

Bitterroot AUDUBON



DECEMBER 2008

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 23 NO. 4

Bitterroot Christmas Bird Counts

By John Ormiston, Hamilton & Dave Lockman, Stevensville

The 22nd annual Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, is scheduled for Saturday, December 20th sponsored by Bitterroot Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Bitterroot Audubon members and other birders will count the birds present within a 7½ mile radius of Hamilton. The data collected is added to the information from other Christmas Bird Counts throughout the nation and the rest of North America. 2008 marks the 109th anniversary of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in North America. Volunteer citizen scientists in over 1,000 CBC circles will pay \$5 for the privilege of counting birds in an effort to document trends in wintering bird populations.

Hamilton birders meet at 7:30 AM at the Teller Wildlife Refuge Education Building (Slack Barn) about ¼ mile south of the junction of Chaffin and Quast Lanes, north of Corvallis. We'll organize into parties of 3 or 4, always matching bird "experts" with people who are not as skilled or confident of their abilities. **We welcome anyone with an interest in birds, no matter their skill level.** The day can be a marvelous learning opportunity for the beginner and extra eyes in a party will contribute to more birds seen and identified.

At noon everyone meets back at the Education Room to compare the morning results and enjoy Bill Good's special chili and Oreos lunch, enhanced by some of the best Christmas desserts found anywhere. We then reorganize and spend the rest of the day finding birds in places not covered in the morning. The participants are expected will see about 65 different species of birds, for a total of over 6,000 birds, if the future reflects history. Bring your binoculars, bird guide, warm clothes, and a jug of hot something to help Bitterroot Audubon have a great birding day. Contact John Ormiston at 363-5464 for more information or check the BAS website at www.bitterrootaudubon.org.



If you cannot participate in the field counts you can help by counting the birds at your feeders. If you live within about 7 miles of Hamilton, know most or all the bird species frequenting your feeders, and have a few hours, or all day, to count the visitors, call Colleen Powell, 363-2116, to receive instructions so you can help.

The 44th annual Stevi Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, December 27th, and we need all the help we can get. Experience is helpful, but certainly not required. Field observers will meet in the basement conference room of the Stevensville Ranger Station between 7:00 and 7:30 AM to form small teams and get area assignments. Birders who live in the Count Circle (anywhere within 7.5 miles of the Ranger Station) can opt to get up later and count the birds on their property. You don't have to spend all day counting birds, any time you have is helpful.

Bird counters on last year's Stevi Christmas Bird Count found 10,142 birds of 87 different species, a new record for the Stevi CBC and the highest species total of any CBC in Montana. As warm as the weather has been this fall, maybe we'll find some exotic tropical birds (like the Vermillion Flycatcher we found in 1999) to help us set a new record! Please contact Dave Lockman (777-2929) for more information.

2nd Annual Big Hole Bird Count

Kate Stone (formerly *Shick*) will once again be coordinating this new Christmas Bird Count in the **Big Hole on Sunday, December 14th**. The group will gather at the Big Hole Crossing restaurant in Wisdom between 8:00 and 8:30 am, giving birders a chance to organize and grab some coffee and snacks before starting the count at 8:30. Conditions are unpredictable in the Big Hole, so please be prepared for cold, blustery, and potentially snowy weather. The parties will re-group at the same restaurant for lunch between 12:30 and 1:30 to compare notes. The last time Kate was in the Big Hole she saw one lone snow bunting and about 30 rough-legged hawks.

Some of the highlights from last year include flocks of snow buntings, common redpolls, a ferruginous hawk, and a Harris' sparrow. Birders of all levels are welcome to attend. There is a \$5 fee for participating in the CBC; this money goes towards compiling and analyzing CBC data and to the publication of *American Birds*, a summary of CBC results world-wide.



Please contact Kate if you would like to attend or if you would like to be added to a carpool list. Reach her by email kroystone@hotmail.com or by phone at 381-1115.

Coyote Coulee

Fieldtrip *By Kate Stone*

Ten people attended the 11/22 field trip to hike the Coyote Coulee Trail. The morning was relatively quiet for birds, though the red-breasted nuthatches did their best to provide us with a constant serenade. Small groups of red crossbills flew over us through much of the morning, but always seemed to be just out of range of our binoculars. One highlight of the trip was the opportunity to watch a number of foraging brown creepers. There was also a nice dusting of snow on the ground that allowed us to see what critters had been about the night before. The group was scolded by a chipmunk that had not yet decided to begin its winter slumber. Though the birds were few, we had a very



pleasant ramble through the woods. Pictures and a full species list from the trip can be found on the BAS website.



Letter from the President

By Fred Weisbecker

As most of you know, hunting season is now over for another year. Hunting in Montana is a big deal and has long tradition. I have read that 50% of Montanans hunt and fish--the highest percentage in the country. I too hunt, but consider myself a "nature hunter." As I sit in the woods waiting for that mythical big buck or elk to come by, I get to experience lots of other facets of nature. I guess my number one experience this year was listening to snow geese migrating south as I sat on the side of a mountain up the East Fork on a foggy, overcast morning. They passed overhead in wave after wave for hours that morning. They were amazingly talkative as they passed by. I assume they were on their 18 hour trip from Freeze Out Lake to the Oregon Coast that I have read about. I sat there wishing them well. Even though we hunters get in the woods well before daylight, I always noticed the little birds did not start stirring until well after sunrise. Guess they were smarter than us. One treat about getting out early is getting to listen to owls in the distance. I regret not hearing any wolves this season, but maybe they knew hunting season was in and were keeping quiet--smart move. It sure is amazing what you can see just sitting still in the woods or sitting on a tree stand for hours. I wouldn't trade it for anything. I hope you all have a way to enjoy the natural world, catching little glimpses of animals and birds as they go about their daily lives, oblivious to us human beings.

Put Your Photos on the Website!

Would you like to see YOUR photo posted on the Bitterroot Audubon's website? If so, please go to www.bitterrootaudubon.org, and click on **Photo Galleries**. If you are a new user of the site, use the tab on the left of the page to register a **Username** and **Password** in order to post anything. This process should only take a few minutes. Once you are registered, click on **My Galleries** and a window will come up that allows you to post your photos. Scroll down to the **Add Image** section of this window. You must first select a gallery where you would like to place your photo (there are three to choose from right now). Next, use the **Browse** tab to navigate to where your photograph is stored on your computer. Finally, enter a

title and optional description of your photo. Once this is done, hit the **Floppy Disc** icon to save your image.

Photos should be less than **2MB** in size to be posted. If you generate an error message while posting a photo, it is likely that your photo is too large.

What's the Story, Story?

By Jim Story



colorations on their backs make them difficult to see from above. Any different coloration on these birds is usually restricted to the bills and legs.

Question: Why do so many sea/water birds have black and white coloration?

Answer: The plumage of most seabirds is not as colorful as land birds, generally consisting of shades of black and white. These plumage colors have undoubtedly evolved because they are the colors that best protect these birds in their aquatic environment. The light underside, for example, makes them less visible to predators below, while darker or mottled

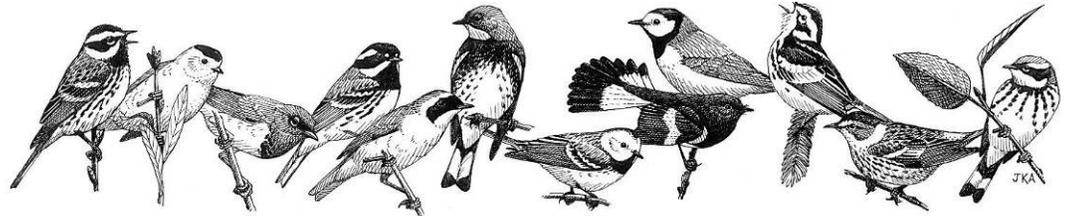


[Black-backed gull, above, and Blue-footed Booby, left, illustrate Jim's answer – Editor]

Remember that you can have your burning ornithological questions answered by our resident expert. Either send an email to Jim at JStory@cybernet1.com or call him at 961-4689.

OCTOBER'S BEST BACKYARD BIRDS

Compiled by Wayne Tree, 777-3159
or calidris05@montana.com



Hamilton

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Claude Birkeneder | Clark's Nutcracker |
| Audrey Hobbs | Gray Jay |
| Shirley Abel | California Quail |
| Barry Abel | Pileated Woodpecker |
| John Ormiston | Ruffed Grouse |
| Barb Ormiston | American Robin |
| Kate Stone | No Report |
| Kathy Daniels | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Mike Daniels | Song Sparrow |
| Aislinn Daniels | Northern Flicker |
| Leslie Robinson | Red-tailed Hawk |
| Patricia Ryan-Swindler | No Report |
| Ree van Oppen | Red-shafted Flicker |
| Mac Donofrio | No Report |
| Peter Allen | Pileated Woodpecker |
| Helen Allen | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Jason Allen | Evening Grosbeak |
| Skye O'Byrne | Blue Jay |
| Rick Fuhrman | No Report |
| Christine Coffin | Clark's Nutcracker |

Grantsdale

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Colleen Powell | Blue Jay |
| LM Powell | Townsend's Solitaire |
| Ted Troutman | Blue Jay/Steller's Jay-hyb |
| Dorinda Troutman | Blue Jay |

Roaring Lion

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Pat Bartholomew | Gray Jay |
| Bart Bartholomew | Pygmy Nuthatch |

Darby

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Barb Hoag | Northern Goshawk |
| Bart Hoag | American Dipper |
| Veryl Kosteczko | Downy Woodpeckers |

Conner

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Peg Platt | Pygmy Nuthatch |
|-----------|----------------|

Sula

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Sue Case | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Doug Case | Bald Eagle |

Corvallis

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Samantha O'Byrne | Brown Creeper |
| Steve Elie | Great Horned Owl |
| Art Callan | Gray Partridge |
| Nancy Callan | Common Raven |
| Jim Story | Gray Partridge |
| Marlene Story | Northern Shrike |
| Marie McKee | Red-winged Blackbird |

Corvallis Hills

- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| Lora Pechy | Black-billed Magpie |
| Bob Pechy | Common Raven |

Victor

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Molly Hackett | Great Horned Owl |
| Jill Davies | California Quail-many |
| Sharon Browder | Pileated Woodpecker |
| Dan Browder | Brown Creeper |
| Kevin Browder | Golden Eagle |
| Lindsay Browder | Golden Eagle |
| Doris Roberts | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Betsy Douglas | Clark's Nutcracker |
| Kay Fulton | Pygmy Nuthatch |
| Carol Santos | Evening Grosbeak |
| Johnny Santos | Pileated Woodpecker |

Stevensville

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Marvin Costello | Belted Kingfisher |
| Mary Costello | Western Meadowlark |
| Judy Hoy | Northern Shrike |
| Bob Hoy | Pinyon Jay |
| Melinda Hettick | Downy Woodpecker |
| Lynn Moshier | American Goldfinch |
| Gail Moshier | Song Sparrow |
| Sherri Ritter | Pileated Woodpecker |
| Patty Laughlin | No Report |
| Mike Williams | Clark's Nutcracker |
| David Calkins | Clark's Nutcracker |
| Patti Calkins | Oregon Junco |
| Jeanne Tischler | American Goldfinches |

Stevensville continued...

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Jerry Tischler | Downy Woodpeckers |
| Judy Mason | No Report |
| Carter Mason | No Report |
| Wayne Tree | Blue Jay |
| Arla Tree | Great Horned Owl-2 |
| Paul Hayes | Pileated Woodpecker |
| Mary Hayes | Red-shafted Flickers-16 |
| Jim Hamilton | Slate-colored Junco |
| Dave Lockman | Sharp-shinned Hawk |
| Blakey Lockman | Townsend's Solitaire |
| Daniel Lockman | Hairy Woodpecker |
| Jenna Lockman | Steller's Jay |
| Lorna Lagerquist | No Report |
| Mimi Sauer | No Report |
| Len Sauer | No Report |

Lee Metcalf Refuge

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| Bob Danley | Northern Shoveler |
|------------|-------------------|

South Kootenai

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Joe Birkeneder | Cedar Waxwing |
| Marty Birkeneder | White-breasted Nuthatch |

Florence

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Greg Nenow | Bald Eagle |
| Minta Nenow | Northern Shrike |
| Chris Thompson | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Jean Osterheld | No Report |
| Mary Gum | Dark-eyed Junco-part alb |
| Pete Scholl | Northern Goshawk |
| Kate Davis | Ring-necked Pheasant |
| Michael Koeppen | Hairy Woodpecker |
| Lynn Koeppen | Hairy Woodpecker |

Lolo

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Al Hinman | Sharp-shinned Hawk |
| Hazel Hinman | Steller's Jay |
| Dale Dufour | Sharp-shinned Hawk |
| Robert Danley | Townsend's Solitaire |
| Christine Danley | Bohemian Waxwing |