

Bitterroot AUDUBON



JANUARY 2009

NEWSLETTER

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Bhutan: Biological Diversity and Conservation in a Working Landscape

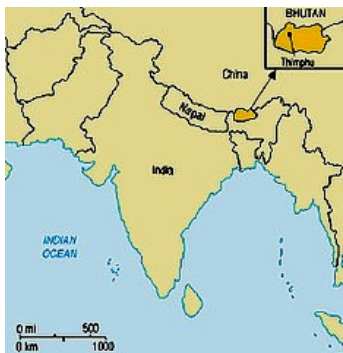


Two University of Montana Professors in the College of Forestry and Conservation, Steve Siebert and his wife, Jill Belsky, will present a program on their work in Bhutan on Monday, January 19th.

Over the last two years, they have been developing curriculum and educational programs with the Ugyen Wangchuck Environmental and Forestry Institute (UWEFI) as well as working with the country's Nature Conservation Division on conservation research projects. Their presentation about this little known country, its ecology, wildlife, and culture, promises to be quite enlightening.



Bhutan is a Buddhist country located in the eastern Himalayas between India and Tibet/China. It is approximately the size of Vermont and New Hampshire and has a population of 800,000 people.



About 80% of the population live in rural areas and derive their livelihoods from farming, grazing and forest product collecting. The country ranges in elevation from 200 feet in the south to over 24,000 feet in the north

and has exceptionally high biological diversity (over 5,000 plant species and over 700 bird species). Steve says that some of the terrain reminds him of the Bitterroot.

Come join the Bitterroot Audubon Monday, January 19th at 7:00 PM, at the Natural Resources/ Forest Service Headquarters, 1801 N. First Street (Hwy 93) in Hamilton. Enter the building from the west side. For further information contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794.

2009 Montana Legislature Audubon Needs Your Help!

Montana Audubon has made the following list of bills a priority for the 2009 Montana Legislature:

- **Montana River Legacy Act** ~ The "River Legacy Act" will be introduced to require new homes and commercial buildings to be set back at least 250 ft from the ordinary high water mark on up to 12 legacy rivers.
- **Wind Farms and Wildlife** ~ A wildlife-friendly certification program will be established for new wind projects.
- **Protecting Prairie Dogs** ~ Legislation will be introduced to allow Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to manage these declining animals.

If you are interested in helping with our legislative work, consider signing up for our action alert program. You can sign up for our alert program by: signing up at your local chapter meeting, sending an email to lobbyist Janet Ellis (jellis@mtaudubon.org), signing up on our website (www.mtaudubon.org), or calling the Montana Audubon office (443-3949). THANKS for your interest and involvement!

Great Backyard Bird Count is Coming!

The next [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) takes place **February 13-16, 2009**. The [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) are calling on everyone to “Count for Fun, Count for the Future!” Participants did just that in record numbers for the 2008 count, submitting more than 85,000 checklists and identifying 635 species. **Let's break some more records this year!**



To learn how to participate, go online to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>

Christmas Bird Counts



Big Hole (Kate Stone): Four participants braved the blustery weather for the second annual Big Hole Christmas Bird Count. The temperature climbed from -20° to a balmy -9° during the course of the day, with steady wind blowing and

occasional snow showers. This may explain why an hour and a half of trudging through the snow at the Big Hole National Battlefield yielded NO BIRDS! It was truly a better day for birding by car than by foot. The group identified 346 birds of 14 species. Some new species for the count included the sage grouse (12), Eurasian collared-dove (5), killdeer (1), and the Canada goose (50). The bird seen in greatest abundance was the snow bunting (85), followed by the rough-legged hawk (68) and the black-billed magpie (52).

Hamilton (John Ormiston): If you weren't there, you missed a grand day. Warm clothes were the order of the day, but 24 hardy birders participated in the Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, the 22nd effort to count all the birds in a 7 1/2 mile circle. The temperature was only -4, but there was no wind and we lost no one to frostbite. Noses were red when we gathered at noon to partake of Bill's extra good homemade from scratch chili. There was just enough, only a teaspoon remained at the end of noon hour, and the Oreos really took a beating.

So, how'd we do? -- Pretty darn good, considering the conditions. We hit the average number of species, 65, and saw over 2000 more birds than average. We added two species, Eurasian Collared-dove and Barred Owl, so the total for the 22 years is now 122. We've seen 32 species

every year and 22 only once. We had two unusual waterfowl, Blue-winged Teal and Northern Pintail. The most common bird was also the largest, Canada Geese.



The 2000 we saw was about 600 above average. We also saw about 200 more Mallards than average. Birders in the field saw 63 species and our corps of 28 feeder watchers added two to the total. There were nearly 100 Mourning Doves seen, a new record high by 20 birds. There's an obvious upward trend in Mourning Doves, thanks to all you who feed birds. We also saw a record number of California Quail, by over 80 birds, another species that's also increasing in numbers in the Valley. Record numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos were also in evidence, nearly twice as many, 201, as have been recorded before.

Stevensville (Dave Lockman): Participation in the 44th annual Stevi CBC was the lowest it's been for many years, possibly because a number of regulars hadn't returned from Christmas trips. The weather was fairly warm, but the wind blew hard all day, causing many smaller birds to hide in thick cover. I don't have everyone's results back yet as I write this, but we still managed to find at least 81 species, which again gives us the highest species total in Montana. The only new species for the Count was Common Grackle, bringing our cumulative species count to 153. We also found two Greater White-fronted Geese and a Pinyon Jay, both of which have only been seen once before on this Count. Other unusual species included Blue Jay, Canyon Wren and Harris' Sparrow. So all in all, it was a pretty good Count.

A complete list of species and counts can be found on the Bitterroot Audubon website. Thanks to those who participated!



Call for Photos

Bitterroot Audubon is seeking digital photos for our IBA brochure – scenes of the Bitterroot River, vegetation along the river, and focal bird species (Lewis' woodpecker, willow flycatcher, red-eyed vireo, and the red-naped sapsucker). Contributors will receive a photo credit for any image that appears in the brochure. Please email pictures with a brief description to Kate Stone (krostone@hotmail.com).

1What's The Story, Story? by Jim Story

Question: How is feather color produced in birds?

Answer: Color in birds comes from two sources. Most color comes from pigments in the feathers or skin. Pigments absorb some wavelengths of light and reflect others. The other color source is structural color, which is the source of all blue and iridescent colors. Blues are produced by minute particles in the feathers that influence only shorter wavelengths which appear blue. Iridescent colors are produced by reflection of wavelengths from highly modified

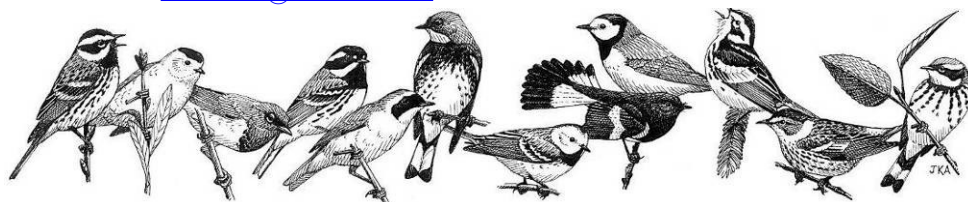
barbules of the feathers that are rotated so that a flat surface faces the incoming light. The barbules reflect some wavelengths, and the reflected wavelength changes with the angle of reflection. Colors aid in camouflage, identification, and sex attraction. Sometimes, colors are the accidental result of pigment location in feathers for strengthening purposes.



OCTOBER'S BEST BACKYARD BIRDS

Compiled by Wayne Tree, 777-3159

or calidris05@montana.com



Hamilton

Claude Birkeneder	Dark-eyed Junco
Audrey Hobbs	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Shirley Abel	No Report
Barry Abel	No Report
John Ormiston	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Barb Ormiston	Pileated Woodpecker
Kate Stone	No Report
Kathy Daniels	Northern Flicker
Mike Daniels	Song Sparrow
Aislinn Daniels	Rough-legged Hawk
Leslie Robinson	Red-tailed Hawk
Patricia Ryan-Swindler	No Report
Ree van Oppen	Amer. Goldfinch-5
Mac Donofrio	No Report
Peter Allen	Downy Woodpecker
Helen Allen	Rough-legged Hawk
Jason Allen	Hairy Woodpecker
Skye O'Byrne	Ring-necked Pheasant
Rick Fuhrman	Red Crossbills
Christine Coffin	Sharp-shinned Hawk

Grantsdale

Colleen Powell	Blue Jay
LM Powell	Townsend's Solitaire
Ted Troutman	Cooper's Hawk
Dorinda Troutman	Downy Woodpecker

Roaring Lion

Pat Bartholomew	Gray Jay
Bart Bartholomew	Steller's Jay

Darby

Barb Hoag	No Report
Bart Hoag	No Report
Veryl Kosteczko	Mourning Doves-20

Conner

Peg Platt	Clark's Nutcracker
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Sula

Sue Case	Song Sparrow
Doug Case	American Dipper

Corvallis

Samantha O'Byrne	Northern Goshawk
Steve Elie	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Art Callan	Common Redpoll
Nancy Callan	Northern Harrier
Jim Story	Hairy Woodpecker
Marleen Story	Dark-eyed Junco
Marie McKee	Mourning Dove

Corvallis Hills

Lora Pechy	No Report
Bob Pechy	No Report

Victor

Molly Hackett	Golden Eagle
Jill Davies	No Report
Sharon Browder	Northern Shrike
Dan Browder	Brown Creeper
Kevin Browder	Pileated Woodpecker
Lindsay Browder	Ring-necked Pheasant
Doris Roberts	Mountain Chickadee
Betsy Douglas	No Report
Kay Fulton	Brown Creeper
Carol Santos	Red-winged Blackbird
Johnny Santos	Northern Flickers

Stevensville

Marvin Costello	No Report
Mary Costello	No Report
Judy Hoy	Harris' Sparrow
Bob Hoy	Northern Goshawk
Melinda Hettick	No Report
Lynn Moshier	American Goldfinch
Gail Moshier	Song Sparrow
Sherry Ritter	Northern Harrier
Patty Laughlin	Mourning Dove
Mike Williams	Clark's Nutcracker
David Calkins	Bohemian Waxwing
Patti Calkins	Western Screech Owl
Jeanne Tischler	White-breasted Nuthatch

Stevensville continued...

Jerry Tischler	American Goldfinch
Judy Mason	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Carter Mason	Blue Jay
Wayne Tree	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Arla Tree	Pileated Woodpecker
Paul Hayes	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Mary Hayes	Red-shafted Flickers-8
Jim Hamilton	Mallard
Dave Lockman	Merlin
Blakey Lockman	Pine Siskin
Daniel Lockman	Hairy Woodpecker
Jenna Lockman	American Goldfinch
Lorna Lagerquist	No Report
Mimi Sauer	No Report
Len Sauer	No Report

Lee Metcalf Refuge

Bob Danley	Common Redpoll
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South Kootenai

Joe Birkeneder	Mourning Dove
Marty Birkeneder	Mourning Dove

Florence

Greg Nenow	Steller's Jay
Minta Nenow	Mountain Chickadee
Chris Thompson	Black-capped Chickadee
Jean Osterheld	No Report
Mary Gum	Dark-eyed Junco-part alb
Pete Scholl	Rough-legged Hawk
Kate Davis	Northern Goshawk
Michael Koeppen	American Goldfinch
Lynn Koeppen	Hairy Woodpecker

Lolo

Al Hinman	Rough-legged Hawk
Hazel Hinman	Bald Eagle
Dale Dufour	Rough-legged Hawk
Robert Danley	Rough-legged Hawk
Christine Danley	Bohemian Waxwing