

Bitterroot AUDUBON



FEBRUARY 2013

NEWSLETTER

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Why Renewable Energy, and Why Now?

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

Come join Bitterroot Audubon February 18th to learn everything you ever wanted to know (even what you didn't know you wanted to know) about Renewable Energy from Chris Daum, owner of Oasis Montana. She will discuss a wide range of usages from small gardening projects to one of the largest grid-tied solar electric systems in Montana.



Courtesy Chris Daum

Solar panel array, Deep Creek Ranch, Choteau, MT.

Some of the topics she will cover include:

- Where does our power come from?
- The importance of energy efficiency
- Overview of solar electric power systems, remote and grid-tied
- Solar water pumping
- How and where to obtain information, equipment and assistance
- Grants and incentives for systems
- Benefits of green energy

Chris has been in the Renewable Energy field since 1989 and started her own company in 1999. Oasis Montana has been involved in consulting, planning, designing and implementing systems as far away as Africa, the Caribbean and South America. In addition to her business, Chris and her husband maintain a large orchard with over 25 varieties of fruit trees and a bountiful garden on their Stevensville property.



Courtesy Chris Daum

The Home/Office solar array system at Oasis Montana.

Join us on Monday, February 18th, at 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf Refuge Visitor's Center (north of Stevensville), in the Okefenokee Room. The public is invited. For further information, contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794.

2012 Wildlife Rehabilitation Report

By Judy Hoy

In 2012, wildlife rehabilitators Brooke Tanner, Kristi Swisher, Ellen Henry, Adele Coon and Judy Hoy collectively received 243 birds that were injured or orphaned. Of those, 175 (72%) were released, 67 died or were euthanized because of injuries and one Homing Rock Pigeon with a broken wing was rehabilitated and a home was found for it.

Of special note, the following hatchlings were successfully raised and released: three Western Screech Owls, six Red-breasted Nuthatches, one Hermit Thrush and three Lewis's Woodpeckers. Also of special note was an amazing 26 Mallard ducklings that were raised and released by Kristi Swisher.

No malformed young of the year birds were received until after the thick smoke began coming from the Idaho forest fires. Then three hatchling American

Robins had underdeveloped upper bills and very yellow skin, indicating liver damage. Two died, and the third recovered and was released into the wild. One American Goldfinch with severe poisoning symptoms and short upper bill died. Seven hatchling Rock Doves were found dead, all of which had severely underdeveloped upper bill and facial bones. Also received were two fledgling birds with severe disruption to the growth of their feathers. A Wild Turkey fledgling was caught and mortally injured by a dog because it couldn't fly due to short malformed wing and tail feathers. A fledgling Osprey chick was euthanized and given to The University of Montana Osprey researchers for testing because of disrupted growth of flight, tail and body feathers. All three Red Squirrels received had visible birth defects.

We would like to thank everyone who donated to the Bitterroot Audubon Wildlife Rehabilitation Fund, which pays for food and medicine to care for rescued animals. And a very big thank you to all the people who cared enough to rescue injured or orphaned birds and take them to our rehabilitators. Thank you to the Bitterroot Audubon Society for assisting with the funding and to all who made 2012 a very successful year.



Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

Rough-legged Hawk in the Bitterroot Valley.

Bitterroot Audubon Photography Workshops

Are you interested in learning about photographing wildlife or how to use your camera to take better shots? Bitterroot Audubon Society is offering a Photography Workshop in late March, hosted by BAS members Nathan DeBoer and Sara Ashline. The workshop includes one evening class with a morning field trip for shooting. Following the field trip, we'll return to the classroom to share images and critiques.

Cost for the workshop will be \$20.00/Audubon members and \$30.00/non-members. **Pre-registration is required and limited to 6 participants. Participants may not sign up for only one portion of the workshop, but must commit to attending both the evening class and the field trip on the following day.** The workshop is open to photographers of all abilities from beginner to those with more experience. For more information or to pre-register, email Sara at sareevt@gmail.com. Registration forms are due two weeks prior to the workshop date.

Would you like to see the newsletter in **COLOR**? Visit 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. Please include "Newsletter" in the subject line.

Winter Raptor Counts- a mid-season report

by Kate Stone

How many raptors over-winter in the Bitterroot Valley, and how do their populations change through the season? Citizen Scientists from Bitterroot Audubon are working to help answer these questions.

Groups of observers are going out in the first week of each winter month to count raptors along set routes in the south end of the Valley. Employees of the MPG Ranch are surveying a 50-mile route at the north end of the Valley weekly. So far, observers have counted over 1,000 raptors. Rough-legged Hawks are the top raptor (with 420 counts), followed by Red-tailed Hawks (with 350 counts). We have also seen many Bald Eagles, with numbers increasing as calving operations increase. Interestingly, observers from Stevensville to the north have seen more Red-tailed Hawks than Rough-legged Hawks, while the opposite is true from Stevensville to the south. The majority of Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, and Golden Eagles are adults. The majority of American Kestrels are males.

Observers will be out counting again in February and March. Our data will be shared with folks taking the winter raptor class with Steve Hoffman, and will also be presented at The Wildlife Society conference taking place in Whitefish at the end of February. Thanks to everyone who has participated in these counts!

Save the Date

The 14th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

will take place June 7th -- June 9th, 2013

in the geographic center of the state, Lewistown, Montana!

You are invited to join Montana Audubon and Lewistown for dynamic birding field trips, great speakers, interesting presentations, and fun festivities as we celebrate efforts to conserve our birds and wildlife in the heart of Montana.

One of only ten cities nationwide selected to receive an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds grant, the Lewistown community and surrounding areas are gearing up to welcome birders to the region.

"The Urban Bird Treaty program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service brings together private citizens, as well as federal, state, and municipal agencies and non-governmental organizations to conserve migratory birds through education programs, participation in citizen science, conservation and habitat improvement strategies, and reducing hazards to birds in urban/suburban areas."

Keynote speaker John Marzluff will share the amazing world of corvid intelligence with us! Visit mtaudubon.org for more information and a sneak peak at John's work.

Experience Central Montana and all this landscape has to offer
either through festival field trips or your own exploration!

- Lewistown Trail System
- Snowies, Moccasins, Belts, Judiths, and Highwoods
- Big Springs Trout Hatchery
- Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge
- Big Spring Creek Fishing
- An official Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBird Trail Tracker, the first and only in the state, will be available in the lobby of the festival hotel, the Yogo Inn, to record your sightings!

Watch mtaudubon.org and this newsletter for updates
and information about how you can register and participate!

Calendar of Events

Feb 15-16-Raptor Workshop with Steve Hoffman, Registration is **FULL**

Feb 18-Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.

Feb 16- Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-12PM

Mar 18-Audubon Meeting, TBD

Mar-Photography Workshop, TBD

News and Notes

Dues Reminder

For those who are not members of National Audubon, and who would like to support our local chapter, membership dues of \$15 are due by the end of January for the 2013 calendar year. However, if you have renewed or joined since October 1, 2012 your

Bird Shots



Courtesy Linda Turner

Adult Bald Eagle hunting for rabbits, Bitterroot Valley, February 2010

membership is carried over until January 2014.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook!

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

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.

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 February 16th 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.

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WEBSITE: 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: _____
Email: _____

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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