

Bitterroot AUDUBON



MARCH 2016

NEWSLETTER

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Beavers: Friends, Not Foes

By Kay Fulton



Courtesy Kate Stone

Beaver.

American Indians called the beaver the “**Sacred Center of the Land**” because this species creates such rich watery habitat for other creatures. The beaver is considered a “**keystone species**,” which is a term for species that have a disproportionate influence on other species and their habitat. Their ponds benefit all levels of the food web, starting with the aquatic bugs, algae and plants that feed fish, frogs, waterfowl, birds, ungulates, other rodents and furbearers and large predators.

Human interface with beavers has not always been as positive: historically they were trapped for their pelts, there have been efforts to eradicate them by trapping and their dams have been dynamited. Sadly, much of their habitat has disappeared, at great detriment to birds and wildlife.

Bitterroot Audubon invites you to join **Amy Chadwick, a riparian and wetlands ecologist**, to learn why the beaver is so important to birds, other wildlife and the environment and what can be done to allow people and beavers to coexist. She will explore the benefits and challenges of living with beaver and how they can actually be used for cost-effective habitat restoration.

Amy has a degree in Biology from Colorado College and a Masters of Forestry from the University of Montana. She has worked on mapping suitable beaver habitat, restoring degraded environments and installing “Beaver Deceivers.” Amy worked at the University of Montana Riparian and Wetland Research Program and then was self-employed as a partner at Watershed Consulting for eleven years. Currently, Amy is the lead Ecologist for Great West Engineering and works part time at her own company providing non-lethal beaver management. She specializes in watershed restoration and improving natural water storage, including restoring beaver complex wetlands in streams and their headwaters.



Courtesy Amy Chadwick

“Beaver Deciever.”

Come join Bitterroot Audubon, Monday, March 21, 2016, 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge Visitors’ Center, north of Stevensville on Wildfowl Lane. The Public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton for more information (642-3794).

Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS
President



It's SPRING! (Too early for me. I want more snow) But you could use this time to work on the plantings around your home for your birds. We can help their survival and encourage their visits to our area by what we put in our landscape. Also - the world is worried about losing the bees and the butterflies so be sure to choose the plants they like.

Try this link for Montana native plants that are all about the birds:

<http://www.birdzilla.com/in-the-backyard/state-based-information2/montana/native-plants-3101.html>

Here are some great reasons for planting for Montana birds:

“Developing bird-friendly habitat in your yard is the best way to attract a greater variety of species and to support local and migrating species. Native plants provide food and cover, are more insect and disease resistant than non-native species, and may require less water”

“Wildlife doesn't just randomly appear in a given area. It is there because of favorable habitat. The essential elements that you must provide in your habitat are food, water, cover and a place to raise a family. To attract the most wildlife, you need native trees, shrubs, groundcover, vines and wildflowers, many of which will provide food and shelter.”

MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY CLARK FORK CHAPTER will have a link to the list of nurseries in the Bitterroot and Missoula who can help you with the proper shrubs and trees and grasses, etc.

They also have several links to the recommended NATIVE species for our area.

<http://www.mtnativeplants.org/Clark%20Fork>
http://www.mtnativeplants.org/Missoula_%26_West-Central_Montana_Native_Plant_Landscaping

And here is a link to plants for pollinators:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index.shtml>

When to plant? Here is the link to the Farmer's Almanac about when to plant in our area. They

mostly cover vegetables, herbs and fruit. Hmmmm, you may not want some birds visiting those parts of your garden!

www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-dates/MT/Missoula

Enough with the links! Have a great spring. Your hands will be getting dirty but the birds will be loving you!

Welcome Back Waterfowl Day, April 2, 2016

By Judy Hoy and Bob Danley

On Saturday, April 2nd, 2016, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge will once again host Welcome Back Waterfowl Day (hyperlink underlined text to

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/lee_metcalf/event_details/2016_wbwd.html, sponsored by the Bitterroot Audubon Society and in association with International Migratory Bird Day (hyperlink underlined text to <http://www.birdday.org/>. Meet at the Refuge Headquarters and Wildfowl Lane between 10 am and 1 pm and celebrate the spectacle of spring bird migration featuring waterfowl. The total duck population in 2015 was 49% above the long term average so there should be a good chance of seeing a good diversity of birds. There will be other self-directed activities for the whole family on both Wildfowl Lane and at the Refuge Visitor Center beyond birding: drawing, mammal skins/skulls collection, aquatic invertebrate samples, and more. The waterfowl will be in their gorgeous spring plumage so bring your cameras and binoculars. Scopes will be on hand for close up views, an experienced Audubon members will help you identify birds. Judy Hoy will have her un-releasable education birds, a Long-eared Owl and a Saw-whet Owl for you to see. Drinks and treats will be provided. We hope to see you then!

We Need Your Help! Sign the petition to put Initiative I-177 on the ballot

By Jill Davies

Trapping is cruel and indiscriminate and is contributing to a steep decline in populations of rare animals and birds, including Eagles. Signatures are needed for a petition to get Initiative I-177 on the November Ballot, which would then let the public vote on the measure. I-177 would stop trapping on public lands only (about 1/3 of Montana), not on private lands. It allows trapping

for certain management purposes. Around 25,000 approved signatures from 34 legislative districts must be gathered in order to put the measure up for a vote. There will be a table at the next BAS meeting with petition sheets and more information. Call Jill Davies, 642-3601, for more information or go to www.trapfreemt.org.

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~~, and March 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.

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

By Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon

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 Missoula. 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 mtaudubon.org/about/award/. To be considered for this year's award, nominations must be submitted no later than May 19, 2016. Nominations can be submitted by email (PREFERRED!) or mailed to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624.

Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or <jjellis@mtaudubon.org>.

Bird Sightings for Bitterroot Birds, February 2016

By Becky Peters, BAS President

If you would ever like to receive the sightings of our Bitterroot Birds please consider signing on to eBird Alert

<http://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/topics/455990-alerts/articles>

I receive the Alerts just for our area whenever someone records them on eBird. That way I can keep track of who has arrived and who has left (speaking bird-wise of course!) This is all thanks to the thorough birders who take the time to enter the data. And if you get eBird Alerts you can even click on the links to the maps to see exactly where they were!! The following list of recent birds in our area is thanks to: **Nathan Stone, Samantha O'Byrne, Sara Brigham**.

By Mel Holloway, in the area of Chaffin Ln, Eastside Hwy and Lee Metcalf Refuge: Canada Goose, Mallard, Redhead, Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Black-billed Magpie, Common Raven, European Starling, Spotted Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird. "Bird in Willow Hedge: Typical location for spring observation. We have not seen this species before March 15th. We have 10 years of records. Not the only species of the morning. Just an unusual bird."

By Kate Stone in the Iron Cap area, east of Middle Burnt Fork Rd.: Mountain Bluebird, Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebird and Townsend's Solitaire.

By Craig Kuchel, Steven Cross, Rachel Grabenstein, Kate Stone, James Diefenderfer, In the Slack Lane, Wild Fowl Ln, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, Maroon Court, and Iron Cap area: Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Killdeer, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Black-billed Magpie, Common Raven, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling,

Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, House Finch, House Sparrow.

And by John Csoka at Lee Metcalf Visitor Center: Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Black-billed Magpie, Marsh Wren, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird.

Have fun birding!

eBird workshop- are you interested?

By Kate Stone

More and more birders are taking advantage of this amazing tool developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. eBird is a real-time, on-line checklist program with the goal of maximizing the utility and accessibility of the birds observed by ordinary citizens. The quantity of data is staggering: in May of 2015, over 14,000 birders reported 9.5 million bird observations.

People use eBird to keep their own personal bird lists, to locate species they are trying to find, and/or to explore the collective bird data submitted by thousands of other birds. How many species have you seen in your yard? Curious if Mountain Bluebirds have arrived back in Montana? Trying to find a good spot to see a Yellow-billed Cuckoo? Traveling to Sante Fe and want to know what birds to expect? Who is the top birder in Montana? eBird can help you answer these questions and more.

We would like to have more Bitterroot Audubon members sharing their observations with eBird. Bitterroot Audubon uses eBird to do things like document species occurrence in the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area, without actually having to perform the surveys ourselves. We also use eBird data to support our comments on land conservation projects, or to protest bad projects. Your participation and the data it brings will make our ability to support conservation efforts stronger. If you think you'd like to take part in a hands-on workshop on how to use eBird, please contact Kate Stone (krogestone@hotmail.com) to confirm your interest. Please indicate your location, preferred days of the week, and times for a workshop. The workshop will likely occur in April.

News and Notes

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 19th 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.

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.



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, 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

Bird Shots



Spotted Towhee seen visiting a local feeder.

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.

Calendar of Events

- Mar 8, 15, 22**-Fire Ecology Course
- Mar 19**-Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.
- Mar 21**- Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Apr 2**-Welcome Back Waterfowl Day, Lee Metcalf NWR
- May 19**-MT Audubon award nominations due date
- Jun 3-5**- Missoula, MT, Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

Courtesy Diana Brandt

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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

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