

Bitterroot AUDUBON



OCTOBER 2008

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 23 NO. 2

NORTH POLE SKIING EXPEDITION

The Bitterroot Audubon invites you to spend an exciting evening with Skip Horner, well-known adventurer, as he shares his slides and stories of the North Pole.



In 2004, Skip led an international ski expedition to the North Pole. They skied "The Last Degree", from 89° North to 90° North, which is about 70 miles as the polar bear walks, but was closer to 100 miles as the skier skis. They dealt with temperatures down to minus 25° F, broken and constantly shifting ice, slivers of open ocean, 24 hours of daylight, and the constant threat of hungry polar bears. In the end it took them 10 days to reach their goal.

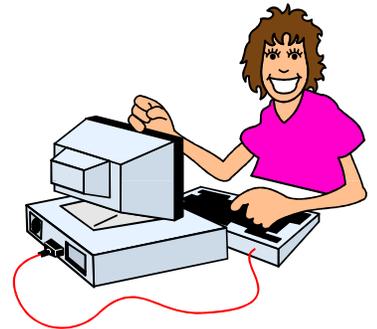
Skip Horner has led expeditions to high mountains, wild rivers, and other remote bits of terrain for over 30 years. He was the first person to guide others to the tops of the Seven Summits, the highest peaks on each continent. He has led more than a dozen 'first-descents' of Class V rivers around the world as well as skied the highest peaks in the Arctic and the Antarctic. Being an avid birder Skip has a life list of over 2,300 species. Skip lives in Victor and is on the Board of the Bitterroot Audubon.

The program will follow a brief meeting, Monday, October 20th at 7:00 P.M. at the Natural Resources/Forest Service Headquarters, north end of Hamilton, 1801 N. First Street (Hwy 93). Enter the building from the west side. For further information contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794.

BITTERROOT AUDUBON'S WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING

by Kate Shick

Bitterroot Audubon would like to welcome all members to our new website. Please use this facility to stay informed about monthly meetings, field trips, and other local bird-related events. The



website (www.bitterrootaudubon.org) details some of the major projects our chapter is working on, including the Bitterroot Important Bird Area, the annual Christmas Bird Count, and our educational programs. You will also find links to other websites about birds or bird habitats in Montana. Finally, we would also like to invite you to use the website to post interesting bird sightings and photographs. If you encounter any technical difficulties while using the website, or would like to offer suggestions for improvement, please contact Kate Shick (kateshick@hotmail.com).

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Oct 20 | Audubon meeting, 7 pm
USFS Bldg, Hamilton.
Board Meeting @ 5 pm |
| Nov. 17 | Audubon meeting, 7 pm
Lee Metcalf Refuge
Board Meeting @ 5 pm |

Letter from the President

By Fred Weisbecker



I would like to encourage all our members to strongly consider voting **against** the local initiative on the Nov 4th ballot calling for the repeal of the Ravalli County Growth Policy. In 2004 the voters approved the Policy by a 67% majority. The Growth Policy provides local control for land use planning and quality of life issues. The Policy establishes a comprehensive set of long range goals to guide the future. It has **no** enforcement powers but rather allows **local** citizens to define **local** priorities. Wildlife habitat is one of the many values we can protect. Without a growth policy Montana law says we are subject to one size fits all state rules. The law also says that without a county growth policy we can not talk about land management / development issues. Our Board voted unanimously last month to oppose the initiative. Again, I encourage all our members and friends to read up on the Growth Policy and consider voting “against” the intuitive. Your vote will help define the future of this valley.

BIRDING IN SOUTH AFRICA --

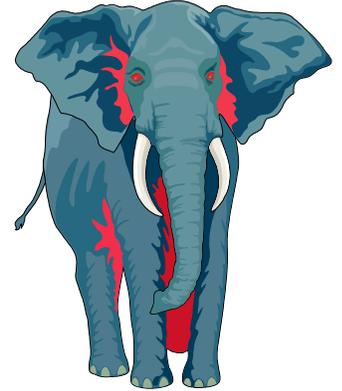
January 3-16, 2009

14 day subtropical South Africa Birding Adventure

This is a trip of a life time. The price of this 2-week trip assuming 6-10 participants and INCLUDING \$500.00 per participant to the Montana Audubon Society (which is tax deductible) is \$3,949.00 for double occupancy staying at 3 star accommodations. For single occupancy it will cost \$4,443.00. This includes all transportation, accommodation, food and guiding fees, but excludes the international flight arriving in Durban and departing from Johannesburg two weeks later, drinks, tips, gifts and other items of a personal nature. The trip costs can be reduced with increased number of participants and/or lesser accommodations.

This two-week subtropical tour provides a representative sample of the very best African birding can offer and can be combined with the [8-day Western Cape Birding Tour](#). Huge numbers of species will be seen (the typical bird list for this 2-week adventure is amongst the very highest in the world – in the range of 400 species), and we will also

find large numbers of South African endemics. Apart from yielding hundreds of bird species, this dream African experience also provides the possibility of seeing lions, cheetahs, leopards, elephants, rhinos, crocodiles, hippos, giraffes, antelope, plus *many* other mammal species, as well as breathtaking scenery.



We begin our birding safari in the bird-rich subtropical city of Durban on the Indian Ocean, then head inland to the spectacular Drakensberg Mountains. This “barrier of spears,” as locals have named the imposing Drakensberg Escarpment, separates South Africa from the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, which we will also visit. The beautiful Lesotho and Drakensberg highlands harbor a host of localized avian endemics. After birding the Drakensberg, we will once again descend in altitude to explore the fascinating temperate forests of the Natal midlands (where such spectacular species as Spotted Ground Thrush, Orange Ground Thrush, Cape Parrot, Narina Trogon, Green Twinspot, Green Malkoha and many others lurk). Next on our schedule is the habitat mosaic of subtropical forest, savanna, moist grassland and superb wetlands of the northern Zululand coast, an area truly world-famous for its spectacular bird diversity. Then we head for the grassy hills of Wakkerstroom, essential for such sought-after species as Blue and Barrow’s Korhaans, Rudd’s and Botha’s Larks, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Bush Blackcap, Bald Ibis and a plethora of other southern African endemics. We are now within easy striking distance of Kruger, which is to many the greatest national park on earth. Eventually, we will ascend out of the subtropical lowlands and onto the temperate highland plateau on which the mile-high city of Johannesburg sprawls. Before flying out of Johannesburg, we will sample birds typical of the Kalahari semi-desert northwest of Pretoria (including such gems as Southern Pied Babbler and Crimson-breasted Shrike).

If you are interested in reading the daily itinerary or in signing up for this trip, call or e-mail Mary Fay @ 406-431-9761 or mary.fay@bresnan.net. With limited time, your quick reply is necessary.

Bitterroot Audubon 2008 Bird Seed Sale

Bitterroot Audubon, in partnership with Sam's Spade, is selling bird seed again this fall. Prices of bird seed have increased dramatically over the past year – 85% for the niger, and about 70% for sunflower. But, the birds still need to be fed! Please mark your choices below and send this order form with check (payable to Bitterroot Audubon) to: Jim Story, 1336 Honey House Ln., Corvallis, MT 59828. Questions: call Jim Story at 961-4689

Ordered seed will be available for pick-up at Sam's Spade, 111 S. Fourth St., Hamilton, approximately one week after payment has been received by Jim.

Black oil sunflower	10# bag _____	\$ 9.00 ea.	\$ _____
Black oil sunflower	25# bag _____	\$20.00 ea.	\$ _____
Black oil sunflower	50# bag _____	\$38.00 ea.	\$ _____
Niger (thistle) seed	10# bag _____	\$30.00 ea.	\$ _____
Niger (thistle) seed	25# bag _____	\$70.00 ea.	\$ _____
White millet seed	25# bag _____	\$13.00 ea.	\$ _____
White millet seed	50# bag _____	\$23.00 ea.	\$ _____
Total order			\$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



What's the Story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: Why do birds scratch their heads so often?

Answer: Birds apparently scratch their heads for several reasons. Since birds can't reach the top of their head with their beak, scratching helps spread the preen oil on their head. Some birds gather preen oil on their bill, scrape the bill with their feet and then scratch their head. Scratching is also done to remove parasites and to remove molted feathers. The motion for head scratching varies between species. Some warbler species scratch their head by extending a leg over a drooping wing, while other species raise their leg directly toward the front. Species that dwell mostly on the ground tend to scratch under the wing while those that are primarily arboreal tend to scratch over the wing.



Audubon Conservation Education Center on the Yellowstone River

by Paul Belanger

The Audubon Conservation Education Center (ACEC) in Billings is Montana Audubon's first Center in the state. Originally envisioned and launched in 1998 by local Billings' teachers and community leaders, the ACEC brings benefits to the environment and education. A strong partnership between the Yellowstone River Parks Association (YRPA), Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, and Montana Audubon has made the ACEC possible. Montana Audubon provides hands-on environmental science programs to K-University schools while YRPA coordinates site restoration and construction of the ACEC facility – the "Wet lab." The local Yellowstone Valley Audubon Chapter is intimately involved with the ACEC. Chapter members have organized special events such as the Yellowstone River Bio-blitz in 2007, contributed hundreds of volunteer hours, financial support, and assisted with overall project development.



The education programs take place on a 27-acre former gravel mine that is being restored as habitat for wildlife and as a conservation education center for students and the community. Billings is the largest population center in the state, yet it currently has no nature centers and limited conservation education programming to serve the 22,000 K-12 students and larger community of more than 100,000 residents. The location of the ACEC (within minutes of most Billings residents and along the banks of the historic Yellowstone River), make it an ideal place for schools and families to explore, learn about and enjoy the natural world.

Programs provided at the ACEC are designed to bring attention to the natural and cultural heritage of the Yellowstone River Basin. Connecting with this heritage builds pride in the community and is also important to the mental, physical, and emotional health and development of children. Now more than ever, children and families are growing up with little or no meaningful connection to the natural world – even in Big Sky Country. Many experts link this trend with rising childhood obesity rates and learning disabilities such as ADHD. According to Richard Louv, author of the popular book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, these are symptoms of the broken bond between our youth and the natural world. Hands-on experiences in nature have been proven to enrich the learning environment in schools, raise overall student achievement,

and complement curriculum goals. Our goal is to make these programs more accessible to a wider audience of Billings-area students and teachers.

The immediate target audience is K-12 students and especially those students in the traditionally underserved Billings south-side community. Schools provide science education, but the ACEC augments and coordinates

science/nature activities that are not available in a school building. Programs such as the Audubon Naturalist in Schools (ANTS), after-school programs, and summer camps, engage students in on-going biological monitoring of the diverse aquatic and terrestrial

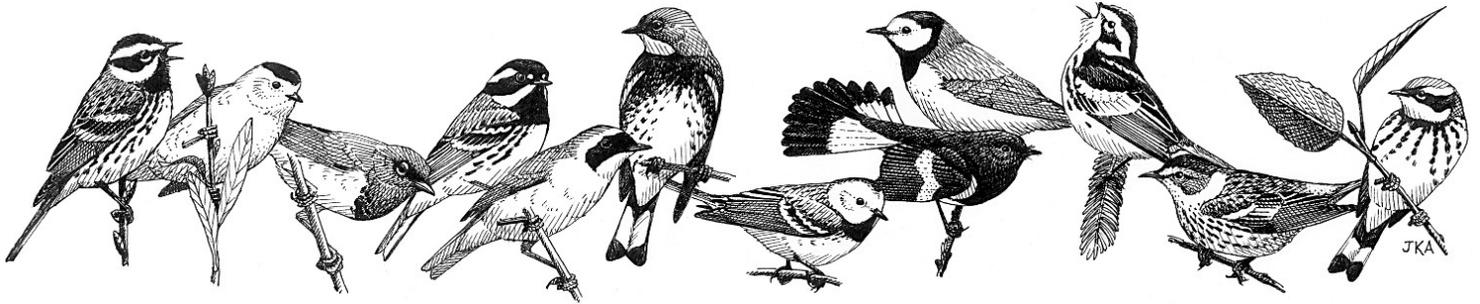


ecosystems, and free-exploration to raise awareness and interest in the natural world. Achieving important educational objectives is only part of the ACEC experience. Perhaps for the first and only time in their lives, students are given the opportunity to paddle a canoe, hold a turtle, or observe up close the delicate wings of a dragonfly, creating connections and memories that will last a lifetime.

Connecting children with nature is woven throughout the fabric of Audubon's rich 100 year heritage. There is no other conservation organization in the U.S. that is so widely recognized for its work with nature based education. This tradition is alive and strong in Montana. Each year, hundreds of Audubon members from around the state share their passion for birds and other wildlife with thousands of children and adults. This nurtures and provides an important link between people and place. Our potential to build and develop stronger networks of trained volunteers and exceptional place-based education programs continues to grow.

This is an exceptional year at the ACEC. Construction of the ACEC facility is underway. The building will provide a state-of-the-art environmental science lab, offices, a meeting room, restrooms, as well as storage space for education and habitat restoration equipment. We plan to move into the building in November and have a grand opening ceremony sometime next spring. The ACEC education programs last year served over 2,000 children. Our ANTS program was launched this fall with participation from 12 classrooms, 10 schools, and the endorsement from the Billings School District. Partnerships with Billings Parks and Recreation Department and the Friendship House of Billings have resulted in four weeks of summer camp and after-school programs.

If you happen to be traveling along I-90 in Billings, take the time to visit and enjoy the wildlife and trails at the ACEC. For directions and more information about the ACEC, visit the Montana Audubon webpage, www.mtaudubon.org.



SEPTEMBER'S BEST BACKYARD BIRDS

Compiled by Wayne Tree, 777-3159

or calidris05@montana.com

Claude Birkeneder	Downy Woodpecker	Hamilton	Betsy Douglas	Clark's Nutcracker	Victor
Audrey Hobbs	American Goldfinches	Hamilton	Kay Fulton	Wild Turkeys	Victor
Shirley Abel	American Robin	Hamilton	Carol Santos	Blue Jay	Victor
Barry Abel	Black-capped Chickadee	Hamilton	Johnny Santos	Pileated Woodpecker	Victor
John Ormiston	Pileated Woodpecker	Hamilton	Marvin Costello	White-breasted Nuthatch	Stevensville
Barb Ormiston	Steller's Jay	Hamilton	Mary Costello	American Robin	Stevensville
Kathy Daniels	Osprey	Hamilton	Judy Hoy	Yellow Warbler	Stevensville
Mike Daniels	Mourning Dove	Hamilton	Bob Hoy	Sandhill Crane	Stevensville
Aislinn Daniels	Great Blue Heron	Hamilton	Lynn Moshier	White-crowned Sparrows	Stevensville
Patricia Ryan-Swindler	Spotted Towhee	Hamilton	Gail Moshier	White-throated Sparrow	Stevensville
Mac Donofrio	Black-headed Grosbeak	Hamilton	Bob Danley	Peregrine Falcon	Metcalf Refuge
Peter Allen	Steller's Jay	Hamilton	Joe Birkeneder	Reeve's Pheasant	South Kootenai
Helen Allen	Clark's Nutcracker	Hamilton	Patty Laughlin	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Stevensville
Jason Allen	Wild Turkeys	Hamilton	Mike Williams	Ring-necked Pheasant	Stevensville
Skye O'Byrne	Wilson's Warbler	Hamilton	David Calkins	Red-tailed Hawk	Stevensville
Rick Fuhrman	Turkey Vultures (3)	Hamilton	Patti Calkins	Willow Flycatcher	Stevensville
Christine Coffin	Red-naped Sapsuckers	Hamilton	Jeanne Tischler	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Stevensville
Colleen Powell	American Goldfinches	Grantsdale	Jerry Tischler	White-crowned Sparrows	Stevensville
LM Powell	American Goldfinches	Grantsdale	Judy Mason	Cedar Waxwings	Stevensville
Ted Troutman	Canada Geese	Grantsdale	Carter Mason	Pileated Woodpecker	Stevensville
Dorinda Troutman	Pine Siskins	Grantsdale	Wayne Tree	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Stevensville
Pat Bartholomew	Black-capped Chickadee	Roaring Lion	Arla Tree	Pileated Woodpecker	Stevensville
Bart Bartholomew	Ruffed Grouse	Roaring Lion	Paul Hayes	American Goldfinches	Stevensville
Veryl Kosteczko	Steller's Jay	Darby	Mary Hayes	Clark's Nutcracker	Stevensville
Peg Platt	Wood Ducks	Conner	Jim Hamilton	Wood Ducks	Stevensville
Sue Case	Western Tanager	Sula	Dave Lockman	Western Tanager	Stevensville
Doug Case	Belted Kingfisher	Sula	Blakey Lockman	American White Pelicans	Stevensville
Samantha O'Byrne	Cassin's Vireo	Corvallis	Daniel Lockman	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Stevensville
Steve Elie	Sandhill Cranes	Corvallis	Jenna Lockman	Red-naped Sapsucker	Stevensville
Art Callan	Barn Swallow	Corvallis	Greg Nenow	American Kestrels	Florence
Nancy Callan	Western Meadowlark	Corvallis	Minta Nenow	Western Meadowlark	Florence
Jim Story	Mountain Bluebird	Corvallis	Jean Osterheld	Steller's Jay	Florence
Marlene Story	Pine Siskin	Corvallis	Mary Gum	Wilson's Warbler	Florence
Marie M'Kee	Ring-necked Pheasants	Corvallis	Pete Scholl	Black-billed Cuckoo	Florence
Lora Pechy	Western Meadowlark	Corvallis Hills	Kate Davis	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Florence
Bob Pechy	Black-billed Magpie	Corvallis Hills	Michael Koeppen	Evening Grosbeaks	Florence
Molly Hackett	Townsend's Warbler	Victor	Lynn Koeppen	Evening Grosbeaks	Florence
Sharon Browder	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Victor	Al Hinman	Blue Jay	Lolo
Dan Browder	Great Blue Heron	Victor	Hazel Hinman	Wood Duck (pair)	Lolo
Kevin Browder	Turkey Vulture	Victor	Dale Dufour	Sandhill Crane	Lolo
Lindsay Browder	Steller's Jay	Victor	Robert Danley	Evening Grosbeaks	Lolo
Doris Roberts	Pileated Woodpecker	Victor	Christine Danley	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Lolo