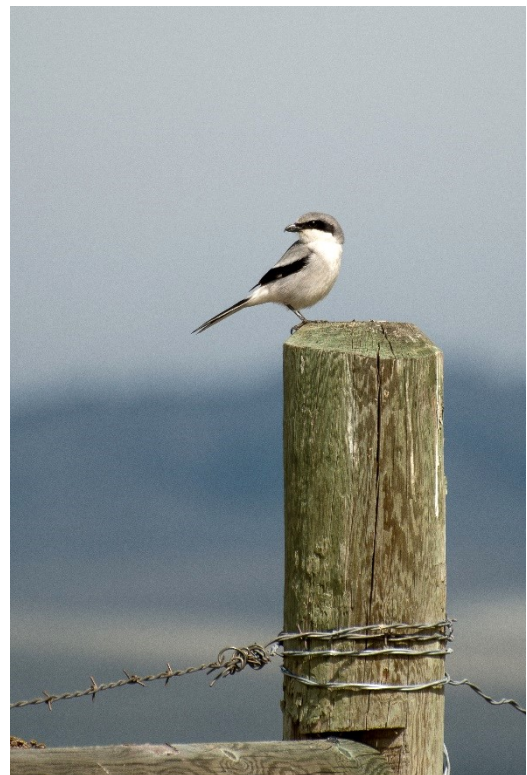
Call for Photos

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!

Bird Shots



*Courtesy Sara Ashline
 Loggerhead Shrike, Corvallis, MT, April 2019.*

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