

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



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NEWSLETTER

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## In Memoriam – Byron Weber

By John Ormiston

Some place is richer and the earth is a little poorer today. Byron Weber, the very reason for Bitterroot Audubon's existence, passed away last week, much too soon. He left this world a better place for having been here and his legacy will live on in the good works he accomplished in his 65 years. I didn't know much about Byron's life outside the world of nature, but according to the obituary in the 8/31/2010 Missoulian (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/greatfalls Tribune/obituary.aspx?n=byron-l-weber&pid=145012334>) he influenced many worlds. As "The Bug Guy" he frequently appeared on Montana Public Radio's *The Pea Green Boat*. I looked forward to the *Pea Green Boat* those Fridays and to the natural world he made come alive for youngsters, and oldsters like me, especially the world of insects. The last Friday of the month lost some of its luster as he moved on to another place. Byron had the ability to make us see insects on the radio.



Sometime in about 1984 when Byron was the President of Five Valleys Audubon, he noticed the membership list contained many members from the Bitterroot. He made contact with several of those members and organized a meeting to form a steering committee. This was the beginning of Bitterroot Audubon. He showed us the way, taught us the rules, and got out of the way. Many folks contributed to the effort, but it was thanks to the singular effort of Byron that we got started, and resulted in a newly chartered Chapter, Bitterroot Audubon, in March, 1985.

As a sixth grade teacher, Byron had the opportunity

to shape many lives to appreciate the rich natural environment we're privileged to enjoy. He established a lasting legacy with the establishment of an "Outdoor Classroom" on the grounds of the Florence Carlton School. I'm proposing that Bitterroot Audubon make a significant donation to the Outdoor Classroom as a token of our appreciation for a life well lived and the legacy he left. The Board, I'm sure, will approve a memorial contribution. We'll "pass the hat" at our September meeting. If you can't be there, you can mail a contribution and we'll add it to the fund. I hope we can make a difference in maintaining an Outdoor Classroom for generations of Florence Carleton students.

The "Bug Guy" will be missed.

## FALL KICK-OFF MEETING & FIELD TRIP

By Kay Fulton

The "New Year" for the Bitterroot Audubon Society begins Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>,



at 6:00 p.m. (not 7:00 as is usual) with a brief general meeting in the Visitor Center of Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge. Important information on fall migration birding in Montana – what to look for and where – will be included. This will be followed by an evening birdathon on the refuge – How many birds and how many different species can you see in an hour? After an hour in the field, we'll return to the center for hot drinks, cookies and prizes for the winners. Dress appropriately and bring a flashlight, just in case. The public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794 for further information.

## Letter from the President

By Peter Allen

Here it is September already – where did the summer go? Fall is in the air, but first, congratulations are in order for all those in our chapter who contributed their time, talent, and materials to make the 2010 Bird Festival in Missoula a success. There are many of you, and I can't name you all, so hesitate to name any.



Some contributed time and talent in the planning efforts, with lots of trips to Missoula for meetings. Others canvassed for donations of funds or items for the raffle and silent auction. Let me not omit those who contributed delicious desserts for the dessert auction. Still others volunteered to lead field trips as part of the festival. All in all, *Wings Over the Big Sky, 2010*, was a successful festival. People came from as far away as New York state to participate. The festival is,

of course, a fund-raising event for Montana Audubon, and our Chapter's share of the proceeds has added to our financial resources.



During the Saturday night banquet, it was my honor to accept, on behalf of the Chapter, the 2010 Special Achievement Award from Montana Audubon for the work the Chapter has done to promote and manage the Bitterroot River IBA. This award recognizes the excellent work done by Sherry Ritter and the rest of the IBA Committee to map out a plan of action and get started on the work of promoting protection of this important IBA.

## Wolves and the Law

by Fred Weisbecker, Conservation Chair

Watching the reintroduction of the gray wolf into the northwest has been agonizing at best. Mixed in with the rumors, ignorance, and primeval fears are many legal twists and turns. Judge Molloy's latest ruling rescinding the US Fish



and Wildlife Service's decision to allow Montana & Idaho to take over management of wolves in their states is just the latest of many legal rulings. Everyone seems to have someone to blame for this setback. What Judge Molloy said in his ruling was that the original plan to de-list the reintroduced wolves required all three states (Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho) to rewrite their game laws removing wolves from their predator list, providing the species with some form of legal protection, and presenting an acceptable management plan. Idaho and Montana stepped up to the plate and did both. Wyoming decided to dig in its heels. They said that, outside of Yellowstone Park, they would continue to treat the wolf as a predator with a 'shoot on sight' policy.

With this situation the USFWS de-listed the species in Montana and Idaho and turned management over to the respective state game agencies. Basically, Judge Molloy ruled that this was a **three state** de-listing plan and anything less was inappropriate. He ruled that the USFWS had made a political decision, letting Wyoming off the hook.

One concern of some environmental groups was that this type of arbitrary management of the Endangered Species Act would set a bad



precedent. So, if there is someone to blame for this setback in the evolution of wolf management, it is the state of Wyoming and their decision to make some sort of political statement against wolf reintroduction. It is ironic that they have refused to do the very things that would eventually give them the right to manage the very species they seem to fear so much. We are hopeful that more sensible heads will eventually prevail.

## Moving?

Please let Bitterroot Audubon know as early as possible of any change in your postal address. Under the terms of our bulk mailing permit, the Post Office does not forward your newsletter to your new address. Instead it returns it to us and we pay a return fee. You can write, phone, or email the change of address to us, giving your name, old address, new address, and date of change.

## What's the Story, Story?

Readers of this newsletter usually find that page 3 begins with a contribution from Jim Story answering some question about bird life. Jim has decided to suspend publication of his column for a while. He has simply run out of questions to answer. He's been so dedicated, over the years, that he must have answered all your questions. A review of past issues reveals that, to the best of the editors' knowledge, the first column appeared in the October 2005 newsletter, "Does the size on an individual egg change during the incubation period?"

Jim hasn't run out of answers or willingness to contribute – just out of questions. If you have any, send them to him at [JStory@cybernet1.com](mailto:JStory@cybernet1.com) and he'll try and get them answered.

Even if there are no further questions to answer, we believe Jim Story has done his part to contribute to our newsletter. Congratulations, Jim, thanks for all your columns, and enjoy your retirement.

## Raptor Watch Opportunity

By Kate Stone

Bitterroot Audubon will be helping Raptor View Research (<http://www.raptorview.org/>) conduct fall raptor surveys at Sula Peak and potentially other locations in the Bitterroot Valley. If you are interested in participating in this project, either watch our website for information on this project or email Kate at ([kroestone@hotmail.com](mailto:kroestone@hotmail.com)). The surveys will likely occur around the third week in September.



## Support Audubon as You Drive

By Peter Allen

On a recent trip to visit our son, Jason, a Park Ranger at Mt Rainier National Park, I noticed a card in the Visitor Center. It showed a Washington license plate and bore the title *Drive Your Support*. The card invited visitors to "Show the world you care about Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks! Purchase a National Park License Plate." Now, if you've been in the basement hallway of the Ravalli County Courthouse, waiting to register your

vehicle, you're probably aware that Montana has about a hundred different specialty plates, each of which provides a contribution to some worthy cause or group. Audubon is just one of them, but it's the one I'm supporting at present. Next time you need to register your car or truck, consider the gift that keeps on giving, year after year, as long as you keep Audubon plates on your vehicle.



## Field Trip – Teller Refuge

By Peter Allen

On Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, a dozen or so birders gathered for an evening birdwalk through the Teller Refuge.



In part, this was an opportunity to re-emphasize the Chapter's role working to protect the Bitterroot River IBA, and Amy Cilimburg, Montana Audubon's IBA Coordinator, was on hand to re-present the Special Achievement Award we received at the Bird Festival banquet in June. Sherry Ritter, Kate Stone, and Fred Weisbecker were present to receive the recognition of the group for all the hard work they have done as the IBA Committee, and it was actually the first time they'd seen the frame of photographs which make up the award. Had Kay Fulton been present we would have had the entire committee on hand.

Sepp Jannotta, of the *Ravalli Republic*, attended also, and wrote a nice piece for the newspaper which many of you may have seen. You can find the article at [http://www.ravallirepublic.com/news/local/article\\_4585ea84-afe4-11df-92db-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.ravallirepublic.com/news/local/article_4585ea84-afe4-11df-92db-001cc4c03286.html).

After opening ceremonies and congratulations, the party spent some time exploring the Teller and looking for such bird life as might have been apparent.