

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



OCTOBER 2012

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 27, NO. 2

## The Bitterroot Water Forum: Protecting our Watershed

The October meeting of the Bitterroot Audubon Society will feature a presentation by Heather Mullee, Executive Director of Bitter Root Water Forum (BRWF). She will give an overview of the organization with a presentation highlighting the history and trajectory of BRWF, including recent and upcoming restoration projects, educational programs for youth and adults, and what's in store for 2013.

The Bitter Root Water Forum is the Bitterroot Valley's very own watershed group. BRWF is a community driven non-profit dedicated to supporting the traditions of agriculture, community and recreation by protecting, enhancing and restoring the Bitterroot Watershed through on the ground restoration projects and watershed education. BRWF works for clean water for all generations.

BRWF has been operating in the Bitterroot Valley since 1994. You may know of BRWF from their annual "Riverfest", a day for children and families to learn about the importance of the river while having a



Kids participating in Riverfest activities.

great time. Or perhaps you have seen some of the recent re-vegetation projects completed along the East Fork of the Bitterroot River near Highway 93, where BRWF is in the process of planting 5,000 feet of native vegetation to help shade the stream, keep sediment from reaching the river, and create a healthy riparian buffer to improve wildlife habitat.



Heather Mullee planting a tree.

Heather joined the Bitter Root Water Forum in November of 2010. Hailing from Wisconsin, a water wealthy state, she is acutely aware of the need to promote a healthy watershed in the Bitterroot Valley. With a background in conservation policy, she has spent years developing locally based citizen engagement programs and working on initiatives to promote water quality and quantity. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies and Sociology from the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse. Heather enjoys spending time outdoors hiking, camping, and fly fishing. When indoors, she's most likely working on a new recipe or craft project.

**The Audubon meeting will be held on October 15th at 7PM at the Teller Wildlife Refuge Slack Barn. Take the Eastside Highway 1.5 miles north of Corvallis to Quast Lane; turn west and go until it dead ends at Chaffin Lane. Turn south (left) and at the first driveway on your right, turn in to the Slack Barn (big red barn) parking area. The public is invited. For further information contact Kay Fulton, 642-3794.**



*Courtesy Nathan DeBoer*

This Northern Hawk Owl flew past a raptor observation site on Friday, September 21 at the MPG Ranch. This encounter represents a first record for this species in the Bitterroot Valley. The owl took a few swipes at the owl decoy, then continued flying south.

### **Letter from the President**

*By Kay Fulton, BAS President*

Hi, Birders: I hope that you are surviving the smoke. I keep wondering what impact it is having on the birds. I know that birders are not getting out as much as they would like in this, the beginning of fall migration. There certainly has been a lot of flocking and staging going on – Warblers, Finches, Juncos, etc. and the usual large families of California Quail and Wild Turkeys.

Last night, though, I was entertained by 3 MOOSE in my backyard, one huge, dark bull Moose, a cow and a calf. Apparently, Mr. Moose didn't like the cow and calf invading his territory so he charged them – two different times! Which brings me to a story I've been wanting to tell you of the birding field trip in East Glacier, when I was at the Montana Audubon Birding Festival in June. I went with a group of about 12 people, mostly "older", some even retired biologists, and several expert birders including Steve Hoffman, the Executive Director of Montana Audubon. To make a long story short, we came upon a Moose in the willows, which, essentially, ignored us until we were on our way back after birding by the river. We looked up to see her glaring at us through the willows and THEN, SHE CHARGED US – 3 TIMES! In retrospect it was quite funny and would



have made a comical movie of 12 old birders running this way and that! Well, no one was hurt and she made her point. (We figured she had a baby stashed in the willows.) You never know what you might see on a birding field trip, so get out and go birding if you can!!

### **Connect Kids to the Natural World with Audubon Adventures**

*by Leslie Nyce*

Bitterroot Audubon is offering National Audubon's "Audubon Adventures Program" to teachers around the valley. Geared for grades 3-5, the program helps teachers bring the natural world into their classrooms and connect kids to the environment.

The title for the 2012-2013 kit is "**Sharing Our Earth**". Participating classrooms will learn about *Sharing Our Shores, Caring for Our Planet-Be a Friend to Birds, World of the Forests, and Grasslands: A Prairie Tale*. Each classroom will be provided with an Educator Guide for each topic, student handouts, hands-on activities for inside/outside, student assessment pages and an Official Certificate for participation. Teachers also receive a one-year membership to National Audubon and Audubon Magazine, which also means they are members of our local Bitterroot Audubon Chapter. The Audubon Adventures program is provided at no cost to teachers because Bitterroot Audubon members generously provide donations to cover the fees for all the materials. The cost to sponsor a classroom is \$45.95. Partial contributions for half the amount may also be made. To sponsor a classroom, please make your check payable to Bitterroot Audubon and send it to Bitterroot Audubon, Attn: Audubon Adventures, P.O. Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840. For more information or to register for the program, teachers should contact Leslie Nyce at 961-3808.

#### **We are very thankful to the generous sponsor's for last year's classrooms:**

Helen & Peter Allen, Marlene & Len Sauer, Judy & Bob Hoy, Judy & Jerry Williams, JoAnn & Doug Morris, Becky & Bill Peters, Bill Gabriel, J. Stanley Stewart and Ruth & Lloyd Straits. Thank you so very much for helping to educate our valley's kids about the natural world!

## Where do Bitterroot Osprey go in the winter?

By Kate Stone

An audience member at last month's program by Steve Hoffman asked that very question. Thanks to the recent placement of satellite transmitters on a handful of local Osprey, we are beginning to get some answers.

This summer, Raptor View Research Institute (RVRI) put satellite transmitters on two Osprey families nesting on the MPG Ranch, near Florence. One goal of this project was to look at foraging ecology during the breeding season, in the hopes of linking Osprey foraging locations with exposure to toxic metals. A second goal of this project was to examine patterns of individual and family movement and migration in the non-breeding season. This work is being conducted in partnership with the MPG Ranch, and with University of Montana researchers Dr. Erick Greene and Dr. Heiko Lagner as part of a larger regional study on Osprey ecology.

Where are the Osprey now? Each family successfully fledged two young, so we have data from eight transmitters. The first Osprey to make a major move was one of the adult females. She left Florence on 9/1, and just ten days later she had traveled over 2,000 miles and was near Veracruz, Mexico. As of September 23, she has traveled over 3,400 miles from Florence, and is hanging out off of the Pacific coast of the Costa Rica/Nicaragua border.



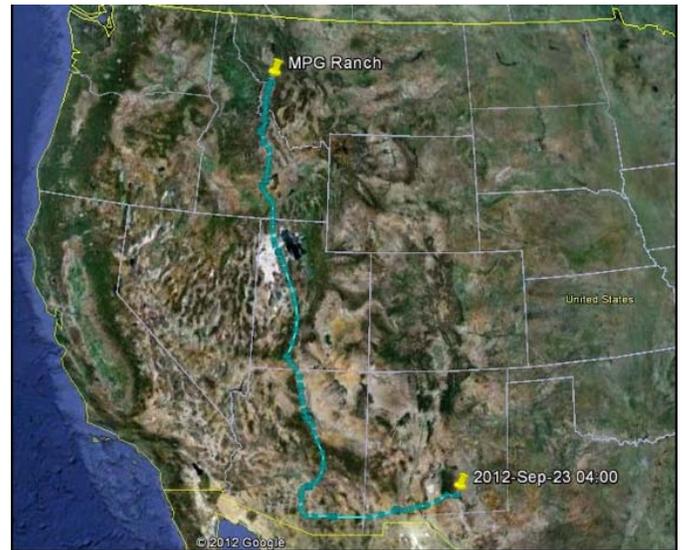
*Courtesy Rob Domenech*

The amazing journey of one female Osprey from Florence.

RVRI has not been able to retrieve any recent data from the second adult female. She was last detected on September 6, near her breeding area. Catastrophic transmitter failure usually suggests mortality,

potentially from a vehicle collision or electrocution.

The juvenile Osprey have made some interesting movements since leaving the Bitterroot Valley. One traveled northeast and is currently along the Blackfoot River. Another traveled south to Bear Lake in Utah. Two juveniles are in New Mexico. Both followed similar routes south, though one has moved farther east than the other.



*Courtesy Rob Domenech*

Migration route of one juvenile Osprey from Florence to New Mexico. A second juvenile Osprey followed this same route south.

The males from both nests are still near their breeding areas along the Bitterroot River. Adult males are typically the last to leave the breeding area.

Where will these Osprey settle for the winter? Will we see them back next year? With the help of these transmitters, hopefully we will be able to answer these questions and more.

Thanks to Rob Domenech and Adam Shreading of Raptor View Research Institute for compiling this information and making it publicly available.

## Bitterroot Springs Ranch work day 10/21/12

Bitterroot Audubon will host a work day on Bitterroot Springs Ranch, a 1,200-acre conservation property north of Victor. Work will focus on building small enclosures to protect ponderosa pines, cottonwoods, and shrubs establishing on the floodplain. We will also be removing houndstongue. This project is supported by a grant from Bitterroot Audubon's Riparian Habitat Fund, where landowners apply for financial and volunteer support to improve bird habitat on their property within the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area (IBA).



Bitterroot Audubon members creating a bird list for Bitterroot Springs Ranch

Bitterroot Springs Ranch is home to an amazing diversity of bird life, including a Great Blue Heron rookery with over 30 nests. In the breeding season, it is home to several of the species that define the Bitterroot River IBA, including the Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-eyed Vireo, Bald Eagle, Willow Flycatcher, and the Red-naped Sapsucker. Participants will have the opportunity to bird on the property after a few hours of work.

We will work on this project from 1-4 on Sunday, October 21. Participants should be prepared for light labor, including putting up wire fencing. If you are interested in this work day, please REGISTER by October 18<sup>th</sup> by contacting Kate Stone (381-1115, krosetone@hotmail.com).

## Banner Year for Peregrine Falcons in Montana

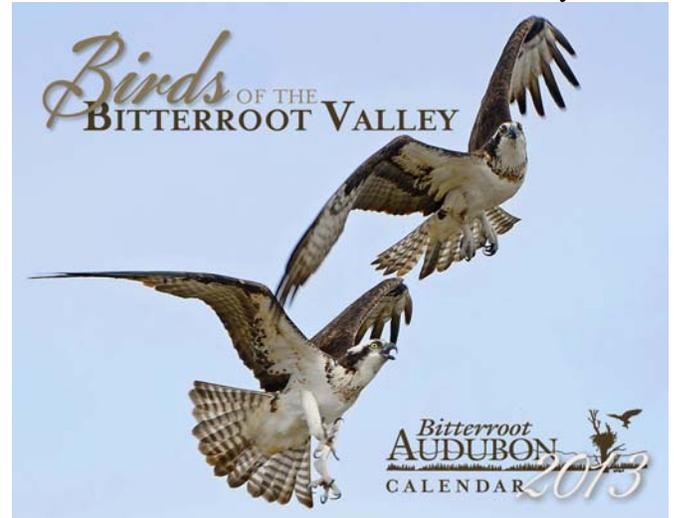
by Dave Lockman

Monitoring showed that Peregrine Falcon populations across Montana and in the Bitterroot had another very successful year in 2012. The Montana Peregrine Institute (MPI) coordinated the state-wide monitoring efforts, and documented 108 active Peregrine territories that fledged 203 known young, both record numbers. They found 14 new territories, also a record number. Local monitoring efforts were led by Bitterroot National Forest Biological Technician Mac Donofrio, with help from MPI staff and Kate Davis, Executive Director of Raptors of the Rockies. They found 15 active Peregrine territories in the Bitterroot drainage, 12 of which were known to be successful. These 12 nests fledged at least 31 young, which tied our previous record from 2010. Mac found one new territory this year. Finding fledged

Peregrines and documenting nest success can be very challenging and time-consuming. Unfortunately, we were not able to devote as much time to it this year as usual. If we had, it's likely that we would have found a few more young and broken our local records as well. Be that as it may, these monitoring results show that peregrine falcons continue to expand their numbers and distribution in Montana. They've come a long way since the mid-1970s, when there were exactly zero known Peregrine Falcon eyries in Montana.

## The Bitterroot Audubon 2013 Calendar Takes Flight!

Bitterroot Audubon has a beautiful 2013 Calendar to sell! This unique, stunning calendar can be found in Hamilton at the BAS meetings, the Farmer's Market, Apple Days booth #11, Sam's Spade, Chapter One Bookstore, and Art Focus; in Stevensville at Lisa Archer's Silks; in Darby at Darby Wine and Spirits; and in Missoula at Montana Natural History Center.



They are only \$15 and the artists are local Bitterroot photographers, local school children and of course, our local Bitterroot birds!! All the proceeds go to the BAS Educational and Scholarship Funds. The Calendars are going fast, so get one before they are gone! For more information contact Becky Peters at 369-5210.

Would you like to see the newsletter in **COLOR**? Visit [www.BitterrootAudubon.org](http://www.BitterrootAudubon.org) and click the link to download the current newsletter or visit the archives.

You can sign up to have an e-copy sent to your email inbox by contacting Susie Duff, our Membership Chair at 961-5455 or [sduff1@aol.com](mailto:sduff1@aol.com). Please include "Newsletter" in the subject line.

# News and Notes

## 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!--

Bitterroot Audubon has created a Facebook page. If you use Facebook, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and "Like" us!

## Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT--

New to birding? Beginner Bird Walks at the refuge sponsored by Bitterroot Audubon and Five Valleys Audubon are held the third Saturday of each month. Meet at the Refuge Visitor's Center on October 20th at 10AM for a two hour bird walk. Bring binoculars if you have them. Contact the refuge at [\(406\) 777-5552](tel:4067775552) for more information.

## Fall Highway Clean-up

Greetings birders!

Our semi-annual highway clean-up project will take place on October 16 at 4PM. Meet on the west side of Highway 93, near mile marker 64, south of Stevensville. There is a fair amount of trash along our stretch of road so please come out and help make us look good! We'll supply orange vests for everyone, but bring your own gloves. **For questions contact Skip Horner at 642-6840 or [skip@skiphorner.com](mailto:skip@skiphorner.com)**

## Calendar of Events

**Oct 15**-Audubon Meeting, Teller Wildlife Refuge Slack Barn, Corvallis, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM

**Oct 16**-Highway Clean-up, 4PM, Stevensville, MT

**Oct 20**-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-12PM

**Oct 21**- Bitterroot Springs Work Day, 1-4PM

**Nov 19**-Audubon Meeting, TBD

## Bird Shots



*Courtesy Julie Gothrup*

Rufous Hummingbird, July 2012, Darby, MT. The Hummingbirds were active at the feeders after a late day rainstorm.

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\* Board Member

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

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

## Chapter Only Membership

The Bitterroot Audubon Chapter Only Membership is \$15/year. These members will be supporting local chapter activities, receive the newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check this box to receive full color email-only newsletters delivered to your inbox.

Send this application with \$15 to:



Bitterroot Audubon Society  
PO Box 326  
Hamilton, MT 59840-0326

## NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Become a member of the **National Audubon Society** and **Bitterroot Audubon** [Chapter Code C1ZN580Z]. You will receive *Audubon* magazine, *Bitterroot Audubon Newsletter* and a membership card. *Introductory membership is \$20.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this application and your check to:



# Audubon

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