

MONTANA
Audubon



eNewsletter — April 2011



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HAPPY EARTH DAY

from your friends at Montana Audubon!



Today -- celebrate the day, the birds, the snow (?) and our amazing planet. The sun really is coming out this weekend...

**One Last Email or Phone Call - Help Us Save MEPA
The Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Both our latest action alert and last month's eNews asked for your help defending MEPA. This bill headed to the Governor's Desk and he REALLY needs to hear from all of us. If you haven't contacted him yet, do so today. Ask your friends, colleagues and family members to send one quick message. It's not over yet, and we remain very concerned.

SB 233 (Sen. J Keane, D-Butte) is going to the Governor. Ask for a VETO today! If you've already done so, THANK YOU!

Contact Governor Schweitzer:

Email him at: governor@mt.gov or send a message [here](#).

please contact [Amy](#).

Phone: 406-444-3111, FAX: 406:444-5529

Interested in

Audubon Chapter

activities this spring?

[Visit each Chapter's website.](#)

Support Montana

Audubon:



Owls at our Center in Billings... Check out [Heather's blog](#).

Our Texas tour begins this week - follow this southern adventure via [Darcie's blog](#).

Background: For nearly 40 years, the Montana Environmental Policy Act has served as a "look before you leap" approach to actions that may have a significant impact on the environment. It is the only place that impacts to fish & wildlife, cultural resources, and public health & safety are considered by projects. It also provides a process for the public to learn how they may be impacted by a project - as well as how they might provide comment on those impacts.

SB 233 severely undermines this process, tipping the scales in favor of industry and development. Proponents of these bills insist that changes to Montana's bedrock environmental law will create jobs. Montana Audubon and our conservation partners know that fully considering the impacts of a project results in better decisions. We also know that minimizing impacts to clean air, water, wildlife and communities is vital to maintaining a healthy economy in Montana.

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Long-billed Curlew ~ *April Bird-of-the-Month*

Thanks to author David Cronenwett

Among the many avian rites of spring on the Rocky Mountain Front, is the return of our Long Billed Curlews to their breeding prairie lands. It's a less gaudy event than the typically massive Snow Geese migration, but spectacular in its own way. I have found these creatures "staged up" in concentrations of nearly a hundred as they come into the country. This doesn't last long though; the birds will quickly pair up and become territorial for the nesting process.



The ridiculously long bill is actually a well-adapted foraging tool in both its wintering and breeding habitats. In Montana, much of what Curlews consume are grasshoppers and other insects, which can occur in great abundance. Many people find the plaintive cry of these birds to be strongly evocative of Montana's wide-open, native grasslands. Until recently, very little was known about migration routes and other basic facets of this bird's ecology. Nearly all wildlife agencies in the US, Canada and Mexico consider Long Billed Curlews to be an "at risk" species. Once again, this speaks largely to our cultural bias against grasslands as anything other than grain-growing, energy-producing areas that lack aesthetic appeal or biological value in general.

But nothing could be further from the truth. The grassland habitats upon which Curlews and other species depend are some of the richest, most rare and threatened ecosystems in all of North America. Because only 1-2% of relatively intact, native prairies exist on the continent, the concern for long-term viability of many creatures is serious.

The complete article is [HERE](#)....

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One Year Later and 40 Years Later

On the **One Year Anniversary** of the BP Oil Disaster, we need your help. National Audubon Society has been working to restore the Gulf Region since before the oil spill. And they, together with an amazing team of volunteers, are helping the birds, shores and marshes recover. Restoration means rebuilding the delta, and it takes money.



BP is poised to finally deliver on promises to put up the funds to begin to repair this critical region. Right now BP funds would go to the general US treasury. Tell Congress to direct Clean Water Act penalty money to **Gulf Restoration**. Learn more [HERE](#) & [ACT TODAY](#).

On the **40th Anniversary** of the Clean Air Act, we are thankful recent attacks to weaken this amazingly beneficial law were thwarted. Read more about efforts to protect the EPA's ability to reduce carbon pollution, action by our Congressional delegation, and what you can do [here](#).

On this **Earth Day**, thanks for all you do to understand global climate change impacts, work toward solutions and opportunities, and act as good stewards of our earth.

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News from Our Audubon Center

We're Hiring at the Audubon Conservation Education Center

Audubon Center is hiring Summer Naturalists in Training (NiTs)! Learn to be a Teacher Naturalist in this internship program for students ages 16–19. NiTs will learn about natural history of the Yellowstone River Valley as they help teach nature camp during the summer months. Training will take place during the week of June 13–17, 2011. NiTs will then select four of the eight weeks of camp that they would like to work. Schedule for most weeks is 7:30 AM – 1:30 PM (~25 hours/week). NiTs are paid \$7.30/hour. For more information on our camps or the NiTs program, visit www.mtacec.org.

We are also hiring a [Lands Stewardship Coordinator](#).

Hope to see you at our Center this Spring.

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Annual Audubon Awards -- Call for Nominations

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes select individuals or groups for their special achievements for birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Valuable wildlife and habitat conservation is often the result of two things—a person's passion for wildlife and their committed action.

In 2011 we will acknowledge individuals who exemplify both of these qualities in an award ceremony on June 4 at our Bird Festival in Glasgow. The categories for our awards include **Conservationist of the Year**, **Environmental Educator of the Year**, **Special Achievement Award**, and **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Learn more about each award and how to nominate a candidate [here](#). Nominations must be postmarked/e-mailed by May 16, 2011.

Registration is open for our annual ***Wings Across the Big Sky* Bird Festival** to be held in Glasgow June 3-5, 2011. Plan a vacation, see amazing birds and learn about grassland and sage conservation. Details [here](#).

HAPPY EARTH DAY! Thanks for all you do.

The Montana Audubon Staff



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