

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



MAY 2021

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 35, NO. 9



Local Solar Project Designed & Installed by SBS Solar” *Courtesy Flynt Brandborg*

## THE BITTERROOT CLIMATE ACTION GROUP (BCAG)

*by Kay Fulton*

Bitterroot Climate Action Group (BCAG) is a local group of Ravalli County citizens concerned about climate change. In 2019, it arose from the humble origin of 5 people sitting in a living room discussing impacts of the climate crisis to over 120 members and over 200 people on their mailing list. BCAG continues to use the original mission statement developed in the early stages:

*“People of the Bitterroot Valley taking action to mitigate the impacts of climate change and mitigate or change human activities that contribute to climate change, acting with respect and civility to all.”*

Their strategy is to work from the twin goals of providing education and action on issues addressing climate change, while benefitting Bitterroot Valley residents.

On Monday, at 7:00 PM May 17<sup>th</sup>, Hillery Daily and Kit Tilly, two of the founding members, will introduce Bitterroot Audubon members to the Bitterroot Climate Action Group via Zoom.



Roaring Lion Fire, 2016 *courtesy USDA, public domain*

They will cover BCAG past and present educational presentations, projects, successes, partnerships, as well as the goals and plans for the future. They will

discuss how this group came to be, shaping and changing the group as its leadership, membership and goals solidified and how it continues to adjust and grow. During the last year and half, they continued to work hard toward their goals: holding meetings and programs on Zoom, assisting the City of Hamilton with a grant for the first Electric Vehicle Charging Station in Ravalli County and developing an amazing, comprehensive document entitled "Climate Resiliency in the Bitterroot Valley: A Science Primer for Ravalli County" which will be made known to local government with the goal of improving climate sustainability in planning and procurement.

## CLIMATE AND ITS IMPACTS:

**MONDAY, MAY 17 AT 7:00 P.M. ON ZOOM.**  
**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED**

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtcu-pqDwtE9zm\\_nvLQXfl9BAm5n1qXxVp](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtcu-pqDwtE9zm_nvLQXfl9BAm5n1qXxVp)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

## Elections reminder!!

Don't forget!! We'll have elections for next years' Bitterroot Audubon board prior to our May program. Please contact Jim Story ([jstory4689@gmail.com](mailto:jstory4689@gmail.com)) if you have any questions about our board and its members.

## Letter from the President

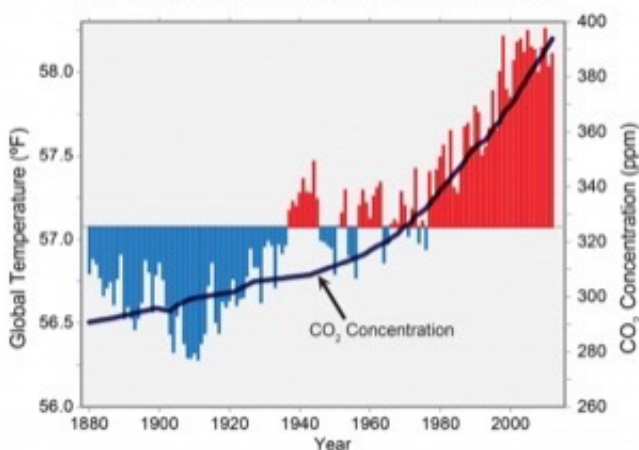
*By Micki Long, BAS President*

This will be my last letter until September, when we will be, I hope, looking back at a summer filled with family and friends and looking forward to the Fall migration. But now it's Spring! Some migrants have already arrived, and throughout May and June, we should see or hear more and more warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and other birds. Every morning, when I take my dogs out, I look and listen for returning birds and their songs or calls.

In addition to watching for arriving migrants, I'm seeing and/or hearing courting and nesting activity in many species. I feel very lucky that in or near my yard are pairs of Pileated, Hairy, and Downy Woodpeckers; Northern Flickers; Black-capped Chickadees; American Dippers; Great-horned Owls; and Steller's Jays. The Jays are a surprise, and I'm hoping they continue to build a nest in a juniper not far from my house. They seem to have slowed down their construction efforts lately, but there are still at least four flying around the yard, so I may eventually see Steller's Jay babies!

Almost every day, the bird pairs raise my hopes for a yard full of nestlings and fledglings. Not long ago, I heard a noise similar to the squeaking of my dogs'

Global Temperature and Carbon Dioxide



Hillery Daily, in addition to being a founding member of BCAG, was, at different times, both the vice chair and chair. She is now an active member and part of the membership committee as well as one of the authors of the BCAG newsletter. She is a mother and grandmother and enjoys nature, wildlife and wildflowers and many outdoor activities.

Kit Tilly, also a founding member of BCAG, is a Board member and focuses on the scientific basis for climate change and its current and future consequences. After almost 30 years as a microbiologist, she retired in 2016 to spend more time outside with her husband, three dogs and horse. She is happy to still be learning about the wild world and trying to make it better or, at least, not worse.

**PLAN TO JOIN BITTERROOT AUDUBON TO LEARN ABOUT THIS IMPORTANT ORGANIZATION AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING TO BENEFIT ALL OF US AS WE DEAL WITH OUR CHANGING**

toys; I stood on the deck and slowly scanned the trees for the source. Two Downy Woodpeckers were facing each other on a branch, dipping up and down and squeaking! Most days, two Dippers fly out from under the driveway bridge when I walk to get the mail or take out the garbage. And, best of all, standing on that bridge, I can watch Black-capped Chickadees excavating a nest hole in a decrepit snag. They take turns, sometimes almost colliding when one tries to enter the hole as the other, with a bill full of wood bits, exits. I am looking forward to quietly observing their progress and, eventually, watching the parents bring food to the nest. I try to be very unobtrusive, even though the little birds don't seem to care that I'm standing there.

I have great memories of another Spring birding ritual: Global Big Day, which this year is on May 8. You can participate for a few minutes or a few hours, alone or with friends, in your yard or neighborhood or in a place you've always wanted to bird. For details, see <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-8-may-2021>.

Finally, as a complement to our program on May 17<sup>th</sup>, a presentation by the Bitterroot Climate Action Group, check out Audubon's Climate Action Guide: <https://www.audubon.org/climate-action-guide>. Let's learn all we can and fight in any way possible this existential threat to our future.

### **Please Use Only Perchless Hummingbird Feeders**

*By Judy Hoy*

Hummingbirds have been co-evolving with native flowering plants for millions of years and those flowers do not provide perches for the hummingbirds. The birds had to fly from flower to flower and hover while feeding. Flying and hovering warms the hummingbirds and the small amount of nectar ingested from each flower on cold mornings and during cold cloudy days. Ingesting larger amounts of cold sugar water while remaining motionless rather than flying and hovering can cause the birds to become hypothermic and unresponsive, thus endangering them and causing nest failures if the female hummingbirds are unable to return to their nests to keep the eggs and hatchlings warm. Please use only perchless feeders in areas like Montana where the daytime temperatures can go below 60 degrees and the nighttime temperatures far lower. Erring on the side of caution and removing feeder perches to prevent harm to hummingbirds is an easy fix to a possibly

serious environmental issue. Rufous Hummingbirds are declining by 3 percent per year, so we can't afford to lose any unnecessarily. Attracting hummingbirds by supplemental feeding can provide many hours of enjoyable hummingbird watching and can be beneficial to the hummingbirds if the welfare of the birds is always the primary consideration. Please use only perchless hummingbird feeders.

## **Calendar of Events**

- May 6, 13, 20, 27:** Birder hangout at Lee Metcalf, 5 PM, see announcement in this newsletter.
- May 17:** ZOOM Audubon Meeting/Program, see announcement in this newsletter. 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.
- May 18:** Highway Clean-up 2.0, 4PM, see announcement in this newsletter.
- May 20:** Great Blue Heron Field trip, 6 PM see announcement in this newsletter.



*Courtesy Skip Horner*

Join the few, the brave, the beautiful for our next Highway Cleanup!

### **Awesome Highway Clean-up Redux May 18 4PM**

*By Skip Horner*

Greetings Clean-up Birders! Our April attempt at cleaning the highway suffered scant participation, so we'll try again on May 18. Since our name is on the big signs out there, it's important that we do a good job. This time we'll meet on the east side of the road at Bell Crossing, not the west side, and concentrate our efforts on that messy east side of the highway. Please email me to let us know you're coming as we'd like to assign everyone to a specific section of the road. Please come out and make us look good! Thanks! Questions? And to register? Contact Skip Horner ([skip@cybernet1.com](mailto:skip@cybernet1.com))

## High School Envirothon at Skalkaho Bend Park

By Betsy Ballard

After an invitation from Ellie Devos of the Bitter Root Water forum, three Bitterroot Audubon Society members met with eight of Marie Antonioli's Hamilton High School students for an hour at Skalkaho Bend Park on April 11. The students were gathering knowledge to compete in an Envirothon competition.

The Envirothon® is an environmental and natural resource conservation problem-solving, teambuilding and leadership experience and competition for high school students (grades 9-12 or ages 14-19) across the United States, Canada, and China. Incorporating STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*) principles, experiential learning and hands-on outdoor field experiences, the Envirothon fosters student learning in the areas of aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and current environmental issues (for more info see: <https://envirothon.org/>)

Betsy Ballard gave an introduction about the importance of riparian habitats. Bird biologist extraordinaires Deb Goslin and Sherry Ritter showed how to count birds and bird species in the park. Some of the bird species they sighted included: Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Killdeer, Bald Eagle and Black-billed Magpie. Discussions included how students would deal with specific environmental issues and bird form and function.



Courtesy Kate Stone

This Bald Eagle wishes the students well in their Envirothon competition!



Courtesy Kate Stone

Because birding is better with friends!!

## Weekly Birder Hang-out goes in person: Lee Metcalf NWR Thursdays at 5

By Kate Stone

During the winter months of the pandemic, Bitterroot Audubon hosted a weekly virtual birder hang-out. Thursdays at 5 became a nice time for people to gather and chat about the birds they were seeing, ask birdy questions, and just check in with friendly faces. As the weather warms and days get longer, the virtual group has transitioned to weekly, in-person hangouts at Lee Metcalf NWR. These gatherings are generally small, all outside, and completely unstructured. Virginia Rail quest? Waterfowl extravaganza? Countless goslings?

We currently have no coordination beyond a few email reminders. We'd like to invite the general membership to gather with us on Thursdays at 5 pm in the parking lot of the Lee Metcalf's Visitor's Center if you're looking for an hour of outside activity. I'll post these meetings on our website calendar and do some reminders via Facebook, but otherwise the group will continue in a freeform state. If anyone would like to take over a more formal coordination of these gatherings, please use the Contact Us feature of the website to let us know!!

## Great Blue Heron Field Trip

By Alex Kearney

Bitterroot Audubon member Alex Kearney will lead a BITTERROOT AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBER ONLY field trip at the Teller Wildlife Refuge's Great Blue Heron rookery!

Alex will lead this trip on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm, for approximately 2 hours. People will meet at the furthest northern access to Teller Refuge, located on Chaffin Road (2 miles north from The Slack House on Chaffin Road). Members of all ages are invited. The event is limited to

20 people, and because of Covid-19, it has been suggested to follow CDC recommendations (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>). This short hike will undoubtedly also present the opportunity to see other birds by chance, with the possibility of short eared owls.

People attending should consider bringing:

- Binoculars
- Spotting scope
- Collapse-able sitting chair
- Appropriate dress, preferably earth-tone's
- Bug juice (maybe?)

Parking will be at the access point and a short walk will be required from there. The grade is fairly flat and there will be no trees near the viewing area. Any special needs will/can be met, but please notify me early to prepare. I can not stress enough the use of a spotting scope and binoculars to provide the best viewing of these elegant birds and their behavior and interactions with each other.

Again, this is limited to 20 people. Please sign up with me at [ackbluefish20@gmail.com](mailto:ackbluefish20@gmail.com). Contact me for any additional information via email or at (406) 360-2345.



Courtesy Kate Stone

Great Blue Heron



## Volunteers needed! Please help us!

By Kay Fulton

Attention all Audubon members, all family members, all friends, and the public:

The 2022 Bitterroot Audubon Calendar will be available at the Hamilton Farmer's Market and in select stores in Ravalli County beginning Saturday, July 3 and will be sold every Saturday from then through October 9<sup>th</sup>. That means 15 Saturday, and 15 days we will need volunteers to staff our booth. There will be two shifts: one from 7:30-10:30, and the second from 10:30- 1:30. We need two people per shift, plus a team leader every day. That means we need 75 volunteers to sell these glorious calendars.

Please help us!! Contact either Kay Fulton at 406-360-8664 or [kayinmt@cybernet1.com](mailto:kayinmt@cybernet1.com), or Becky Peters at 406-369-5210 or [rpeters@montana.com](mailto:rpeters@montana.com). We'll want to know which Saturday dates and shifts you could do. And of course provide your email and phone number!! Thank you so much.



Courtesy Kate Stone

Eyes to the skies people!!



*Courtesy Christine Coffin*

Raptor Guardians Kay Fulton and Christine Coffin surveying the Bitterroot Canyons for Peregrine Falcons

### **Farewell and truly, fare well Kay Fulton!**

*By Kate Stone*

We want to take some time and space to recognize one of the stalwarts of Bitterroot Audubon: Kay Fulton. At our April board meeting, Kay announced that she'll be moving away from the Bitterroot Valley in the fall to be closer to family.

It's hard for me to imagine Bitterroot Audubon without Kay. This marvel of a woman has fulfilled many roles and has volunteered for every project imaginable, from surveying for Peregrine Falcons, to staffing the Farmer's Market Booth, to dragging deer carcasses through the woods. Most importantly, she has coordinated our programming for MANY years, inviting speakers on topics ranging from polar bears to native plant landscaping. And of course, so many memorable programs about birds from near and far.

Personally, Kay has been a sweet cheerleader during tough times, sharing tears, talks, and iris bulbs, all of which remind me of how much compassion there is in the world. Kay we love you, we'll miss you, and we wish you well as you transition to a new place. Don't forget us- we certainly cannot forget you!



*Courtesy Becky Peters*

Kay brings smiles along with hard work to endeavors like our wonderful Bitterroot Audubon calendar.

### **What's the story, Story?**

*By Jim Story*

#### ***Question: Why can vultures soar so effortlessly?***

**Answer:** Some land birds like vultures, hawks, and ravens have the ability to soar for long periods without flapping their wings. These birds make use of thermal updrafts. The birds stay within the thermals by flying in tight, slow circles. But vultures have a low aspect ratio (ratio of length to width of the wing) which causes a lot of drag (air resistance) that is not helpful for soaring. Vultures reduce this problem by flying with their primary feathers extended which reduces wingtip turbulence and lowers the stalling speed. Thus, vultures can circle continually, maintaining a thrust by gliding downwards, but staying aloft by sinking slower than the speed at which the heated air is rising. (Some info from Birder's Handbook)

*Local birding expert Jim Story answers your questions about birds and their habits. Jim welcomes your questions at [jstory4689@gmail.com](mailto:jstory4689@gmail.com).*



# News and Notes

Bird Walks at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT

**CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

**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).

**Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook and Instagram**

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



*Courtesy Becky Peters*

Kay Fulton uses her local celebrity to advocate for all sorts of conservation causes. Thanks for all of your work Kay!!

# Bird Shots



*Courtesy Judy Hoy*  
Red Crossbill

BITTERROOT AUDUBON  
PO BOX 326  
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

### Officers

|            |                |              |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| President  | Micki Long*    | 440-221-5256 |
| Vice-Pres. | Mike Daniels*  |              |
| Secretary  | John Ormiston* | 360-9530     |
| Treasurer  | Jim Story*     | 493-9813     |

### Directors & Committee Chairs

|   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| IBA Program<br>& Conservation<br>Programs | Micki Long*  |          |
| Website                                   | Kay Fulton*  |          |
| Instagram                                 | Kate Stone*  |          |
| Education                                 | Philip Williams*   |          |
| Nwsltr. Ed. &<br>Distribution             | Betsy Ballard*   |          |
| Hospitality                               | Sara Ashline* <a href="mailto:baseditors@gmail.com">baseditors@gmail.com</a> |          |
| Membership                                | Rosan Stover   |          |
| Publicity                                 | Becky Miller*  |          |
| Rep. to MT<br>Audubon                     | Dave Lockman   | 777-2929 |
| Scholarship                               | Micki Long*  |          |
| Aud. Adv.                                 | Mike Daniels   |          |
| Field Trips                               | Skip Horner*   | 642-6840 |
| At large                                  | Betsy Ballard*   |          |
| At large                                  | Susan Nelson*  |          |
| At large                                  | Judy Hoy*  | 777-2487 |
| At large                                  | Michele Falivene (Mimi)*   |          |
| At large                                  | Becky Peters*  |          |

\* Board Member

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

WEBSITE: [www.BitterrootAudubon.org](http://www.BitterrootAudubon.org)

INSTAGRAM: @bitterroot\_audubon

### 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

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[Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org)