

Bitterroot AUDUBON



MARCH 2014

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 28, NO. 7

Duck Banding in Canada

By Deborah Goslin

Banding is one of the most commonly used techniques for studying birds/ducks to learn about their habits, migration patterns, health and their environment. Biologists from all over the United States “flock” to the Provinces of Western Canada every year to count and band ducks. This prairie-pothole region is known as the “duck factory of the continent.” Come join Bitterroot Audubon, March 17th, to discover why this occurs and learn historical background on how this helps maintain duck populations.



Courtesy Deborah Goslin

Deborah Goslin, Biological Technician at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, has “migrated north” to Alberta for the past two years to band hundreds of ducks. The enthusiasm she exudes when discussing her experiences is infectious and will have everyone wanting to sign up! Deborah is a Master Naturalist and has worked as a Biological Technician at the Metcalf Refuge for over 20 years, counting waterfowl and banding songbirds.

Come hear Deborah as she unveils her stories, Monday, March 17th 2014, 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf Refuge, on Wildfowl Lane north of Stevensville. The public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton, 642-3794, for more information.

Trapping Policy Committee

By Kate Stone

The death of three Golden Eagles in traps in one week last winter prompted several of our Board members to suggest that Bitterroot Audubon take a position on trapping as it currently operates in Montana. Soon afterward, we were also approached to support I-169, a ballot initiative that would prohibit lethal trapping on public lands, with some exceptions.

After much discussion, the Board decided to form a Trapping Policy Committee to develop a policy, based on our mission statement and input from our membership.

Our mission statement states that we support the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and earth's biological diversity. We accomplish this mission by 1) offering educational programs and field trips for Chapter members and the general public; 2) advocating political and personal actions that promote the conservation of wildlife and their habitats; 3) cooperating with the National Audubon Society and Montana Audubon on national and state-wide endeavors, as well as local conservation-oriented projects. We believe it is within the realm of our mission to tackle this issue, if we feel that trapping is a barrier to the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems. We also believe that providing our membership with information on this topic fits within our mission.

In the few months that the Committee has been

operational, we have made it a goal to determine the impact trapping has on non-target wildlife. Unfortunately, no current system exists to keep track of this type of information. With the exception of the newly instituted wolf trapping program, trappers targeting other furbearers are not required to report the capture and/or mortality of non-target wildlife. If they do report captures and/or mortalities, that information is not compiled systematically, and often resides in the memory of a local warden or other wildlife official. However, every person we have approached about this issue, including wildlife rehabilitators, wardens, state biologists, other wildlife law enforcement, and research biologists, can list several eagles or other raptors being caught in traps. In the coming months, we hope to complete a more comprehensive survey and compile documentation of non-target wildlife captures.

Like many other organizations, Bitterroot Audubon represents a diverse group of people who may or may not share the same values in regards to trapping. That means we need to hear from YOU if you have strong feelings on this topic. You can contact Committee Chair Kate Stone directly (381-1115), or use the Contact Us feature on our website to communicate your comments. We will keep your comments anonymous. Keep in mind that we are currently focusing our efforts on the effects of trapping on non-target wildlife, including birds. Please limit your comments to this topic and/or the Bitterroot Audubon mission. It would be particularly helpful to receive comments on the following topics:

- Do you think Bitterroot Audubon should develop an official position on trapping? If so, what do you think that position should be? If not, why not?
- Do you support Bitterroot Audubon officially signing on as a proponent of I-169, the ballot initiative to restrict lethal trapping on public lands in Montana?
- Do you support Bitterroot Audubon sharing information on the topic of trapping to its membership?

We are also looking for members representing all viewpoints to join our Trapping Policy Committee, to help us develop our policy, focus our group on specific actions, and help complete a more comprehensive survey of incidences of non-target wildlife captures in traps. We want to reiterate that we

currently DO NOT have a blanket policy regarding trapping. If you feel strongly about this issue, from any angle, please consider shaping the direction of our actions. We can only represent the voices we hear.

Spotlight: Golden Eagles



Courtesy Raptor View Research Institute

The highly publicized death of three Golden Eagles in traps last winter began Bitterroot Audubon's foray into the trapping debate. Golden Eagles seem to be one of the more common non-target species attracted to and caught in traps set for furbearers. Golden Eagles are currently designated a Species of Concern in Montana. They face anthropogenic threats throughout their range and their life histories, such that any significant source of mortality may affect populations. Out of 19 Golden Eagles outfitted by Raptor View Research Institute (RVRI) with GPS transmitters during fall migration over Montana, two (11%) have since perished in traps. This winter, RVRI captured an adult male Golden Eagle near Florence, MT. The male showed clear signs of escape from a trap some time ago; it had gross deformities on its left foot and its ankle had been fractured. The tip of its tongue was also missing, potentially from frostbite. The Golden Eagle was underweight, had fault bars (an indication of nutritional deprivation) throughout its wing feathers, and was infested with lice due to its inability to preen. Its blood-lead levels exceeded the ability of the testing unit to measure, suggesting that its main feeding option is scavenging ammunition-ridden gut piles left by hunters. How often do Golden Eagles get caught in traps? This question is one Bitterroot Audubon is working to answer- we could use your help!

Letter from the President

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

A Worthwhile Endeavor for Bitterroot Audubon:



Jackson Petty is a Boy Scout who is working on a project for his Eagle Scout Badge and he has asked for assistance from Bitterroot Audubon. He is developing a “Blue Bird Trail” along North Kootenai Creek Road. He and some of his fellow scouts have constructed 40 blue bird nest boxes and are now ready to place them on fence posts along the road. He will be monitoring the boxes over the next few months. In Jackson’s proposal for this project he approached the BAS Board to ask for assistance with the following:

1. Installing the boxes
2. Monitoring
3. Assuming care and maintenance of the boxes in the future

Jackson will graduate from high school in the spring and will be going off to college. Thus he will not be able to take care of the boxes in the future. If you are willing to help him with any of these activities, please contact me. Thanks for helping our youth and birds. Kay (642-3794)

Great Backyard Bird Count Recap

By Kate Stone

On Monday February 17th, a group of 17 birders from Bitterroot and Five Valleys Audubon Societies gathered at the MPG Ranch to count birds for the Great Backyard Bird Count. The group split and covered three areas of the ranch, including the Bitterroot River floodplain, agricultural fields, open grasslands, and mid-elevation conifer forests. Despite blustery conditions and knee-deep snow in some places, the groups remained in good spirits and counted 529 birds of 32 species. Mallards and Canada Geese circling the agricultural fields made up the bulk of the individuals counted. Other interesting species included: Golden Eagle (4), Horned Lark (35), Townsend’s Solitaire (1), American Robin (11), American Tree Sparrow (14), and Red Crossbill (2). You can find a full species list on Bitterroot Audubon’s website. Citizen Scientists submitted over 136,000 bird checklists over the 4 days of this event. Thanks to everyone who participated!



Courtesy Kate Stone

Karla Johnston, Pat Little, Phil Difani, and Colleen Powell brave the snow to count birds for the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Open Pipes Kill Many Thousands of Birds Each Year

By Dave Lockman

Hollow metal and plastic pipes serve many purposes and are common throughout the world. Unfortunately, open vertical pipes of all sizes are often death traps for birds and other wildlife species. Open pipes attract curious birds, many of which like to nest or roost in cavities. Birds that enter vertical pipes are often unable to grip the smooth inside with their feet or open their wings to climb or fly back out, and end up trapped in the pipe to die from starvation or exposure. While cavity nesters like woodpeckers, bluebirds and small owls are most susceptible to being entrapped, many other bird, mammal and reptile species have been found dead in pipes. Some documented examples:

-A California Audubon employee found a 6” wide, 10’ tall irrigation standpipe that had fallen over and contained the remains of over 200 dead birds;

-California Audubon staff pulled down a 20’ tall vent pipe from an abandoned irrigation system that had been in place for 50 years and found a 7’ deep mass of decomposing carcasses of hundreds of dead birds and animals including kestrels, flickers, bluebirds and fence lizards;

-In Nevada, a survey of 854 PVC pipes used to mark mining claims found the carcasses of 879 birds, 113 reptiles and 20 small mammals, or an average of 1.2 dead animals for each pipe (the Nevada legislature banned the use of open-ended pipes to mark mining claims as a result, but many remain);

-A Lolo NF biologist checked the dry vault of an unused outhouse and found 15 bird carcasses, mostly woodpeckers, after it had been in place for only 6 months. The birds entered through the vertical vent pipe.

This is a nearly invisible problem with an obvious solution. Every house and most commercial buildings have multiple vent pipes protruding from the roof. Pipes are used for venting irrigation systems and outhouses, or as fence posts, gate posts, mining claim markers and sign posts. Many are abandoned and left in place after their original use is over, or just leaned up against a wall and forgotten. Look around your property and see if there are any open vertical pipes you could cap, fill, screen or lay horizontally to prevent birds and other wildlife from entering and becoming entrapped. And then talk to your neighbors and encourage them to do the same. Thanks for helping to prevent unnecessary wildlife deaths.

Welcome Back Waterfowl Day at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge Stevensville, Montana

By Bob Danley



Courtesy USFWS

2013 Welcome Back Waterfowl participants.

Audubon will host Welcome Back Waterfowl Day on Saturday, March 29, 2014 from 10 am to 2 pm. Bitterroot Audubon members and Refuge staff will have high quality optical equipment to assist in identifying and observing 19 or more species of waterfowl and all other birds we can find. This station will be along Wildfowl Lane on the county road between the ponds west of the Visitor Center. At the Visitor Center, there will be a variety of self-guided activity stations targeting young and old. This special event is open to the public and, of course, the primary

focus will be viewing all species of birds using the Refuge wetlands. An informal duck identification workshop will run continually that day to assist beginning birders. Judy Hoy of Bitterroot Audubon will do programs on-demand on Wildfowl Lane with a Long-eared Owl and a Northern Saw-whet Owl. A variety of yummy snacks will be available to those attending. For more information or questions, please call Bob Danley at 777-5552 x203 or email Bob_Danley@fws.gov or call Judy Hoy at 777-2487.

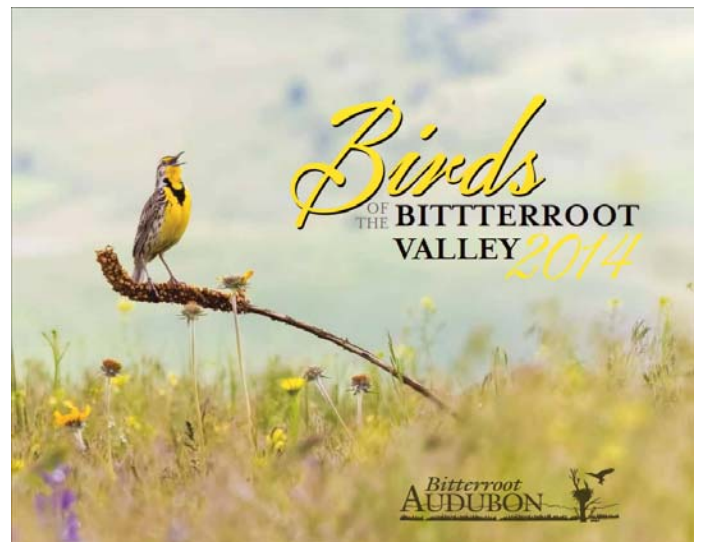
Calling all Bitterroot Photographers!

By Becky Peters

Bitterroot Audubon is organizing their 2015 calendar. This could be our last one. The generosity of our local photographers have helped increase our Education and Scholarship Funds with our 2013 and 2014 BAS Calendars. If you would like be part of this wonderful process and would like to submit your photo(s) of our local Bitterroot birds please go to our website for more information: bitterrootaudubon.org. The website has a list of birds we have prioritized for next year's calendar. We would like photographs submitted by April 15th this year. They are to be really sharp photos of at least 300-600 dpi and with the dimensions of 8 1/2"W by 9 1/2"H. Send your photos and questions to bitterrootcalendar@gmail.com

Thank You!

By Becky Peters



Bitterroot Audubon would like to thank a great deal of people who made the success of our 2014 Calendar possible. First the photographers: Tony Rizzo, Nathan DeBoer, Kate Davis, Kate Stone, Merle Ann Loman, Patrick Chaplin, Alan Applebury, Steve Akre, Nathan Stone, Mel Holloway, Judy Hoy, Scott Bury, Kimi Smith, Suzanne Bienusa, Sara Ashline, and Katie

Olsen, as well as the artistic students of Darby and Grantsdale Elementary Schools. Second we would like to thank the Sponsors of our 2014 Calendar: Bitterroot Drug, Empire Landscaping, The Brooks, Hamilton PT, Rod's Auto, Sam's Spade, Lakeland Feed, Evans Ace, Ford's, Bitterroot Valley Eye, Cottage Garden, and especially the talented people at Allegra Printing! Special thanks also goes to the patient people who helped sell our calendars at these fantastic stores: Samantha at Sam's Spade, Mara and Shawn at Chapter One, Lakeland Feed, Jennie and Pete at Bitterroot Drug, Douglas at Art Focus, Deb at Deb's Restaurant, Georgine at Lisa Archer Silks, Carol and Suzanne at Paper Clip, Michael at Picturesque, Dominic at Sapphire Lutheran Homes, Tony and Bunny at Robbin's Hallmark, the Naturalist's Mercantile, and Valley Vet. Thank you one and all. We literally could not do this without you!

Corrections on the 2014 BAS Calendar: Sorry, we left off November 30! Don't worry, it will be back in 2015. Also, the April BAS meeting is on 4/21.

Rehabbing Wildlife in Ravalli and Missoula Counties in 2013

By Judy Hoy

In 2013, wildlife rehabbers, Brooke Tanner, Kristi Swisher, Ellen Henry, Adele Coon and Judy Hoy collectively received 230 birds that were injured or orphaned. Of those, 127 were released, 103 died or were euthanized because of injuries and 6 were transferred to other rehab centers.

Several birds were received with developmental malformations, including a Canada Goose hatchling with a malformed leg bone, a Mallard hatchling with neurological damage, a European Starling fledgling with pure white leucistic feathers, and two hatchling Northern Flickers and a hatchling Rufous Hummingbird with underdeveloped upper bills. Also in 2013, similar to 2012, after the thick smoke began coming to the Bitterroot Valley from the forest fires in California and Idaho several malformed young hatchling Rock Pigeons were found dead with severely underdeveloped upper facial bones, including upper bills and one also had crossed bills. The pigeons that hatched after the smoke stopped were normal. Interestingly, many adult birds with short upper bills and some that had crossed bills were photographed by bird watchers in 2013. Osprey and Bald Eagles received for care were tested for heavy metals by the University of Montana researchers because of

continuing high levels.

We would like to thank everyone who donated to the Bitterroot Audubon Wildlife Rehabilitation Fund, which pays for food and medicine, especially the MPG Ranch. The fund needs donations for 2014. An especially big thank you goes out to all the people who cared enough to rescue injured or orphaned birds and bring them to rehabbers. Thank you to the Bitterroot Audubon Society for assisting with the funding and to all who made 2013 a successful year.

Bird Shots



Courtesy Judy Hoy

Rehabilitated Bohemian Waxwing. Corvallis, MT, 2014.

Wings Across the Big Sky
June 6-8, 2014, Bozeman, Montana

Come join us for Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by the Sacajawea Audubon Society, June 6-8, 2014, at the Best Western GranTree Inn, 1325 N 7th Avenue, Bozeman, MT. We are very excited about this facility, which will be the center for all festival activities Friday through Sunday, including registration, birding field trip departures, guest speaker presentations, meals, banquet festivities, and much more.

The GranTree is located right off the interstate in the heart of the Gallatin Valley and provides easy access to all our birding activities and field trips.

Currently we have 80 rooms blocked out for festival-goers Friday and Saturday nights. Be sure to tell them you're with the Bird Festival group to get the special rate! We suggest you make your reservations soon at the hotel directly at 1-406-587-5261.

Our Festival Registration Brochure is scheduled to be mailed by March 3rd, with our online registration system going active on March 5th. Use either the registration form with the brochure or the online system to make your registration for this annual event. The brochure is full of information on the festival events and all the field trips that will be available.

A Sneak Peak at Some of our Scheduled Events for the Festival includes our lineup of Saturday Presenters:

We are excited to once again feature a diverse array of Saturday afternoon speakers to educate and inspire us. We will host break-out sections from highly regarded researchers, conservationists, and bird aficionados. The hardest part will be choosing which talk to see! Topics include:

- Montana's nesting Ospreys and toxins;
- Sage-Grouse conservation;
- Bird migration in the Middle East;
- A new "Field Guide to Birds in a Changing Climate";
- Bridger Raptor Migration Project; and
- Birds, Beetles, and Burns.

Plan now to attend this event and learn about the amazing world of crows from our keynote speaker, and then hear from our break-out speakers regarding birding in far-flung places, as well as our Montana concerns and interests including the osprey, sage-grouse, raptors, forest birds in burned forests, and how birds will fare in Montana with our rapidly changing climate.

News and Notes

Save The Date: Youth Conservation & Education Expo

When: Saturday, May 10, 2014

Where: Teller's Slack Barn, 1180 Chaffin Lane, Corvallis, MT 59828

Details: FREE to attend! Meander through the Slack Barn and the surrounding grounds to visit educational booths and interactive trailers from approximately 30 national and local conservation organizations.

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

Please nominate a deserving person for their work for conservation and/or Audubon! We are now seeking nominations for awards that will be given away at Montana Audubon's June annual meeting in Bozeman. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

To nominate your candidate, please visit our website at <http://mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html>. To be considered for this year's award, nominations must be submitted no later than May 23, 2014. Nominations

Calendar of Events

Mar 15- Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-12PM, Call 777-5552 for more information.

Mar 17- Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, 7PM, **Board Mtg. 5PM**

Mar 29- Welcome Back Waterfowl Day, Lee Metcalf NWR, 10AM-2PM

Mar 29- Lee Metcalf NWR 50th Anniversary, details soon!

Apr 15- BAS 2015 Calendar Submission deadline. bitterrootcalendar@gmail.com

May 10- Youth Conservation Expo, Teller's Slack Barn, 1180 Chaffin Lane, Corvallis, MT 59828. Free to the public.

May 23- Nominations for Montana Audubon's Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

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

can be submitted by email or mailed to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: [\(406\) 443-7144](tel:4064437144). Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at [406-443-3949](tel:4064433949) or jellis@mtaudubon.org.

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

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 March 15th 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
PO BOX 326
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

Officers

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Vice-Pres. & Conservation Chair	Fred Weisbecker*	375-9317
Secretary	John Ormiston*	363-5464
Treasurer	Jim Story*	961-4689

Directors & Committee Chairs

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Website & Field Trips	Kate Stone*	381-1115
Education	Leslie Nyce* bas4education@hotmail.com	
Newsltr Eds &	Sara Ashline* baseditors@gmail.com	
Distribution	Karen Griffing*	961-0181
Hospitality	Rosan Stover	
Membership	Susie Duff*	961-5455
Publicity	Dave Lockman	777-2929
Rep. to MT		
Audubon	Becky Peters*	
At large	Judy Hoy*	777-2487
Scholarship	Skip Horner*	642-6840
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