

Bitterroot AUDUBON



JANUARY 2014

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 28, NO. 5

Sailing, Skiing and Birding in Antarctica

By Skip Horner, Adventurer Extraordinaire

Once again Bitterroot Audubon is fortunate to kick off the New Year with an exciting program by Skip Horner. He has delighted and amazed us before but this new adventure tops them all. In December, he led a small group of adventurers on a skiing expedition in Antarctica. He chartered a 67' steel-hulled sloop out of Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world, and they sailed 770 miles across the treacherous Drake Passage to and from the Antarctic Peninsula. Then, for two weeks they sailed through an archipelago of glacier-covered islands along the mainland, dodging icebergs and avoiding the pack-ice, as they chose new ski ascents and descents each day. They shared the route with a great number of sea-birds, penguins, seals and whales. He will show some of his spectacular pictures of them during his program.



Courtesy Skip Horner

Gentoo penguins with the yacht XPlore in the background.

Skip has guided a wide variety of adventures worldwide for over 40 years. He was the first to guide the 7 Summits, the highest mountain on every continent. He led the first descents of over a dozen wild rivers on 5 continents, including the Zambezi, the Indus, and the Yangtse. He has skied the highest peaks in the Arctic and the Antarctic, led camel caravans across the Sahara, and chased solar eclipses across 3 continents. Skip is a popular lecturer and an accomplished photographer. He lives in Victor and is a member of the Board of Bitterroot Audubon.

Come join BAS for this amazing program Monday, January 20th, 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, north of Stevensville at 4567 Wildfowl Lane. For questions and information contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794.



Courtesy Skip Horner

Post-juvenile Wandering Albatross

The 27th Hamilton Christmas Bird Count Results

By John Ormiston, Secretary

December 21, 2013: What a great day! A record setting day, a fine day to spend looking for birds, counting birds, and enjoying the company of congenial folks.



Courtesy Alex Shaffer

Participants at the Hamilton CBC.

The weather cooperated and so did the birds; we saw a record high 78 species, four more than ever before. Interestingly, we saw no new species, just a higher percentage of the 128 species on the cumulative list.

There were 25 field observers and 26 feeder watchers. We covered about 257 miles driving and 20 walking; there were 10 parties in the field.



Courtesy Alex Shaffer

Participants at the Hamilton CBC.

We saw new record highs for 8 species: Bufflehead, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared-dove, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, and Cedar Waxwing. The number of Red-tailed Hawks exceeded the number of Rough-legged Hawks for only the third time. We've seen more than

53 Bald Eagles only once. It was a great day for raptors, we saw every one of the species that normally winter here including: Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and American Kestrel, and all the accipiters (Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Northern Goshawk) for only the fifth time. The 11,948 birds counted exceeded every high bird count but one. (In 2010 we saw over 16,000 birds, over 11,000 of which were waterfowl.) We've seen 31 species every year and 22 species only once.

All in all it was a great day, thanks to those who spent their day helping add to the data base. It's time to look forward to the 28th annual Hamilton CBC and another chili and Oreo lunch on December 20, 2014.

Look for complete results of the 114th Annual National Audubon Christmas Bird Count at: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

Letter from the President

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

LOOKING FORWARD TO

2014! Last month I reviewed a number of the many activities and accomplishments of BAS and its members during 2013. I anticipate many more exciting and interesting events this New Year. There are also many challenges facing birds and their environment. Each of us in the "Birding World" needs to pay attention, stay vigilant and be willing to stand up for what we believe needs to be protected, changed or improved. Check Montana Audubon and National Audubon for issues and action alerts that might concern you. Thanks for all you do and have a VERY GOOD 2014!



2014 *Wings Across the Big Sky* June 6-8

Field Trips

It's not too early to begin planning your summer activities. During winter, when birds are sparse, it's easy to dream of long summer days and abundant birds. Where you will find plenty is in the beautiful Gallatin Valley and surrounding area. Come join us for **Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by Sacajawea Audubon Society, June 6-8 at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman.**

As for field trips, we have close to 40 planned!

Almost 20 each on Saturday and Sunday—guided by knowledgeable birders and naturalists familiar with the species and their habitats in the Bozeman area. Here is just a brief sampling of some of those trips to contemplate as you anticipate the upcoming Bird Festival:

Yellowstone's Northern Range

The Northern Range, often called "America's Serengeti," is home, either seasonally or year-round, to a wide variety of birds. We will explore the area's diversity beginning in the dry Gardiner Basin, where Horned Larks and Mountain Bluebirds are common along the Old Yellowstone Road. En route, we will stop at higher elevation woodland, willow, and wetland habitats searching for different ducks, grebes, woodpeckers, flycatchers, and sparrows. Breeding pairs of Harlequin Ducks are possible in the fast moving waters of the Gardiner and Yellowstone Rivers. Raptors, such as Osprey, Red-tailed Hawks, and American Kestrels are likely along this route. The trip will end at the lower Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, where Peregrine Falcons have nested in recent years.

Deep Creek, Paradise Valley

We will visit the recently burned habitats of the south fork of Deep Creek via a Forest Service trail that begins in the foothills of the Paradise Valley. We begin with a moderate climb (half-mile) through open grassland and shrub-dotted hills, likely observing a variety of towhees, sparrows, warblers and bluebirds. The trail then drops into a forested canyon as it crosses the south fork of Deep Creek and heads into the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. This area was thoroughly burned during the 2012 Pine Creek Fire so we will be looking for woodpeckers, sapsuckers, and other fire-dependent species and observing the post-fire ecology.

Headwaters State Park Area

The Headwaters area has a variety of habitats, including sage/grassland and riparian, where species from

Common Mergansers to Clay-colored Sparrows may be seen. One of the unique features of the Headwaters area are the limestone cliffs, which support several cliff nesting species such as Prairie Falcons, White-throated Swifts, and Canyon Wrens. The park where Lewis and Clark camped, at the confluence of the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin Rivers is steeped in history. Beside the many nesting species here, numerous other birds use these river corridors as they travel between feeding sites, and during migration.

Keep watch in early March: Festival Brochures with all field trip information and schedules will be in the mail and the online system for registration will be active.

For more information please contact Montana Audubon Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson, cerickson@mtaudubon.org, or call (406) 443-3949.

Calendar of Events

Jan 18- Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-12PM, Call 777-5552 for more information.

Jan 20- Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, 7PM, **Board Mtg. 5PM**

Jan 31- Chapter Membership Fees due

Feb 14-17- Great Backyard Bird Count

Jun 6-8- Wings Across the Big Sky birding festival, Bozeman, MT

Bitterroot Audubon Society is going GREEN

By Sara Ashline and Karen Griffing, BAS Editors

Beginning Fall 2013, Bitterroot Audubon began delivering monthly newsletter electronically. If you haven't already done so, please send us your email address to receive your newsletter via email. Starting this fall, we'll send a meeting reminder by postcard, but the full newsletter will be sent to your email address and is always available at www.bitterrootaudubon.org. This will allow us to reduce printing and mailing costs and waste, while offering full color pictures and expanded coverage of Bitterroot Audubon activities. For those without computer access, we will continue to mail you an individual copy of the newsletter; please send a note to **Bitterroot Audubon, PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840** requesting this service. Please send your email address to Susie Duff at audubonmembership@gmail.com to begin receiving your newsletter electronically.

Hamilton CBC Results

By John Ormiston, Compiler

GREAT BLUE HERON	14		NORTHERN FLICKER	127
TRUMPETER SWAN	3		PILEATED WOODPECKER	7
SNOW GOOSE	1		HORNED LARK	200
CANADA GOOSE	2239		STELLER'S JAY	27
WOOD DUCK	3		CLARK'S NUTCRACKER	21
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	10		BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE	402
MALLARD	2852		AMERICAN CROW	1
NORTHERN SHOVELER	8		COMMON RAVEN	130
AMERICAN WIGEON	1		BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	383
RING-NECKED DUCK	18		MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE	21
LESSER SCAUP	2		RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	46
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE	3		WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	20
COMMON GOLDENEYE	15		PYGMY NUTHATCH	30
BUFFLEHEAD	12		BROWN CREEPER	3
COMMON MERGANSER	6		WINTER WREN	1
BALD EAGLE TOTAL	53		MARSH WREN	2
NORTHERN HARRIER TOTAL	28		AMERICAN DIPPER	9
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	3		GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	12
COOPER'S HAWK	1		TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE	6
NORTHERN GOSHAWK	2		AMERICAN ROBIN	6
RED-TAILED HAWK	89		BOHEMIAN WAXWING	415
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	72		CEDAR WAXWING	376
GOLDEN EAGLE	4		NORTHERN SHRIKE	3
AMERICAN KESTREL	25		EUROPEAN STARLING	523
MERLIN	2		AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	50
PRAIRIE FALCON	1		SONG SPARROW	59
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	218		DARK-EYED JUNCO TOTAL	143
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	46		SNOW BUNTING	10
WILD TURKEY	166		RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	549
AMERICAN COOT	15		WESTERN MEADOWLARK	6
KILLDEER	3		BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	3
WILSON'S SNIPE	4		CASSIN'S FINCH	21
ROCK PIGEON	187		HOUSE FINCH	467
MOURNING DOVE	209		RED CROSSBILL	49
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE	634		COMMON REDPOLL	30
GREAT-HORNED OWL	8		PINE SISKIN	10
BELTED KINGFISHER TOTAL	9		AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	114
DOWNY WOODPECKER	37		EVENING GROSBEAK	3
HAIRY WOODPECKER	21		HOUSE SPARROW	639
78 Species			11948 Birds	

Note: Species in red indicate record high counts for the Hamilton CBC.

News and Notes

Chapter Members Renewal Deadline

If you are a BAS chapter member, your membership fee (\$15) is due by January 31, 2014. Please send payment to Bitterroot Audubon Society, PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840.

The Great Backyard Birdcount

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual four-day event that asks participants to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](http://www.cornell.edu/ornithology) and the [National Audubon Society](http://www.audubon.org) learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, participants turned in more than 134,000 online checklists, creating the world's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

The 17th annual GBBC will be held **Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 17, 2014.**

Bird Shots

Please visit the official website at www.birdcount.org for more information.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook! 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 January 18th 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.

Bitterroot Audubon 2014 Calendar

Only a few of our 2014 BAS Calendars are still available! Contact Becky at bitterrootcalendar@gmail.com or bitterrootaudubon.org to purchase yours today.



Common Goldeneye in winter plumage.

Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

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Treasurer	Jim Story*	961-4689

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Website & Field Trips	Kate Stone*	381-1115
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At large	Campbell Massey	381-0197
At large	Alex Shaffer*	

* Board Member

EMAIL: contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org
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 full color e-newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____

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

Membership Data Center
PO Box 422250
Palm Coast FL 32142-2250