

MONTANA
Audubon



eNewsletter —May 2011



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It's Bird-a-thon season! You can support Amy's bird conservation and climate programs [here](#). And see [below](#) for our Audubon Center's upcoming

(late) May News from Montana Audubon

The Spring of Sogginess

No doubt it's been a wet one - for people and critters alike. Returning migrants seem a little delayed, perhaps dismayed, but not deterred. During seasons of extremes like this are reminders we need to take the long and broad view of our ecological systems. Shorebirds may have trouble breeding successfully without ample shorelines, but as long-lived birds, one failed season can be buffered. Wacky weather around the county reminds us of the need for a wide network of wildlife habitats - and conservation efforts like the [Important Bird Areas Program](#) - in safeguard our native species. We hope you can get outdoors, help conserve birds by reporting your [bird sightings](#), come to our [festival](#), and, of course, [support Montana Audubon](#).

Pictures are worth 1000 Words - Flood Photos Needed

In our work to protect streams corridors, we often give presentations. Pictures illustrating the impacts of flooding help explain the need to protect these areas. We'd love to get any flood pictures you take if you are out and about in the next few weeks. Pictures showing the impact of flooding on houses really impact decision makers. Email photos to [Janet](#).



bird-a-thon.

May is for Migration

Great advice from Audubon on how you can [protect birds](#).

Interested in local Audubon Chapter activities this spring and summer? [Visit each Chapter's website](#).

Support Montana Audubon:



Spring flowers and migrant at our Center in Billings... Check out [Heather's blog](#).

THANKS for your help!

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Golden Eagle ~ May Bird-of-the-Month

Thanks to author David Cronenwett

...I've been startled by the unexpected appearance of a large, dark creature silently riding thermals off Pine Butte. The unmistakable Golden Eagle is certainly one of the most iconic and noteworthy birds in Montana. They will soar over open grasslands for hours in their quest for prey and are always a spectacle to behold. Because I live along the Rocky Mountain Front flyway, they are rarely far from view.

Montana offers excellent habitat for breeding and wintering Golden Eagles. GPS technology has given biologists astonishing information about the migration behavior of these birds. Missoula-based Raptor View Research Institute tracks individual birds across vast areas of North America. This spring, a female Golden Eagle named "Elaine", fitted with a satellite transmitter, flew from her wintering grounds near Livingston, Montana to breed in the northern Brooks Range of Alaska. That is a journey of well over 2000 miles and one that will be repeated on the return trip in autumn. Like other raptors, Golden Eagles tend to follow topographical features like mountain ridges when migrating and do so ahead of low pressure systems when pulses of hundreds or thousands of individuals can be spotted along flyways.....

Current data suggests a decline of Golden Eagles across the West. In addition to the usual culprits (habitat loss, poaching, etc.) a particular and surprising malady is affecting ***The complete article is [HERE](#)....***

NOTE: Montana Golden Eagle nest records needed! If you know where a Golden is nesting this season, please contact [Amy](#)

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On the Policy Front

As we prepare for our festival and catch up on behind the scenes work, we're taking a little breather from the advocacy help requests. In June will update everyone on the state legislative session and provide our score card. And of course there will be continued opportunity for voicing your support for Clean Air, Clean Water, the EPA, solution to climate change and reduced pollution. Never a dull moment and letters to the editor mentioning what you care about are always welcome. Stay tuned.

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Upcoming Events at Our Audubon Center

1. Get Outside Montana - *Kick Off Event* June 12, 1-3 pm at the Center

Get Outside Montana is a multi-week, back-to-nature event for all ages. Families will engage in a little friendly competition as they explore Billings and Red Lodge's conservation areas through activities such as games, Frisbee golf, scavenger hunts, canoeing and more.

The Audubon Conservation Education Center, together with a number of other groups, will be hosting a variety of guided and self-guided events June 12-July 10. The top 3 families who participate in the most activities during the 4 weeks will win prizes! 1st Prize: North Face 4-person Tent, day pack + accessories. 2nd Prize: 3 speed bike + a \$50 gift card to The Bike Shop. 3rd Prize: \$100 gift card to Scheels + a \$25 gift card to The Bike Shop.

Learn more about our Kick-Off Event at the Audubon Center on **June 12th** and how to participate at www.mtacec.org.

2. Get your team together! **Bird-A-Thon -- June 11-12**

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and the Audubon Center will be hosting a 24 hour Bird-a-thon. This 24 hour event will provide fun opportunities for all ages to learn and appreciate our local bird populations while helping to support the local Audubon Center and Chapter. Each team will collect pledges to benefit the installation and maintenance of an osprey pole with webcam on the Audubon Center's property. The live feed will appear on YVAS's and the Audubon Center's websites for all to enjoy. We hope to conduct research each year learning more about the osprey's natural history

This is not just for adults! Families are welcome to join the Bird-a-thon on Sunday 3 – 5 PM at the Center. Audubon staff will teach you the tricks of bird identification, some common local birds, and how to use binoculars. Then we'll head into the field in pursuit of our feathered friends. Binoculars and bird guides will be available to loan. Be sure to stick around for the awards ceremony and dinner at 5:30 PM! Learn more [here](#).

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Annual Audubon Festival - *Around the Corner*

Registration is still open for our annual ***Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival*** to be held in Glasgow June 3-5, 2011. Late registration is now through May 30 then at the festival. We won't let soggy weather deter us from another great weekend. Details [here](#).

Hope to see you in Glasgow or out and about somewhere around Montana! Thanks for all you do.

The Montana Audubon Staff



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