

Bitterroot AUDUBON



JANUARY 2015

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 29, NO. 5

Movements and Habitat Use of Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) During Fall Migration

By Kate Stone



Courtesy Kate Stone

A banded Northern Saw-whet Owl

Kate Stone, Intrepid Avian Researcher and 2014 Montana Audubon Citizen Scientist Award Winner, does it again!

How many of you have been out on an “Owl Locating” field trip with Kate, tip toeing around in the cold, dark, sometimes snowy night, playing owl calls? The results sometimes included no response, once an angry Heron awakened from his sleep and sometimes successfully calling in an interested owl (maybe not the right species!) These trips are always fascinating, educational and fun. Nowadays, for her work at the MPG Ranch as their Avian Specialist, Kate heads up teams doing various studies on a wide range of birds: Migrating Raptors, Breeding Songbirds, Bald Eagle and Osprey Nests, Vaux Swifts, Owls and others using mist nests, banding, remote cameras and radio telemetry. She also employs hiking over rough terrain, tiptoeing around in the dark and sitting at strategic sites to observe birds.

On Monday, January 19th at the Bitterroot Audubon January meeting, Kate will describe a recent study of Saw-Whet Owls using radio telemetry to track their movements and habitat use as they traveled south through the Bitterroot Valley during fall migration. The team deployed 38 units over the course of 3 weeks in late September and early October 2014. They had hypothesized that owls would use the Bitterroot River floodplain as a travel route because this landscape feature offers continuous vegetative cover the whole length of the Bitterroot Valley. The results were not what they expected and give us a rare opportunity to learn more about this small, cute and elusive bird.

Kate is an extraordinary scientist whose research is extensive and detailed in nature. Her documentation of results leads to improved understanding and can contribute to improved conservation of habitat and increased opportunities for survival. She is an Ecologist and currently the Avian Specialist for the MPG Ranch. Bitterroot Audubon is fortunate to have Kate as our Citizen Science Coordinator.

Join us to hear the results of the Saw-Whet Owl Study, Monday, January 19th -7:00 P.M. at the Forest Service/Natural Resources Building, 1801 North 1st (north end of Hamilton, west side of HWY 93) Enter on the west side of the building. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. Contact Kay Fulton (642-3794) for more information.

Chapter Members Renewal Deadline

If you are a BAS chapter member, your membership fee (\$15) is due by January 31, 2015. Please send payment to Bitterroot Audubon Society, PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840.

Letter from the President

By Kay Fulton, BAS President

Happy New Year to all of you “Birders” and Lovers of Nature and the Environment.



I think that 2015 is the year to renew our commitment to doing as much as we can to save our planet. Climate Change is here and is fast encroaching on this beautiful state and world we live in. In September, I stood on the remains of the Sperry Glacier and was in close proximity to Jackson Glacier, both in Glacier National Park. It is absolutely astounding to see the immense devastation global warming has caused. The glaciers are receding at alarming rates. It's possible that even our grand children will not have the opportunity to see them. My Dad passed away in September, at the age of 104 (he was born the same year that Glacier National Park was established) and I could not help but think about how we are losing the true wonders of the world. His death was inevitable but losing the plants, animals, birds, rivers, lakes, glaciers and so on doesn't have to be inevitable. We need to determine what is truly important to us and make changes. The technology is here to move away from fossil fuels. We can reduce use of toxic chemicals, reduce our need and support for “throw away” products, invest more in recycling, repairing and reusing goods, reduce the “use and abuse” approach to managing our lands. We need to value what we have, while we have it, so we can pass it on. My Dad's favorite toast was, “Here's to it and from it and to it again, when you get to it, do it because you may never get to it to do it again!”



Courtesy Kay Fulton

Jackson Glacier, Glacier National Park, MT.



Courtesy Kay Fulton

Surveyors on Sperry Glacier monitoring the receding glacier

8th Big Hole Christmas Bird Count 2014 Recap

By Kate Stone

Thirty-four hearty souls ventured out in the snow for the 8th annual Big Hole Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, January 3rd 2015. The group managed to see more species than any previous count (24!!) and added three new species to the cumulative species list: American Three-toed Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, and Pine Grosbeak. The top bird was the Black-billed Magpie, with 167 counted, followed by the Snow Bunting (60), and the Common Raven (51). The highlight for many observers was a Great Gray Owl, spotted by Fred Weisbecker as it flew in front of him as he was hiking. Shirley Smith found a woodpecker haven in a group of beetle-killed trees; we counted three Hairy Woodpeckers and one American Three-toed Woodpecker busily tap-tap-tapping. We also increased the number of people falling into the Big Hole River on the CBC: this year three people got more than their feet wet! Thanks to



Courtesy Kate Stone

Great Gray Owl seen on the Big Hole CBC, 2014.

Hamilton Christmas Bird Count Results

AMERICAN COOT	29	HAIRY WOODPECKER	23
AMERICAN CROW	4	HOODED MERGANSER	2
AMERICAN DIPPER	5	HOUSE FINCH	723
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	78	HOUSE SPARROW	379
AMERICAN KESTREL	14	KILLDEER	3
AMERICAN ROBIN	4	LONG-EARED OWL	1
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	4	MALLARD	1598
AMERICAN WIGEON	4	MARSH WREN	2
BALD EAGLE ADULT	18	MERLIN	3
BALD EAGLE IMM	5	MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE	18
BALD EAGLE TOTAL	39	MOURNING DOVE	48
BALD EAGLE UNK	5	NORTHERN FLICKER	81
BELTED KINGFISHER TOTAL	6	NORTHERN GOSHAWK	1
BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE	502	NORTHERN HARRIER TOTAL	29
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	277	NORTHERN SHRIKE	4
BLUE JAY	1	PILEATED WOODPECKER	3
BROWN CREEPER	6	PINE GROSBEAK	6
BUFFLEHEAD	21	PINE SISKIN	27
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	222	PRAIRIE FALCON	2
CANADA GOOSE	2078	PYGMY NUTHATCH	35
CASSIN'S FINCH	8	RED CROSSBILL	286
CLARK'S NUTCRACKER	19	RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	107
COMMON GOLDENEYE	41	RED-TAILED HAWK	95
COMMON MERGANSER	1	RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	1699
COMMON RAVEN	127	RING-NECKED DUCK	11
COOPER'S HAWK	4	RING-NECKED PHEASANT	39
DARK-EYED JUNCO TOTAL	121	ROCK PIGEON	133
DOWNY WOODPECKER	30	ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	60
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE	447	RUDDY DUCK	1
EUROPEAN STARLING	555	RUFFED GROUSE	2
EVENING GROSBEAK	1	SANDHILL CRANE	1
GADWALL	2	SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	2
GOLDEN EAGLE	1	SONG SPARROW	23
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	2	STELLER'S JAY	19
GRAY PARTRIDGE	5	TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE	1
GREAT BLUE HERON	22	TUNDRA SWAN	2
GREAT GRAY OWL	1	WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	46
GREAT-HORNED OWL	10	WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	1
GREBE sp	1	WILD TURKEY	270
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	8	WILSON'S SNIPE	2

everyone who participated. A full species list is available on the Bitterroot Audubon website.

28th Hamilton Christmas Bird Count 2014 Recap

By John Ormiston

December 20, 2014, 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. The weather cooperated and so did the birds. We saw 77 species-only one less than the all-time record from 2013. We had one new species, a grebe sp. (either a Western or Clark's) on the Daly Mansion Pond. There were 30 field observers, 23 feeder watchers. We covered about 216 miles driving and 11 walking; there were 8 parties in the field.

We saw new record highs for 8 species: Gadwall, Bufflehead, Red-tailed Hawk, Magpie, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-winged Blackbird, Red Crossbills and tied the "record" of 1 for Great-gray Owl. The number of Red-tailed Hawks, 95, exceeded the number of Rough-legged Hawks for only the fourth time. It was a great day for raptors, we saw every one of the species that normally winter here including Prairie Falcons, Merlin, and Kestrel, and all the Accipiters for only the sixth time. We saw 10,484 birds, 53% of them waterfowl. We've seen 31 species every year and 21 species only once. With the addition of the Grebe sp, we have seen a total of 129 species in the Hamilton CBC Circle.

All in all it was a great day, thanks to those who spent their day helping add to the data base. Time to look forward to the 29th annual Hamilton CBC and another chili and Oreos lunch, December 19, 2015.

Special thanks to Colleen Powell for coordinating Feeder Watchers and Bill Good for the outstanding chili and Oreos lunch, both for the 27th time. The Teller has hosted our gathering each year of the Hamilton CBS.

Look for complete results of the 115th Annual National Audubon Christmas Bird Count at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

Bitterroot Audubon 2015 Calendar

By Becky Peters



What's something that involves our Bitterroot Valley birds, local photographers, local children, and local businesses all the while bringing in money for local projects for our birds' habitats? Why, that can only be our locally made Bitterroot Audubon 2015 Calendar!! And it is a beauty! You already have a 2015 calendar you say? Well, was it locally made and does the money stay local to help local residents? Probably not! Besides you need more than one calendar! You've got more than one room in your house! And what other calendar tells you where you can find which birds during each month? And what other calendar gives you space to write down the birds you see for each month? For a bird lover, there isn't another calendar as unique and useful as this one!

This is the third year we have made a Bitterroot Audubon Calendar and some say it is the best one ever! Out of the 400 submissions from a lot of talented, generous Bitterrooters, we laboriously narrowed our calendar photos down to 55, and would have gone for more if we could have.

What does your \$15 go for when you purchase one, or two?! (They make great boasting gifts to give to non-paradise residents unlucky enough not to live here!) Well, your money stays here in the Valley. Bitterroot Audubon uses the funds to support our Conservation Projects, Education Projects and Scholarship Funds for Montana college students in Environmental Sciences. We are truly thinking of the future for our birds and our children. Help us help them.

Calendar of Events

Jan 17-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.

Jan 19- Audubon Meeting, Forest Service/DNRC Building, Hamilton, MT 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.

Jun 5-7-Helena, MT, Wings Across the Big Sky

Jan 31-Chapter-only membership renewal due, \$15



wings across the big sky

MONTANA
AUDUBON

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: Wings Across the Big Sky
June 5-7, 2015 Helena, Montana

The time has arrived! ... time to begin planning and spreading the word that **Montana Audubon's *Wings Across the Big Sky Festival***, co-hosted by **Last Chance Audubon Society**, is June 5-7 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. We invite you to spread the news and enthusiasm so we can all enjoy a fantastic turnout. Invite your out-of-state and nearby friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit the Capital City and surrounding areas where you can participate in abundant festival activities.

Included in this year's activities are close to 20 field trips scheduled each of two days. These include trips into Helena Valley grasslands, wetlands, forest and field, with the anticipation of seeing a varied array of species.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel at 2301 Colonial Drive in Helena. Last Chance Audubon has been working with us and the Colonial team on event logistics and service, and this venue is going to supply us with excellent opportunities to host an expanded display area, concurrent Saturday afternoon presentations, a fun Friday night festival kickoff event hosted by Last Chance Audubon, our keynote speaker (see below), and a Saturday evening banquet dinner.

We are very pleased to announce that Scott Weidensaul will be our keynote speaker this year. He is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind," about bird migration; "Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul"; and "Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding." His last book, "The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery and Endurance in Early America," was published in 2012, and he is the author of the forthcoming "Peterson Reference Guide to Owls." Weidensaul is a contributing editor for *Audubon Magazine* and writes for a variety of other publications. He lives in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania, where he studies the migration of hawks, owls and hummingbirds.

Each month we will continue to feature developing news on the 2015 Bird Festival. Stay tuned!

For more information contact Montana Audubon's Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson:
cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

You can purchase the calendars at the January BAS meeting. You can also find them at local stores in Hamilton: Chapter One, Paper Clip, Picturesque, Robbins', Bitterroot Drug, Art Focus, Sam's Spade and Lakeland Feed; in Stevensville at the Lisa Archer Silks/Antique Store and in Missoula at Naturalist's Mercantile. If those places are not convenient, by all means buy them online at bitterrootaudubon.org. \$18 will cover the calendar and postage, etc. You will enjoy this calendar much longer than a year.

News and Notes

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 fall 2014, we'll be sending the newsletter electronically only, and it is always available at www.bitterrootaudubon.org. 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 January 17th at 10AM for a two hour bird walk. Bring binoculars if you have them. Contact the refuge at [\(406\) 777-5552](tel:(406)777-5552) for more information.

Bird Shots



Snowy Owl.

Courtesy Mike Daniels

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Treasurer	Jim Story*	961-4689

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Field Trips	Sherry Ritter	777-7409
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Newsltr Eds &	Sara Ashline* baseditors@gmail.com	
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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