

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



MAY 2016

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 30, NO. 9

## Common Poorwills of the Goatsucker Family

By Kay Fulton



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*Common Poorwill female brooding her chicks.*

How Common are the Poorwills? Currently relatively little is known about Common Poorwills' (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) natural history or habitat needs in Montana. Most published range maps do not show them occurring west of the Continental Divide in Montana. However, surveys targeting other birds led to numerous incidental detections of Common Poorwills on the MPG Ranch, a private conservation property in the Sapphire Mountains just south of Missoula. In 2015, Kate Stone and her co-workers began a pilot project to more closely examine Poorwill distribution, habitat use and breeding ecology. They also used Citizen Scientists from Bitterroot Audubon to survey for Poorwills in other parts of the valley. Volunteers detected Poorwills throughout the Sapphire Mountain Range. On the MPG Ranch, they found Poorwills widely distributed in habitats with a mixture of a shrubby over-story, steep terrain, and talus slopes. In some cases Poorwills roosted and/or nested in areas with tree cover. Researchers captured 11 individuals and tested radio telemetry techniques to approximate range size, roost use, and site fidelity. They monitored activity at six nests and deployed motion-sensing cameras when possible to observe nesting behavior. They also used

acoustic monitors and roadside observations to document arrival and departure dates.

Bitterroot Audubon invites you to learn more about this little known, "uncommon" bird, Monday, May 16. Kate will present a summary of the initial findings and share additional aspects of Poorwill natural history not often observed. Kate is a researcher and educator extraordinaire. She works as an ecologist for the MPG Ranch where her research focuses on using bird populations as a means of evaluating the success of restoration treatments. She also oversees several projects aimed at learning more about little-known bird species. Kate has an undergraduate degree in Conservation Biology from Middlebury College, and an M.S. in Forestry from the University of Montana. She lives in Stevensville and is a board member for Bitterroot Audubon and Ravalli County's Open Lands Board.

**Come join Bitterroot Audubon Monday, May 16, 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in the Visitors' Center. The Refuge is located on Wildfowl Lane, north east of Stevensville. The public is invited. Contact Kay Fulton, 642-3794, for more information.**



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

## Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS  
President



“What’s your favorite bird Nana? “ I always hear that from my grandkids. They know I am a bird enthusiast who is still learning, learning, and learning. So they always want to know what my current favorite bird is. For a long time it has been my summer friend the Hummingbird but lately I have fallen totally head over heels in love with the Cedar Waxwing.

Why do I go bonkers when I see a Cedar Waxwing? Cause they are so dang sweet to each other! They are sociable, tend to flock together except when nesting and even then will nest near other Waxwings in a small colony. They take care of each other. They are known to pass a berry from one end of the branch down to the last bird on the branch who is farthest away from the berries. Since they are late nesters (early June to August due to when the fruits ripen) you may get to see the sweetest thing about them – their courtship! They will pass each other a “gift”. “Males and females hop towards each other, alternating back and forth and sometimes touching their bills together. Males often pass a small item like a fruit, insect, or flower petal, to the female. After taking the fruit, the female usually hops away and then returns giving back the item to the male. They repeat this a few times until, typically, the female eats the gift.”-cornell.edu It’s adorable!

Now the other summer favorite of mine, are the Hummingbirds. They are rather the opposite of a Cedar Waxwing. They are not known to be a sociable or kind to each other. In fact, they can be rather mean to each other. They are solitary birds, they never migrate together in a flock, they aggressively protect their territory and will even body slam each other. Boy, do they have an edge to them, especially that Rufous! But I feed them and I am always so excited when the first spring scout finds my feeders.

In order to help these little metabolic wonders maintain their numbers we can follow a few simple steps from [www.cornell.edu](http://www.cornell.edu):

- Encourage your neighbors to make their yards hummingbird friendly. An entire corridor of habitat is much more valuable than scattered patches.

- Hang several feeders far enough apart that the hummingbirds cannot see one another; this will prevent one bird from dominating the rest.
- Fill the feeders with sugar water; made by combining four parts hot water to one part white sugar, boiled for one to two minutes, then cooled. Never use honey, artificial sweeteners, or red dye.
- Hang your feeders in the shade to prevent the sugar solution from fermenting.
- Be sure to change the sugar water regularly -- before it gets cloudy, or about twice a week in warm weather.
- Clean the feeders with a solution of one part white vinegar to four parts water about once a week. If your feeder has become dirty, try adding some grains of dry rice to the vinegar solution and shake vigorously. The grains act as a good abrasive.
- Rinse your feeder well with warm water three times before refilling with sugar solution.
- Check [Hummingbirds at Home](#) and [eBird](#) to find out when the first hummingbird sightings occur each spring, and hang your feeders up a couple of weeks before that. In the fall, keep your feeders up for two weeks after you see the last bird using it.

Have fun this summer enjoying our feathered friends!

### Help Us Survey the Bitterroot River IBA

By Sherry Ritter

This spring through fall, we hope all Bitterroot Audubon members will help us record birds using the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area. This includes all birds observed within riparian habitat from Woodside Crossing to Lolo. We’re especially interested in the numbers and locations of these focal species: Red-eyed Vireo, Willow Flycatcher, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Great Blue Heron, and Bald Eagle.

Please see our [IBA web page](#) for information on where your birding can help us out and how to

record information. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Ritter, 370-4778, [sherryritternature@gmail.com](mailto:sherryritternature@gmail.com).

### **Bitterroot Audubon Board Recruitment**

*By Becky Peters*

Every spring our BAS Board goes through the nomination process for future board members to join our dedicated board. This year Kay Fulton and Becky Peters will be on the nominating committee and we would like our chapter members to consider being on the board. We will be willing to meet with anyone who has questions about what are duties of our board. No commitment would be expected at this meeting. (But be aware we have hired a Bald Eagle to keep track of your whereabouts!!)

As a prospective BAS Board member you would have a right to know the goals and mission of BAS and of our expectations of being on our board. Think about why you are a BAS member in the first place. Think about all the wonderful activities BAS does for our valley. As public service is a core to the survival of our society, so is an Audubon chapter core to the survival of our birds and their habitats.

Our current BAS Board members bring a variety of experiences and backgrounds to our meetings. We come from all walks of life. If you are interested be aware that you do not have to be a scientist or a bird expert, just have a willingness to work cooperatively with some great people. Want more specifics? You would be very welcome to come and observe our board in action before ever requesting a meeting with Kay and Becky. Our last board meeting this spring will be Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Just let us know you are coming for a visit and we'll give you the where and when.

We are especially looking for a new board member to coordinate our Education Program that is offered to the schools in the valley and also looking for someone to coordinate some field trips. Want more information? Call Kay Fulton at 642-3794 or Becky Peters at 369-5210.

### **Bitterroot Audubon's Byron Weber Scholarship Recipient**

*By Skip Horner*

Bitterroot Audubon is very proud to announce Philip Williams's graduation from UM. Philip is the recipient of every Byron Weber Memorial Scholarship we've given since its inception three

years ago. He will receive his BS in Forest Resources Management with High Honors, with minors in Ecological Restoration and Wildland Fire Sciences and Management. He's also graduating from the Davidson Honors College. Philip is an articulate, confident and talented student who has represented us well. He will speak about his Bitterroot Audubon scholarship experience at the upcoming Montana Bird Festival in Missoula on June 4.

Here is what he says. "I was hired as a student researcher and project assistant at UM's National Center for Landscape Fire Analysis (FireCenter for short) in late January.

My duties include research applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to wildfire management. I was accepted to graduate school at UM and will begin my MS in Forestry degree this fall through the FireCenter, which is a part of the College of Forestry and Conservation. My current work at the FireCenter involves me and my future Master's advisor working together on a project involving the usage of drones in fire management. This is the topic I will continue in the Fall for my Master's project. Drones are a new and exciting way to merge GIS technology with forestry, as they have both scientific and social challenges. This is a new field and foresters need to explore the usage of drones in a safe, ethical, and effective manner that produces scientifically-accurate data."

"In the meantime, I'm training for a pack test, which is required by all firefighters. My job at the FireCenter requires that I complete prescribed burns and wildfires if our crew is called in. The pack test involves carrying a 45-pound pack in 45 minutes for a flat 3-mile walk. Running or jogging is not allowed. I've been working out for that in between studying for tests and final projects. Once I pass the pack test I'll get my "red card", which means I can legally fight fires and perform prescribed burns."

"Thanks again! Bitterroot Audubon has been a tremendous support and motivation for me! I hope to continue to grow through education and to help others do the same."

The Byron Weber Memorial Scholarship is given twice a year by Bitterroot Audubon to an upper-class student studying natural sciences in a Montana college or university. The award is \$500

per semester, and is weighted towards students from the Bitterroot.

If you know of a student who qualifies, please ask them to apply from the link on our website.

### **eBird workshop**

*By Kate Stone*

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, Bitterroot Audubon hosted its first eBird workshop to teach local members how to report their bird sightings and to explore the bird data gathered by other birders throughout the world. eBird is a global database now containing over 300 million bird observations contributed by more than 300,000 birders from every country on the planet. We had 13 people attend our workshop, with help from three instructors. Our group hopes to recruit more people to use eBird to collect data within the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area. For more information on how you can participate, please visit the [IBA page](#) of Bitterroot Audubon's website, or

contact IBA committee chair, Sherry Ritter 370-4778, [sherryritternature@gmail.com](mailto:sherryritternature@gmail.com). For more information about eBird, visit the eBird website: [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*e-Bird workshop participants.*

### **Bird Sightings**

*By Becky Peters*

Take a look at the list of birds that were found in the Bitterroot Valley just on May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Want to keep up with the latest sightings? Just go to the Bitterroot Audubon website: [bitterrootaudubon.org](http://bitterrootaudubon.org). And of course you could add your OWN sightings to [ebird.org](http://ebird.org).

American Coot	Dark-eyed Junco	Northern Flicker	Rufous Hummingbird
American Crow	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Harrier	Sandhill Crane
American Goldfinch	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Northern Pintail	Say's Phoebe
American Kestrel	European Starling	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Song Sparrow
American Pipit	Gadwall	Northern Shoveler	Spotted Sandpiper
American Robin	Golden Eagle	Osprey	Townsend's Solitaire
American Wigeon	Great Blue Heron	Peregrine Falcon	Tree Swallow
Bald Eagle	Green-winged Teal	Pied-billed Grebe	Trumpeter Swan
Belted Kingfisher	Hairy Woodpecker	Pileated Woodpecker	Turkey Vulture
Black-billed Magpie	Hooded Merganser	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Vaux's Swift
Black-capped Chickadee	House Finch	Redhead	Violet-green Swallow
Blue-winged Teal	House Sparrow	Red-naped Sapsucker	Western Meadowlark
Brewer's Blackbird	House Wren	Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch
Bufflehead	Killdeer	Red-winged Blackbird	White-crowned Sparrow
California Quail	Lesser Scaup	Ring-necked Duck	White-faced Ibis
Canada Goose	Mallard	Ring-necked Pheasant	Wild Turkey
Chipping Sparrow	Marsh Wren	Rock Pigeon	Wilson's Snipe
Cinnamon Teal	Mountain Bluebird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Merganser	Mountain Chickadee	Ruddyduck	
Common Raven	Mourning Dove	Ruffed Grouse	

## **Bitterroot Audubon's Earth Day Event:**

### **Highway 93 Clean-up**

*By Skip Horner*

On April 21, in celebration of Earth Day, Bitterroot Audubon sponsored our semi-annual clean-up of our section of Highway 93 from Mile 64 to Mile 66. We had a record turn-out of 25 people, and we cleaned the entire two-mile section on both sides. (This is the first time in years that we cleaned the entire section in one go!).

Among the group were 15 high school students from Stevensville under the leadership of Jenny Rokosch. Jenny has started a non-profit called Youth for the Environment. Jenny says " I wanted to start the group because a lot of teens and young adults don't realize the importance of keeping our Earth clean and sustainable. By starting the group and hopefully soon with momentum, I hope to get high school and college age students aware of the dynamics in their surroundings and get them involved as stewards of this planet. My plan is to have two main service projects per season as well as fun trips. Some of these activities include- farmers market booths for save the bees, garbage cleanups, river clean ups, stream restoration, and back-packing to do high elevation weed management, etc. But I'm also working to include fun events to get and keep people excited. My goal is to become strong enough as a unit to influence public opinion and make a great difference within the Ravalli County. "

Bitterroot Audubon is proud to work with Jenny and her friends and honored that their first project was to help with our historic clean-up project.

## **Western Field Ornithologists Conference**

*By Diane Rose*

Western Field Ornithologists (WFO), an organization of amateur and professional field ornithologists that promotes the study of birds throughout western North America, is pleased to announce the availability of a youth scholarship for the WFO 2016 Conference to be held in Humboldt County, California from September 28th through October 2nd. The scholarship is open to youths between the ages of 12 and 22, with six scholarships for youths in Grades 6 through 12, and two scholarships for collegiate youths working towards a Bachelor's degree. The annual WFO conference is a four day event that includes scientific presentations, workshops, field trips,

experts' sounds and visual identification panels, and social activities. The conference offers the opportunity for motivated youths to meet those who earn their living and/or volunteer in field ornithology, bird conservation, biology and other distinguished fields. For further details and conference registration (opening June 12th) visit <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>. For further details about the scholarship, visit <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/scholarship.php>. The application deadline is May 15, 2016, so don't delay, send in your application today!



June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

Step back in history and learn how Montana Audubon began as a fledgling organization 40 years ago; hear the highlights of these last 4 decades of conservation successes! What have they been doing since 1976 and who has been part of that journey?

Meet the authors of the long-awaited Birds of Montana at this year's festival and get your autographed copy! Hear Erick Greene as he brings you fascinating stories of how birds communicate to alert each other to danger and get a bird's-eye view of the Clark Fork watershed. Learn about Kate Davis' raptor education in the Bitterroot, as well as the important work of the American Prairie Reserve.

Five Valleys Audubon (FVAS) has been working with local schools to bring some "Art" to the Festival. They are offering an abundant variety of silent auction items, along with some great custom field trips. There are going to be some creative desserts for our Dessert Auction, so come prepared to bid to enjoy your beautiful dessert at the banquet.

FVAS has also done a fantastic job providing a great selection of field trips – but they are filling up fast, so please register as soon as possible. Register by mail, or online at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). Also— be sure to reserve your rooms at the Holiday Inn Downtown by calling 1-406-721-8550 or 1-800-399-0408. (Be sure to mention that you are part of the Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the group rate if you call. – Code MAS.)

Call the Montana Audubon office at (406) 443-3949

if you have any questions about the festival or registration.



### Recognize Your Peers!

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife by presenting Awards at the Saturday evening banquet. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories: Lifetime

Achievement Award, Educator of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Special Achievement Award. To make a nomination, download a nomination form from

[www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html](http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html).

Nominations are due at the office by May 19, 2016. Mail completed forms to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena MT 59624.

 **Little Birds**   
**Corvallis Middle School**  
**Mrs. Bestor's 5th and 6th Grade**

### Common Name: **Willow Flycatcher**

By: Caitrin Allred- Corvallis Middle School 5th Grade

Domain-	Eukarya
Kingdom-	Animalia
Phylum-	Chordata
Class-	Aves
Order-	Passeriformes
Family-	Tyrannidae
Genus-	Empidonax
Species-	<i>traillii</i>

**Average Length:** 130-150mm (5.2-6 in)

**Average Weight:** 13.5 g

#### **Cool Facts and behavior:**

- Captures insects by hovering over them.
- The Willow Flycatcher and the Traill's Flycatcher were considered the same bird until the 1970s.
- The Willow Flycatcher mostly eats insects and some berries during the fall.

#### **Conservation:**

- The Willow Flycatcher's population has changed 51% since 1966-2014!
- They are rated a 10 out of 20 in the concern score, which contains bird species that are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered.



**Common Name: Lewis's Woodpecker**

By: Chesnee Lawrence and Sophia Honkala

- Domain-** Eukarya
- Kingdom-** Animalia
- Phylum-** Chordata
- Class-** Aves
- Order-** Piciformes
- Family-** Picidae
- Genus-** Melanerpes
- Species-** *lewis*

**Range:** Found in the North-West and South-Western United States. Northern and Western California, Washington, Northwestern Montana, and Colorado. Commonly found in Southeastern San Joaquin County, California. Burned, clear-cut, open woodlands or meadows. Also in riverside and cottonwood groves.

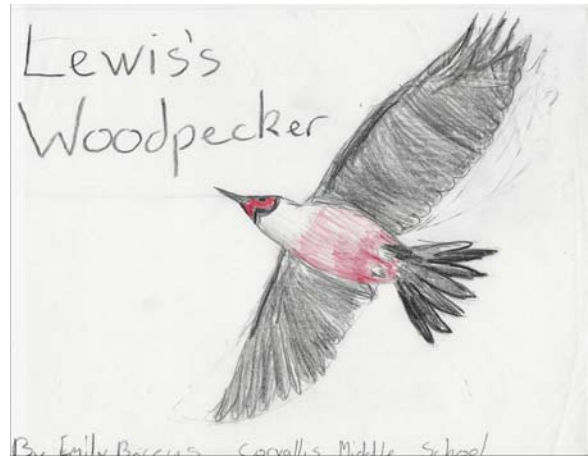
**Average size and Length:** 10-11 inches from head to foot. Wingspan- 20 inches

**Markings:**

- Has a dark green back, red face, pinkish red belly, and silver grey collar. Black beak, red chest, grey legs, black head with a rectangle that goes around the eyes and over its nose with a little under the chin. Grey ring around neck/throat. Its back and wings are a blackish-greenish color. The wings are wider than other woodpeckers.

**Cool Facts and behavior:**

- Silent during nesting season, but weak chattering notes.
- The Lewis woodpecker flies perch to perch to catch bugs.
- The Lewis's Woodpecker was first sighted on one of Lewis and Clark's expeditions. That's how this woodpecker got its name
- Diet- Fruits, nuts, and berries all year. In summer it will also feed off of insects and bugs.
- Nests in tree cavities.



# News and Notes

## Education Update

By Amanda Bestor

This month we are looking forward to hosting a table at the Youth expo at Teller on Saturday, May 14th. I hope you can join us to look at some bird nests and to make one of your own.

Additionally, Phillip Williams, our Bitterroot Audubon Education Ambassador, will be doing a guest lesson in the Corvallis 5th Grade to teach about Forest ecology.

## 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/](http://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 <[jellis@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org)>.

## Bird Shots

**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 May 21st 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.

## Calendar of Events

**May 14-** Teller Wildlife Refuge Youth Expo

**May 16-** BAS Board elections

**May 16-** Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf NWR, MT 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM

**May 19-** MT Audubon award nominations due date

**May 21-** Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.

**Jun 3-5-** Missoula, MT, Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

**Aug 17-** Lecture on George Bird Grinnell, conservationist, Darby Library, 6PM

**Sep 19-** The next Audubon meeting, location TBD



Courtesy Marg Johnson

Great Gray Owl in Hamilton, MT near Blodgett Canyon, spring 2016.



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