

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



FEBRUARY 2016

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 30, NO. 6

## The Art of Nature Photography with Jason Savage

By Kay Fulton



*Courtesy Jason Savage*

*Sandhill Cranes, featured in Audubon Magazine, May/June 2015.*

Imagine spending a couple of hours with a nationally known **Nature Photographer** whose work has been featured in National Geographic Traveler, Time Magazine, Outdoor Photographer, The New York Times, Montana Outdoors and others. **Imagine that his amazing photo of two Sandhill Cranes sparring was one of the award winning photos in Audubon Magazine's 2015 Photography Awards Issue (May-June) and was printed on two full pages.** Now imagine that he is one of our own Bitterroot residents and you can enjoy such a treat Monday evening, February 15<sup>th</sup> with Bitterroot Audubon.

Outdoor and wildlife photographer, Jason Savage will discuss his journey into nature photography: its challenges, rewards and how it has shaped his perspective through the lens. He will discuss concepts in composition, working with light and what it takes to create images that come alive. Jason will also share how his early work as a landscape photographer in Montana led him to discover his love for photographing wildlife and birds and how it has

evolved throughout the years. He will share his views on some of the ethical issues involved in photographing wildlife, especially birds. He will describe some of what he does to get his photos.

Based in Montana, Jason works as a freelance and commercial photographer, specializing in travel and outdoor photography. In addition to his photographs in magazines, his images have been featured in numerous advertising campaigns, books and calendars around the world. Jason also works as one of the leading photography instructors in the country, teaching workshops and classes throughout North America. He is a member of NANPA (North American Nature Photography Association) and also guides for Natural Habitat Adventures.



*Courtesy Jason Savage*

*Snow Geese, Freezeout Lake, MT.*

**This month, Bitterroot Audubon will hold its meeting and program at a different location, The River Street Theater at 421 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Hamilton.** It's four blocks south of the intersection of Fairgrounds Rd. and Adirondack (Walgreens' location) turn west onto River Street. There is ample parking on the street. **The program will begin at 7:00 P.M. and the public is invited. For more information, contact Kay Fulton 642-3794.**

## Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS

President

### Duck Stamp:

Put your stamp on conservation and help our Refuges!



In light of recent events at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge I thought it would only be fitting to remind you that the Duck Stamps are still on sale for \$25. You can purchase them at FWP offices, Big Sky Puzzles in Missoula, and at your Post Office! Also check at major sporting goods stores that sell hunting and fishing licenses and sporting equipment. Make sure to call these places ahead of time to ensure they have some in stock.

“One of the easiest ways that anyone can support bird habitat conservation is by [buying](#) Federal Duck Stamps - among the most successful conservation tools ever created to protect habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Federal Duck Stamps are conservation revenue stamps; - 98 percent of the purchase price goes directly to help [acquire and protect wetland habitat and purchase conservation easements](#) for the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#). Wetlands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars help purify water, aid in flood control, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and enhance [outdoor recreation opportunities](#)”

2015-2016 Federal Duck Stamp featuring ruddy ducks, art by Jennifer Miller of Olean, N.Y. Credit: USFWS



“[Birders](#) and wildlife photographers have played a key role in helping to generate these important monies for habitat protection. Your continued [purchase of Federal Duck Stamps](#) means that we can continue to acquire and protect important areas for birds and other wildlife.”



Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Let’s just say that this could be a way of us taking a stand to protect what belongs to all of us instead of just a few “bird-brains” closing down a National Refuge. My newest hero is that 79 year old birder/retired teacher who surprised one of the “occupiers” with a wrestling move. <http://thelapine.ca/79-year-old-bird-watcher-takes-down-oregon-militant-with-old-high-school-wrestling-move/> “We’re hoping this is an isolated incident and we’re asking the elderly not to knock any more militants on their ass,” said the grinning FBI agent. Don’t cross those birders!!

### Great Backyard Bird Count Field Trip at MPG

By Kate Stone

Once you’ve finished counting the birds in your backyard, please consider helping the MPG Ranch staff count the birds in their 10,000-acre yard! The MPG Ranch will host a field day on Monday, February 15th starting at 8AM to count as many birds and species as possible, as part of National Audubon’s Great Backyard Bird Count.

Participants will split into small groups led by MPG Ranch staff. They will spend the morning hiking through a wide variety of habitats, including floodplain forest, open agricultural fields, shrubby draws, and upland conifer forest. At 1 pm, we will gather at one of the ranch houses for a brown bag lunch and to make a list of species observed.

Please note: All of our surveying will be on foot, and participants need to possess the ability to hike for several hours in winter conditions.

Participants must **REGISTER** for this field trip by February 12th by contacting Kate Stone (krostone@hotmail.com, 381-1115). Additional information and directions will be sent to registered participants.

## **Fire ecology class offered**

*By Fred Weisbecker, BAS Vice President and Conservation Chair*

Fred Weisbecker has put together a series of fire ecology related topics which will be presented in March at the Hamilton High School adult evening education forum. It is called **A Burning Question: The Role of Fire in Western Forests.**

The course will be offered from 6-8 pm on Tuesday March 8, 15, 22.

There will be 6 one hour lectures presented by guest speakers on such topics as what did this area look like before fire suppression, how did the major tree species evolve with fire, how does wildfire behave, hear some of the history of humans and fire, meet a hotshot crew and examine their equipment, learn about the grand experiment to allow wildfires to burn in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and hear from a scientist who's specialty is post fire ecology.

The series is \$12 and you can pre-register by contacting Diane at the Hamilton High School at 375-6060 ext. 0.

## **Montana Audubon Bird Festival Request for Silent Auction Items**

*By Becky Peters, BAS President*

As many of you know there will be a MT Audubon Bird Festival June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> in our backyard up in Missoula!! Don't miss it! Bring friends and loved ones! Putting on a grand Festival like this costs money in order to make it an accomplishment to crow about!

Five Valleys Audubon Chapter is the lead chapter doing all the ground work, with the organizational experience of MT Audubon staff, and help from our Bitterroot Audubon members. To make this Festival a success we need quality silent auction items to bid on. The revenue made from these auction items will be shared between the three groups so that we can do more for our Montana wildlife.

If you can help gather items please let me know. You can approach a business in your area. It can be a nursery that could donate plants that birds appreciate (Cottage Garden Greenhouse, for one, has already signed on! Thank you!) Or a seed store, or an outdoor oriented business of any kind (fishing, biking, hiking, etc.) Maybe you know a business that could donate an evening out for a couple? How about stores that sell coffee supplies? A Brewery

tour? Wine? Books? Garden supplies? Jewelry? Bird feeders? Art work? Coupons for future fun? Do you know anyone that would donate time doing an outdoor activity for a group?

If you are interested in helping acquire auction items please let me know. I need to organize who is going where and what you are gathering for us. Once you contact me I will send you a form to fill out of the Business name and address, contact person, contact phone number, contact email, item donated, value, how to pick up the item, etc. Please contact me by email:

[b-bpeters@webband.com](mailto:b-bpeters@webband.com)

Thank you for your help and that **Pine Siskin** at your feeder thanks you too!

## **About the Great Backyard Bird Count**

Count for as little as **15 minutes** in your own backyard to help expand our understanding of birds

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, more than 140,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, *creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.*

The 19th annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2016. Please visit the official website at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) for more information and be sure to check out the latest educational and promotional resources. Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2014 GBBC data highlighted a large irruption of Snowy Owls across the northeastern, mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes areas of the United States. The data also showed the effects that the

polar vortex had on bird movement around the country. For more on the results of the 2015 GBBC, take a look at the GBBC Summary, and be sure to check out some of the images in the 2015 GBBC Photo Contest Gallery.

On the program website participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during and after the count. Be sure to check out the Explore a Region tool to get an idea of what you can expect to see in your area during the next GBBC.

For questions and comments, please contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology or the National Audubon Society:

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology**

Inside the US: [\(800\) 843-2473](tel:8008432473)

Outside the US: [\(607\) 254-2473](tel:6072542473)

[gbbc@cornell.edu](mailto:gbbc@cornell.edu)

**National Audubon Society**

[citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org)

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited.

**Your Bitterroot Audubon Membership**

*By Susie Duff, Membership Chair and Jim Story, Treasurer*

Now is the time to renew your Bitterroot Audubon membership/support. As most of you know if you are a member of National Audubon you are automatically a member of both Bitterroot and Montana Audubon. However, did you know you can still become a supporting member of Bitterroot Audubon? Your support funds help us to accomplish our mission.

Members may wonder what Bitterroot Audubon's mission is and what we do to support our mission. The BAS mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and earth's biological diversity. We accomplish this by

- Offering educational programs and field trips for Chapter members and the general public.
- Advocating political and personal actions that promote the conservation of wildlife and their habitats.
- Cooperating with the National Audubon Society and Montana Audubon on national and state-wide endeavors, as well as local conservation-oriented projects

Due to the success of calendar sales, BAS

membership support, and other fund raising sources, Bitterroot Audubon was able to fund the following projects that related to our mission during 2014 and 2015:

\$50.00	Junior Duck Stamp award
\$250.00	Raptor View Institute to support bird research
\$300.00	Bitterroot Education Awareness Resources (BEAR) outdoor-based youth mentoring
\$280.00	Scholarship to Teller Wildlife Refuge for Youth Conservation & Education Expo
\$632.00	Printing of brochures to explain and identify the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in the Bitterroot Valley
\$850.00	To MT Audubon to support bird conservation projects throughout the state
\$500.00	Corvallis Middle School nature awareness program
\$2,000.00	Scholarships of \$500 to four Montana college students majoring in natural resources programs
\$50.00	4-H premiums for wildlife projects
\$500.00	Raptor View Institute to support their non lead education project
\$803.00	Audubon Adventures - an environmental education curriculum for grades 3-8 in local schools
\$915.00	Audubon Adventures-related classroom visits by an educator/biologist
\$2,800.00	Bitter Root Water Forum for their restoration and education work
\$300.00	Darby school for bird migration/acoustic study
<u>\$2,300.00</u>	Bitterroot Land Trust
Total \$12,530.00	

**Bird Rehabilitation Report for 2015**

*By Judy Hoy*

In 2015, my sub-permittees, Adele Coon, Brooke Tanner, Kristi Swisher, Brandi Ashford and I received 95 injured or orphaned birds for care. Happily, Brooke Tanner, executive director of Wild Skies Rehab Center, at Potomac, MT obtained her own rehabilitation and education permits early in 2015. She does a superb job of rehabbing wildlife from Missoula and surrounding areas and she gives outstanding education

programs with her live un-releasable birds. My current sub-permittees and I will continue to work closely with Brooke. Since Brooke now reports the birds she cares for, the total number of birds on my report is less than last year. Also, for reasons not determined, we received significantly fewer hatchlings and fledglings in 2015 than in previous years.

Adele Coon, Hamilton, MT, who provided years of dedicated care to injured and orphaned wildlife, has now retired from rehabbing and her expertise will be greatly missed. Adele and her husband Don deserve our deepest gratitude for providing care and a second chance for the many wild birds and mammals they have successfully raised or healed and released. Adele found a great new sub-permittee, Salima Witt, who lives near Darby to rehab injured and orphaned wildlife found in Hamilton and southern Ravalli County. We thank Salima, who has extensive experience in working with wildlife and excellent facilities, for volunteering her help. Adele recently published her interesting and delightful book, "Listening to Animals." We wish her great success with her book and all future endeavors.

Of the 95 birds received, 54 (57%) were released. Eight birds, 7 fledglings and 1 adult had developmental defects and 5 of those did not survive. One American Robin pre-fledgling had a clubfoot on the left and couldn't move the right leg. Another American Robin pre-fledgling had an underdeveloped upper bill (under bite). Because those developmental defects are now common on bird and mammal young, I was able to discover a successful treatment. Both robins recovered completely and were released, as did a House Finch fledgling with disrupted feather development caught by a cat. In this case, the cat likely saved the bird's life. The cat's owner retrieved the uninjured fledgling from the cat and brought the bird for rehabilitation. Its disrupted feathers were stimulated to grow to normal and it was released when old enough. However, a significant number of the birds that died or were euthanized were too badly injured by cats to save. Please keep all cats inside, especially during nesting season.

I also received the first Wilson's Snipe hatchlings this year that I have received to raise in over 45 years of rehabbing birds. The vehicle that hit and killed their mother at Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge went directly over the two newly hatched snipe. They were

uninjured, so were brought to me by Paul Hayes, who saw the vehicle hit the mother. The snipe chicks were absolutely adorable and interesting to raise.



*Courtesy Judy Hoy  
Wilson's Snipe hatchling, one of two raised and released in 2015*

My fellow rehabbers and I would like to thank everyone who donated to the Bitterroot Audubon Wildlife Rehabilitation Fund, all the people who rescued injured or orphaned wildlife, the Bitterroot Audubon Society and to all who helped wildlife in any way. If you would like to donate to help with the cost of food and medicine for the birds being rehabilitated, make out the check to Bitterroot Audubon WRF and mail it to Jim Story, PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840.

# News and Notes

**National Audubon Photo Awards** Call for entries! The 2016 Audubon Photography contest is now open. From now until midnight ET on February 19, 2016, you can enter your best bird photos at [audubonphotoawards.org](http://audubonphotoawards.org). Your best shots, in the categories of amateur, professional, and fine art, could win a cash prize. The youth winner (and a parent or guardian) will win a five day session at Audubon's Hog Island camp in Maine.

**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](mailto: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 16th 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.

## 2016 Great Backyard Bird Count Feb 12-15, 2016

1. [Register for the count](#) or use your existing login name and password. If you have never participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count or any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you'll need to [create a new account](#). If you already created an account for last year's GBBC, or if you're already registered with eBird or another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login information.

2. **Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC.** You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period.

3. **Enter your results on the GBBC website by clicking "[Submit Observations](#)" on the home page.** Or download the free [eBird Mobile app](#) to enter data on a mobile device. If you already participate in the eBird citizen-science project, please use eBird to submit your sightings during the GBBC. Your checklists will count toward the GBBC.



## Advanced Birding Workshop

*Larry Weeks of Five Valleys Audubon*

An advanced birding workshop has been scheduled for February and March 2016 that will include seven

sessions on Thursday nights from 7:00 – 9:30 pm at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Office on Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT. Each session will be devoted to one bird group. The date, subject and presenter of each session are as follows:

### Date Bird Group Presenter

Feb 18- Owls, Matt Larson  
Feb 25- Shorebirds, Jim Brown  
Mar 3- Flycatchers, Aaron Spidal  
Mar 10- Raptors, Steve Hoffman  
Mar 17- Gulls, Alex Hughes  
Mar 24- Forest Birds, Jim Sparks  
Mar 31- Sparrows, Larry Weeks

A person may decide to attend a single session, any combination of sessions or all seven sessions. The cost will be \$15 per session or \$70 for all seven. To sign up, please contact Larry Weeks at 549-5632 or [bwsgenea@gmail.com](mailto:bwsgenea@gmail.com).



**FOR YOUR CALENDAR: Wings Across the Big Sky**

**June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana**

Time to begin making those summer plans! ... **Montana Audubon's Wings Across the Big Sky Festival, co-hosted by Five Valleys Audubon Society**, will be held June 3-5 in Missoula. 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 Missoula and surrounding areas to 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 the Rattlesnake Recreation area, Pattee Canyon, Lee Metcalf NWR, and Lolo Creek, among others, with the anticipation of seeing a varied array of species and habitats.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Holiday Inn Downtown at the Park, 200 S Pattee Street,

## Bird Shots



*Courtesy Estelle Shuttleworth*

*Wild Turkey at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, Stevensville, MT, January 2016.*

Missoula MT. Rose Leach, local festival chairman, and Five Valleys Audubon have been working with us and the Holiday Inn team on event logistics and service, 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, a popular bat walk, our keynote speaker, and a Saturday evening banquet dinner.

We are very pleased to announce that our keynote speaker Friday night will be Erick Greene, professor in the Division of Biological Sciences and in the Wildlife Biology Program at the University of Montana. Kate Davis, author, photographer, artist, and "den-mother" to falconry birds, will be headlining the Saturday afternoon presentations.

Each month we will continue to feature developing news on the 2016 Bird Festival. Registration will begin in March. Stay tuned!

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

## Calendar of Events

- Jan 31-** Chapter-only membership renewal due, \$15
- Feb 12-15-** Great Backyard Bird Count
- Feb 15-** GBBC Field Trip with Kate Stone at the MPG Ranch. Register with Kate at 381-1115 or [kroestone@hotmail.com](mailto:kroestone@hotmail.com)
- Feb 15-** The River Street Theater at 421 N. 2nd Street, Hamilton, MT 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM
- Feb 19-** National Audubon Photo Award Contest deadline
- Feb 20-** Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.
- Mar 8, 15, 22-** Fire Ecology Course
- Jun 3-5-** Missoula, MT, Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

BITTERROOT AUDUBON  
PO BOX 326  
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

### Officers

President	Becky Peters*	369-5210
Vice-Pres. & Conservation Chair	Fred Weisbecker*	375-9317
Secretary	John Ormiston*	363-5464
Treasurer	Jim Story*	961-4689

### Directors & Committee Chairs

IBA Program	Sherry Ritter	370-4778
Programs	Kay Fulton*	642-3794
Website	Kate Stone*	381-1115
Education	Amanda Bestor	369-1482
Newsltr Eds & Distribution	Sara Ashline* <a href="mailto:baseditors@gmail.com">baseditors@gmail.com</a>	
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	Alex Shaffer*	

\* 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 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

National Audubon Society, Inc.  
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10014  
Attn: Chance Mueleck