

Fall 2007

Volume 16, Number 2

"for the conservation of native birds, other wildlife, and their habitats..."

Audubon, Birds, and Global Warming

The prairie potholes dotting eastern Montana look like jewels from the air, but to migrating waterfowl, they are even more precious. Millions of geese, ducks and shorebirds use the seasonal ponds as breeding sites or stopovers during migration. However, hotter and drier summers linked to global climate change will dry up as many as 90% of these oases, and waterfowl populations will suffer accordingly.

Contemplating scenarios like this is part of the job of Montana Audubon's new Global Warming Organizer, Amy Cilimburg. Riparian and wetland areas support more species of breeding and migratory birds than any other habitat in Montana. Even though these habitats occupy less than 4% of the landscape, they are among the most endangered. Increased aridity linked to global climate change will severely reduce these and other important habitats. For this reason, Audubon has begun a major effort to head off these effects.

The crazy spring cacophony of Yellow-headed Blackbirds, so dependent on bulrushes that grow in the wettest areas of wetlands, could disappear. If sagebrush withers, it's going to be hard to be a Sage Grouse. And more complex chains of weather-related cause and effect threaten even more species. Amphibians in Glacier National Park time their breeding to coincide with snowmelt, and predators like snakes and shrews time their life cycles to feed on the young amphibians. But if snowmelt comes too early, the chain that leads from the amphibians to the

snakes to predators like raptors can break down. Ecologists believe that, if not slowed, as many as 30% of known plant and animal species are likely to be at far greater risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 4°F.

The potential consequences are so severe they can bring us to despair. But listen to James Hansen, the NASA scientist who forecasts some of the bleakest outlooks on global warming. He was recently quoted as saying, "I am always surprised when people get depressed

**Audubon Global
Warming Workshop
November 3**

Please join us for a Global Warming workshop on Saturday, November 3, 2007 from 10 am - 3 pm in Missoula. For more information, see page 5.

rather than energized to do something. It's not too late to stabilize climate. I am not about to give up."

And this is where Audubon steps in. Educating and inspiring action to head off global warming is what our campaign is all about. The National Audubon Society has provided the seed money to launch this Montana-based program. We've already started working directly with Audubon Chapters and leaders from

more Global Warming, page 5

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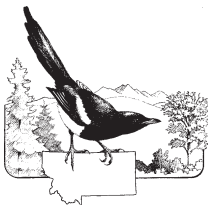
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Costa Rica in March 2008 Join Montana Audubon!

Join Montana Audubon board member, professor Jack Kirkley, on this 2-country 13 day adventure, exploring some of the most productive birding areas in Costa Rica and Panama.

This Montana Audubon tour will begin on March 27, as participants arrive on their various international flights, converging on San Jose, the capital city of Costa Rica. Our first 2 days of birding will focus on the Guanacaste dry forests of northern Costa Rica in search of many Central American specialties. Then we will shift our location eastward to search for the Scarlet Macaw and other birds of the Pacific lowlands, as we visit places like Carara National Park. At the conclusion of our fifth day of birding in Costa Rica, we will make a short evening flight across the border into western Panama, where we will

more Costa Rica, page 11



Magpie Muse

From the Executive Director...

Although Montana Audubon is faring well, many of the birds we are working to conserve are not so fortunate. The good news is that, in July our national symbol, the Bald Eagle, was removed from the federal Endangered Species list! It has been a long road to recovery, but this species now has almost 400 active nesting sites in Montana alone.

Recent analysis of Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey data gathered across the continent during the past 40 years is showing dramatic declines for a number of America's most common and beloved species. Many of these declines are prevalent throughout the species' range, including Montana.

Numbers of several wetland/streamside habitat birds have shown rather sharp decreases in our state over the past 4 decades. For example, the Great Blue Heron has declined by 81% since 1967, the Belted Kingfisher is down 88%, and the Killdeer, a conspicuous shorebird inhabiting urban parks and ponds, has declined by 80%.

We know that 88% of Montana's 421 species use wetlands and/or streamside habitats at some point during their annual cycle, even though these habitats comprise only 4% of Montana's landscape. Of course these habitats also benefit people by filtering out water pollutants, preventing floods and providing critical breeding habitats for both game and nongame wildlife.

We know that wetland and stream habitats are in decline in Montana. As Montana's human population grows, there will be more and more pressure to develop these critical, yet rare habitats—

and once they are lost it will be difficult, if not impossible, to bring them back.



Montana Audubon is working vigorously to protect wetlands and streamside habitats. Our public policy work is focused on creating "setback" regulations for new buildings along major streams and rivers (*see article, page 7*). Of 31 Important Bird Areas identified in the state thus far, 21 of them contain substantial, high-quality wetland habitats. Furthermore, our Audubon Conservation Education Center in Billings has focused its outdoor education programs on these complex systems and their exceptional values to humans and wildlife (*see article, page 3*).

This year, we have much to be thankful for here at Montana Audubon. Our Annual Bird Festival in June (in Ennis) was a resounding success (*see article, page 8*), and our team of volunteer Board members, chapter leaders, and staff are moving a number of important projects and initiatives forward. It is especially noteworthy that two new Montana Audubon endowments have been established to help support our conservation work into the future (*see article, page 12*).

Thanks so much for your past generosity—your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Warmest regards,

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Audubon Conservation Education Center Hosts Yellowstone Bioblitz

A group of young kids, with noses pressed against the aquarium, come eye to eye with a small mouth bass. A crowd has gathered to watch as Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks employees fit a 30-pound snapping turtle with a radio-telemetry tracking device. Under the tent that housed this live museum, parents and children observe—at a distance—the snakes, spiders, and other fascinating critters discovered during the past 24-hour frenzy of searching, trapping, and collecting along the Yellowstone River in Billings.

What brought this group of scientists, volunteers, and families together is the 2007 Yellowstone River Bioblitz. In June, 40 scientific experts and volunteers came together to survey all species from as many taxonomic groups as possible over a 24-hour period in an area that includes the Yellowstone River, Riverfront Park, and the Audubon Conservation Education Center (ACEC). The idea behind the bioblitz was first suggested by Kayhan Ostovar, President of Yellowstone Valley Audubon and a member of the ACEC Board, as a way to organize the natural history talents of top scientists and naturalists in Montana to document the biodiversity present at the ACEC.

A bioblitz is a fun way to bring together specialists to create an inventory of all species in our own backyard. By bringing together scientific experts, their observations can be used to identify uncommon or special habitats for protection and management. While this

was the first bioblitz for Montana, the event is not unique. In fact, since the first bioblitz was hosted on Thoreau's Walden Pond, 28 states and seven countries have hosted similar events.

The Yellowstone River Bioblitz inventoried 434 species: 70 bird species, 10 reptiles and amphibians, at least 200 invertebrates (crustaceans, insects, spiders, etc.), 25 fish, 19 mammals, and 110 kinds of plants. Some particularly exciting discoveries were spotted brown bats at the ACEC ponds and a very large snapping turtle captured in Lake Josephine. While the diversity of life was noteworthy, perhaps the most significant outcome of this event was the tremendous response from the community. The live museum set up at the conclusion of the 24-hour inventory brought 350 people (mostly families) to the ACEC. The buzz of children exclaiming "wow," "cool," or "what is that" was truly memorable.

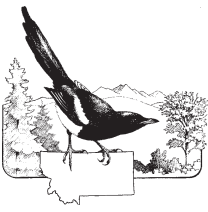
A special thanks to Kayhan Ostovar for his herculean effort to organize this event. Yellowstone Valley Audubon volunteers came out in full force to set up tents, tables, chairs and prepare food. Several Montana Audubon Board members from other communities helped too. Additionally, local businesses contributed supplies, equipment, food, and cash donations to make this event possible. To learn more about organizing an event for your community, visit <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/blitz/> or contact Montana Audubon at (406) 443-3949.



Thank You Yellowstone River Bioblitz Sponsors:

Big Sky Digital Printing
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Billings, Boy Scouts of America
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Zoo Montana





Montana Audubon Elects New Officers

Montana Audubon's Board of Directors elected new officers recently: **Larry McEvoy** is President; **Peter Norlander** is Vice President; **Elsie Tuss** is Secretary; and **Dan Sullivan** is Treasurer.

Larry is a retired physician living in Clancy; he also has been active with Last Chance Audubon. Peter is a data cable technician from Bozeman who is currently also the president of Sacajawea Audubon. Elsie Tuss is an organic farmer/rancher who lives in Floweree; she is a past-president of Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon. Dan Sullivan is a state employee; he is currently treasurer of Last Chance Audubon.

We want to also take this opportunity to thank our outgoing president **Betsy Griffing**—for all her dedication and hard work!



Rim Country Partners with Audubon

Rim Country Land Institute, a state-wide education and research organization, works to heal our cultural disconnect with nature. Toward that end, they hosted a 3-day Teacher Camp in Billings this summer, which included an address from Jim Posewitz on the *History of the American Conservation Ethic* and a panel discussion with Rocky Mountain College on the threats to prairie ecosystems. Nine workshops were also held to explore various aspects of the prairie, with Montana Audubon as a partner in these events. Rim Country also partnered in the Billings Bioblitz (*see article, page 3*). In Helena, a Holistic Wealth Inventory was held in August to invite community input about sense of place in economic, social, and ecological areas. For more information on Rim Country: <www.rimcountry.org>.

2007 Audubon Awards

Each year Montana Audubon proudly recognizes select individuals for their special achievements for birds and other wildlife. This year we recognized:

Debra Doerflinger ~ Lifetime Achievement Award, for her life-long commitment and dedication to Audubon, especially Pintler Audubon, which stretches from Deer Lodge and Butte to Dillon and Virginia City. Debra's volunteerism and leadership has been the glue that has held Pintler Audubon together, year after year: she has participated in Christmas Bird Counts, served as President and newsletter editor, recruited interesting speakers for the chapter's monthly meetings, and spearheaded sunflower seed sales. Debra, more than any one person, has been instrumental in bringing conservation issues to the forefront for Audubon members living in southwestern Montana.

John Scheuering ~ Environmental Educator of the Year, for his years of service to the community of Miles City and Rosebud Audubon. In Miles City, John was a Garfield Elementary teacher for 24 years, using environmental education extensively in his classroom. As a charter member of Rosebud Audubon, John served as president, conservation chair, local bird expert, Christmas Bird Count coordinator, Audubon Community Naturalist, and field trip leader. His programs have touched students, families, service clubs, and more. His bi-weekly *Miles City Star* article, *Bird Calls*, has kept the community informed about the natural history of the area's birds.

Five Valleys Audubon ~ Conservationist of the Year, for their tenacious work to protect the Clark Fork River/Grass Valley Important Bird Area (IBA). This IBA is located west of Missoula, and includes 21,000 acres of river, cottonwood forests, wetlands, and grasslands. Over 230 bird species have been found in the area, including enough breeding pairs of Lewis's Woodpeckers and Red-naped Sapsuckers to qualify it as a "continentally" significant IBA. The Chapter has worked with individual private landowners on habitat conservation projects, conducted numerous bird surveys, partnered with government agencies and other nonprofit organizations, and testified at hearings to advocate for IBA protection.

Angie Kociolek ~ Special Achievement Award, for her work to protect a special wetland near Bozeman and her work on behalf of Montana's birds. As Conservation Chair, Angie is spearheading Sacajawea Audubon's work on the East Main Wetlands in Bozeman. If protected, this 14 acre privately owned urban wetland would save important open space and wildlife habitat, including habitat for 83 species of migrating and breeding birds. Angie has also volunteered on several other bird projects, including bird census work on Audubon's Madison Valley IBA and a monitoring project on the (rare) Black Swift.

We are privileged and proud to know all of these individuals for their outstanding work for birds, Audubon, and the state of Montana.

other conservation organizations. Through a series of presentations, workshops, articles, our website, and personal conversations, we will work to inspire Auduboners and their friends to both personal and political action.


Personal actions. From CFL light bulbs to laundry-on-the-lines to driving habits to buying local foods, we all need to look for ways to reduce our emissions and shrink our carbon footprint. We'll expand on these ideas in future articles, presentations, and on our website.

Also, paying attention to our natural systems over the long term is necessary to understand climate change. Recent studies relying on Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) are helping to elucidate northerly range shifts. (So birding is good, and carpooling to go birding is even better!)

Political actions. We will never get sufficient emissions reductions without government initiatives at the local, state, and federal levels. Right now energy and global warming bills are being considered by the US Congress, and there is hope for passing strong new laws. Montana's congressional delegation is considered key in this process (Senators Baucus and Tester, and Representative Rehberg), and Auduboners are in a prime position to influence them. Legislation that would raise fuel efficiency standards and establish "renewable energy standards" is part of the Energy bill being negotiated. Effective Global Warming bills now moving through the Senate could commit us to reducing emissions by 80% by the year 2050. Importantly, this latter bill includes funding to study climate change effects on our fish and wildlife.

How can you learn more and get involved? We at Montana Audubon hope you will:

- Attend Chapter presentations.
- Sign up to be a Montana Audubon "Armchair Activist" by sending Amy your email/contact information (<amy@mtaudubon.org>).
- Check our web page for updated wildlife science, and legislative information <<http://mtaudubon.org/globalwarming.htm>>.
- Attend one of our global warming workshops. We have at least 2 workshops planned—one in Missoula Nov. 3rd (see side bar) and one in Billings in February 2008.
- Talk to your neighbors and friends about global warming.
- Bring us your ideas. We look forward to a continued conversation with all of you. Please get in touch with Amy: <amy@mtaudubon.org> or (406) 465-1141.



Please join us for an upcoming event in Missoula:

Montana Audubon Global Warming Workshop

WHO: Audubon members and the general public.

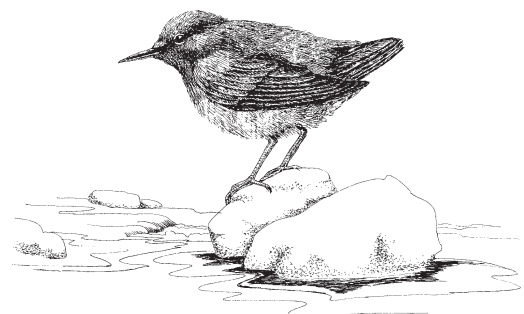
WHEN: Saturday, November 3, 2007, 10 am - 3 pm.
Lunch provided.

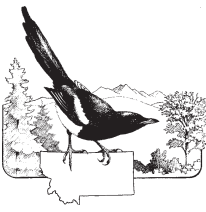
WHERE: Missoula Public Library, 301 East Main Steet, large meeting room.

WHAT: We invite you to learn about global warming's impact on birds and biodiversity here in Montana. Most importantly, we will discuss solutions and show you how to get involved. The workshop will include training in advocacy techniques, legislative strategy, how to talk with your friends and neighbors about the issue, how to use the media, discussion about local impacts and mitigation, and more. The training will be conducted by conservation leaders from Montana, experts from the National Audubon Society, and others. More details to follow!

We are taking steps to make this a low-carbon event and will encourage car pooling and may provide vans from outlying western Montana communities.

RSVP for this event so we can plan accordingly. For more information and to RSVP, contact Amy Cilimburg: <amy@mtaudubon.org> or (406) 465-1141.





Magpie Muse

Thank You!

Montana Audubon depends on the support of numerous individual donors. The following individuals made gifts to Montana Audubon in the period between May 15 and October 10, 2007.

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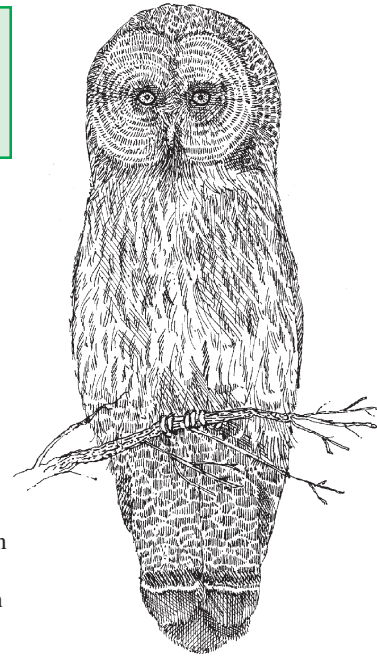
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Donors: Less than \$100

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Wish List for Audubon Office

Toyota Prius (no harm asking!)
Billings Education Center: canoes, paddles, life jackets, waders and hip boots (youth sizes especially)
Flashcards for our computers
Refrigerator (a newer model would decrease our carbon footprint)
Large coffee pot (28 + cup size) for meetings
Stamps
Walkie-talkie sets for Bird Festival field trips
Call the Audubon office if you can help!

• Memorial Gifts •

Few tributes are as lasting as a gift that helps preserve Montana's birds and their habitats. We owe a special thank you to those of you who have recently made a gift in memory of:

James Peterson
Dick Rosa



Stream Setbacks Find Local Support in Montana



Montana Audubon's public policy work has focused on the protection of wetlands and riparian areas in recent years because these areas provide the most important habitat for birds and other wildlife in the state; both are also increasingly threatened by development pressures. Many of the impacts to these areas can be avoided by land use planning decisions made at the local level.

We are pleased to report that streamside setbacks for new buildings are currently being considered in the following places, with Montana Audubon and/or local chapters involved (at some level) with these efforts:

Flathead County (Kalispell area) ~ This fall, the Flathead County Planning Board is considering regulations with setbacks for *new* buildings within *new*

subdivisions. The proposed regulations include 250-foot setbacks on the Flathead River and its major forks (North, Middle, and South), with 100 feet of the setback in native vegetation; 200-foot setbacks on the Swan, Whitefish, Stillwater, and Pleasant Valley Fisher Rivers and Ashley Creek, with 75-feet in native vegetation; and 100-foot setbacks on all other streams in Flathead County, with 50 feet in native vegetation.

Lewis & Clark County (Helena area) ~ This winter, Lewis & Clark County will consider the following setbacks and vegetative buffers for *all new buildings*: 250-foot setbacks on major rivers,

(Missouri (excluding reservoirs), Dearborn, Sun, and Big Blackfoot Rivers), with 100 feet in native vegetation; 200-foot setbacks on major streams (identified in the regulations), with 75 feet in native vegetation; 100-foot setbacks on smaller streams (identified in the regulations), all intermittent streams, wetlands, Missouri River Reservoirs, Lake Helena, and the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir, with 50 feet in native vegetation; and a smaller setback for irrigation ditches.

Photos Needed Can You Help?

Audubon and others need photographs that can be used to show homes built without setbacks and homes built with setbacks. We are collecting Montana photos, with the photographer's distribution permission and information on the picture's location. If you can help, please contact Janet Ellis at Montana Audubon: (406) 443-3949 or <jellis@mtaudubon.rg>!

County Commission approval. The Missoula County regulation considered last spring included: 200-foot setbacks on the Clark Fork, Swan, and Bitterroot Rivers; 100-foot setbacks on the Clearwater River, Blackfoot River, and Rock Creek (near Clinton); 100-foot setbacks on Rattlesnake, Petty, Morrel, Lolo, and part of Ninemile Creek; and 75-foot setbacks on all other streams in the county.

Ravalli County (Bitterroot Valley) ~ Ravalli County has a County

more Stream Setbacks, page 11

Veracruz Mexico Tour Late September, 2008

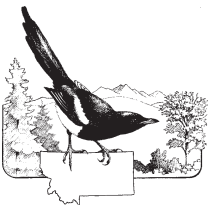


Mississippi Kite. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photo

Montana Audubon has a 12-day birding tour planned for the Veracruz region of Mexico in September 2008, led by Dr. Jack Kirkley. It is scheduled to view the peak raptor migration, when the stunning "river of raptors"—several million strong—streams through the area, providing one of the most awesome wildlife spectacles on earth. Soaring in vortex-like clouds, these flocks include 25 species of raptors, dominated by tens of thousands of Mississippi Kites, Broad-winged Hawks, and Turkey Vultures.

The tour will also include visits to coastal lagoons, wetlands, lowland forests, savannas, and high mountain pine-oak and cloud forests, enabling us to see as many birds as possible (540 bird species are listed for central Veracruz!). We will be led by skillful, local birding guides provided by our host, the nonprofit organization Pronatura-Veracruz.

For more information, contact tour leader Dr. Jack Kirkley by email: <j_kirkley@umwestern.edu> or phone: (406) 683-732 or call Montana Audubon: (406) 443-3949.



Madison Valley Bird Festival—One for the Ages!

Montana Audubon’s Annual Meeting and Bird Festival was held in Ennis in June. By all accounts, it was a resounding success! Over 200 people attended, with smiling faces common throughout the weekend.

Jim Posewitz opened the festival Friday evening at the First Madison Valley Bank with an historic account of how America’s “culture of conservation” began more than 100 years ago. On Saturday morning, a dozen field trips surveyed a variety of avian habitats in the area, documenting more than 150 bird species. For example, the Johnny Gulch burn trip recorded an abundance of nesting woodpeckers, including many Three-toed and Black-backed, that were easily observed at close range (without disturbing them). The trip to Ennis Lake produced over 100 species, including a

number of grebes, pelicans, diving ducks, gulls, loons, cranes, shorebirds and more. Sunday’s trip to Red Rock Lakes Refuge identified more than 120 bird species. Thanks to all our field trip leaders for their excellent efforts!

Saturday afternoon’s events included *Introduction to Birding* and *Kids & Families* workshops, as well as informative talks on the following topics: grassland bird ecology, Peregrine Falcons and falconry in Montana, songbird banding, Greater Sage-Grouse conservation, shorebird identification, and results of contaminant studies on eagles and ospreys. Congratulations to all the speakers for their professional and informative presentations.

The evening banquet featured a number of award presentations (*see article,*

page 4) and a wonderful presentation by John Carlson on the birds, wildlife and ecology of the Antarctic region.

The local Ennis community gave us a very warm welcome—and the economic data from the festival shows that the event pumped more than \$39,000 into the Ennis economy that weekend! In addition, the raffle and silent auction netted Audubon almost \$7,000 (shared among the two local Audubon chapters and the state office). Sacajawea Audubon of Bozeman deserves special kudos for their outstanding efforts organizing the silent auction, field trips, and the event’s logistics.

All in all, the 2007 Madison Valley Bird Festival will be remembered as one of the best ever! Plan to join us at next year’s festival, June 6 - 8, 2008, in Billings.



Amy Cilimburg Joins Staff



Montana Audubon recently hired Amy Cilimburg as a part time Global Warming Grassroots Organizer. Amy is a wildlife biologist. Her ‘other’ part time job is Assistant Director of the Avian Science Center at the University of Montana. Last spring she worked with Bitterroot and Missoula Audubon members on a successful citizen science monitoring project on Flammulated Owls.

“Advocating for sensible energy development and reasoned climate change solutions, with an eye on birds and other wildlife, is a logical and exciting next step for me,” writes Amy. She is dedicated to combating global warming—both professionally and personally. In fact, her family has installed a super-efficient heating system

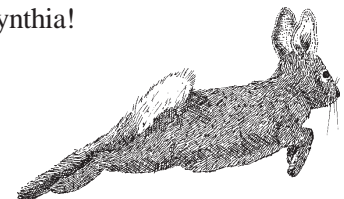
in their home and they make biodiesel from used restaurant oil.

To find out more about Montana Audubon’s Global Warming work, see page 1 *and* plan to attend one of our workshops—the first one is planned in Missoula Nov. 3rd (*see page 5*).



Good Luck to Cynthia O’Bryant

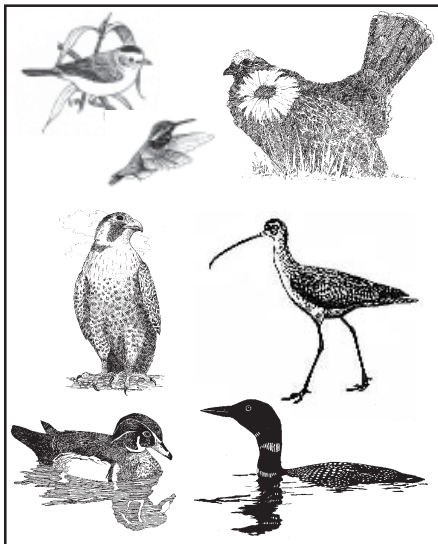
Montana Audubon’s Office Manager, Cynthia O’Bryant, will soon be moving to the Seattle area. If you’ve ever called the Montana Audubon office, Cynthia is the cheerful, helpful person who answered the phone. Many of you also met her at our Bird Festivals, which she successfully organized with a keen attention to detail. We wish her happiness and success in her future endeavors. Good luck, Cynthia!



Introducing the Birds of Montana Project

Interest in Montana's birds is at an all-time high, yet Montana is one of the few states that lacks a comprehensive reference on its avifauna. Without question, a modern publication on all of our birds is long overdue. Montana Audubon is proud to announce that it is leading the effort to fill this need by sponsoring *Birds of Montana*. This important book the first of its kind in our history is being written by Jeff Marks, Dan Casey, John Carlson, and Paul Hendricks, and will take four years to complete. It will cover the status, distribution, biology, and conservation of the 421 bird species known to occur in the state, in addition to providing a lively account of the history of Montana ornithology.

Birds of Montana is being funded in a variety of ways, including the "Sponsor-a-Species" campaign in which individuals donate funds to sponsor species accounts, with sponsors' names appearing at the end of each account. Information on the book will appear on our website and in future newsletters. We hope you share our excitement about *Birds of Montana*, and that you view the book as we do: a gift to Montanans who wish to learn more about the state's birds, and a means of encouraging the public to treasure and protect the variety and abundance of our birds and the habitats that sustain them. Contact Jeff Marks (<jeff17_marks@msn.com> or (503) 774-4783) for more information on the book's contents and how you can help support the project.



A special thanks!

The following chapters made recent donations in support of our work:

Bitterroot Audubon
Five Valleys Audubon
Mission Mountain Audubon
Last Chance Audubon

Sacajawea Audubon
Upper Missouri Breaks
Audubon
Yellowstone Valley Audubon

Wind Farm Siting Policy Recommended

Good news! Montana's Governor Climate Change Advisory Committee included Montana Audubon's suggested wind power certification program in its final recommendations, which are due to be released in early November.

The actual wording of recommendation ES-2 is:

Develop a system that certifies and recognizes new wind projects that have implemented measures in project construction and operation so as to minimize impacts to wildlife, critical wildlife habitat, national and state parks, and other areas of special concern. The Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) should work collaboratively with stakeholders to establish the criteria for such a system in order to formalize the best management practices that Montanans agree make sense for active but low-impact wind power development.

This policy will help ensure that large wind farms do not significantly impact wildlife and other critical areas. Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon's Program Director, provided the Advisory Committee with an outline of what the program might look like; they decided the recommendation had merit. Now it is our job to work with DEQ to come up with the actual program criteria. Stay tuned!

Grant Money Available

Montana Audubon will be offering grants totaling approximately \$2,000 this winter. This money is generated by the Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana Endowment. It supports research and education projects that focus on the preservation, enhancement, and public appreciation of Montana's wildlife.

Last year's funds supported testing of Bald Eagles in southeastern Montana for mercury and other contaminants; purchasing binoculars to enhance wildlife education programs for school students in Bozeman; and providing travel scholarships for education field trips in the Billings area.

For information on the application requirements, visit our website (<www.mtaudubon.org>) or contact the Audubon office. Applications must be postmarked by December 14, 2007; grants will be awarded by February 1, 2008.



Magpie Muse

Christmas Bird Count Join the Fun!



The Christmas Bird Count is a long-standing winter bird census in which volunteers count every bird they see or hear during one day in a designated 15-mile diameter circle. Last year, almost 560 volunteers participated in Montana's 30 Christmas Bird Counts statewide (see accompanying map). These volunteers recorded a total of 152 species of birds, and 154,291 individual birds.

Please think about joining one of this year's CBCs, which will be conducted sometime between December 14, 2007 and January 5, 2008. If you don't know who to call to find out about a local count, call the Montana Audubon office, and we will put you in touch with the right person. Beginning birders are welcome.

Montana Christmas Bird Count Facts:

- Oldest annual count: Bozeman has conducted CBCs every year since 1950.
- Youngest count: Grant-Kohrs (Deer Lodge area) started in 2007.
- Most common birds last year: Canada Geese (30,635 birds), Mallards (20,080 birds), and Bohemian Waxwings (12,005 birds).
- CBC with most species seen last year: 85 species were seen on the Stevensville count.
- CBC with least species seen last year: only 15 species were seen on the Little Rocky Mountain count.
- Bird species seen in every count last year: Bald Eagles (Black-capped Chickadees were seen in all but 1 count and Black-Billed Magpies were seen in all but 2 counts).

Montana Audubon Board Member Profile: Elsie Tuss

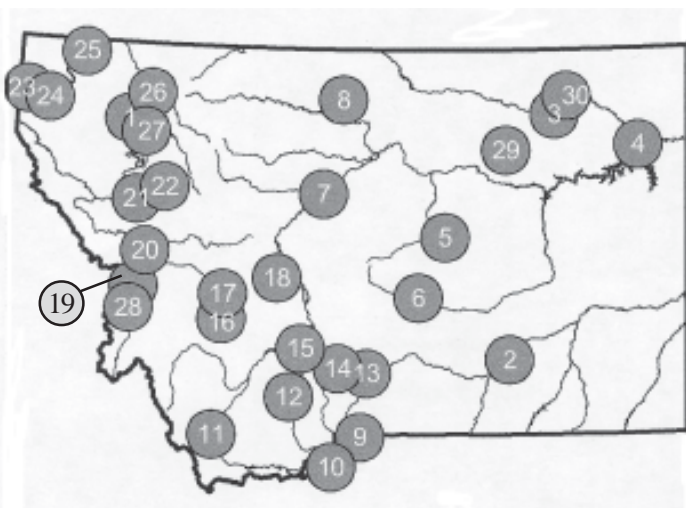
Elsie Tuss was born and raised on 160 acres of pine forests outside of Lewistown, Montana. Upon graduation from high school, Elsie went onto a career as an elementary teacher and principal in Minnesota, Iowa, and throughout Montana (Sidney, Red Lodge, Lewistown, Great Falls, and Glendive). In 1970, Elsie attended the Outward Bound Survival School in Golden, Colorado.



Today, Elsie and her husband grow organic cattle and grains on the "Russ n' Tuss Farm and Ranch" outside of Floweree. Her dedication to organic farming is rooted in the belief that, "We should be good to the earth using organic methods of fertilizing and not using chemicals." Elsie is also active in numerous organizations dedicated to conservation and organic farming; she has served many roles—from newsletter editor to president—for the Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Society.

Elsie currently serves as the Secretary of Montana Audubon. She enjoys her work with Audubon because the members are dedicated and she, "Learns so much from everyone." Elsie loves the agricultural lifestyle. In fact, she recently said, "My favorite activity is growing things—particularly trees—and the wild plum bushes in the shelterbelt." Elsie Tuss: a passionate conservationist, with a deep conservation ethic that she puts into action on a daily basis.

Map of Montana Christmas Bird Count Locations



No.	CBC NAME	No.	CBC NAME
1	Kalispell	16	Warm Springs
2	Billings	17	Grant-Kohrs
3	Bowdoin	18	Helena
4	Fort Peck	19	Stevensville
5	Lewistown	20	Missoula
6	Musselshell Valley	21	Ninepipe
7	Great Falls	22	Upper Swan Valley
8	Chester	23	Troy
9	Yellowstone NP	24	Libby
10	West Yellowstone	25	Eureka
11	Clark Canyon Dam	26	West Glacier
12	Ennis	27	Bigfork
13	Park County (Livingston)	28	Hamilton
14	Bozeman	29	Little Rocky Mtns
15	Three Forks	30	McNeil Slough

Visit Australia and Ecuador with Montana Audubon

Upcoming Montana Audubon birding tours include **Australia (November 2008) and Ecuador (February-March 2009)**. These tours are being led by John Shipley, and will feature the colorful bird species of these countries.

The Australia tour visits the tropical rain forests of NE Australia in Queensland, and includes a boat trip to the Great Barrier Reef. We will see about 20 species of parrots, along with birds-of-paradise, bowerbirds, fairy-wrens, and honeyeaters. We'll also make a concerted effort to find koala, platypus, and some of the 50 different species of kangaroos. The lodges we stay at are exquisite and the meals are superb! The

all-inclusive cost for the Australia tour is \$4,495 from Brisbane, which includes a \$500 tax-deductible contribution to Montana Audubon.

The Ecuador tour will find us viewing different but equally spectacular birds. Here, we should see at least 50 species of tanagers, and 40 species of hummingbirds, along with antpittas, toucans, and trogons. These tours begin in Quito and will visit an array of habitats on the slopes of the Andes mountains.

Come join us for some terrific birding in Australia or Ecuador. For additional information, please call John Shipley at (406) 465-8247.



Noisy Pitta from Australia.

transfer to a quaint hotel located on the flanks of the extinct Baru Volcano.

The second half of our tour will begin with 2 full days of birding in the Chiriqui highlands of western Panama. There, we will search for the Resplendent Quetzal, Turquoise Cotinga and other montaine specialties in this pleasantly cool, lush environment. Our highland birding adventures will be complemented with other interesting activities, such as a visit to the Dracula Orchid Farm and to a family owned coffee plantation. Our third day will feature birding in the cloud forest habitat on the Continental Divide, concluding with a one hour flight to the Panama Canal Zone.

The final 3 days of our main tour are likely to be some of our most productive birding days, as we concentrate on several world famous birding trails in the Canal Zone, including the Pipeline Road, the Achiote Road, Cerro Azul, as well as the nearby Metropolitan Park. Day 13 (April 8) will be the final day of our

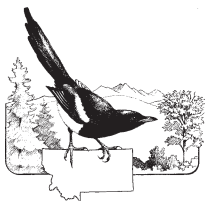
main tour, with some folks embarking on their trip home. Alternatively, it will be the first day of a 4 day extension to the Darien region of eastern Panama.

The Darien Extension will include a semi-rigorous trip into this remote region, including a 1½ hour boat ride up river to our destination, a native Embera village where a rustic wooden "lodge" will serve as our home base. The impressive tropical forest surrounding the village hosts spectacular daily flights of macaws as well as a variety of other birds unique to the Darien. For our more adventurous members, a semi-strenuous 2½ hour hike to an active Harpy Eagle nest will also be an option. April 12 will be the date of our international flights home from our adventure.

For more information about this tour, please contact tour leader Dr. Jack Kirkley phone (406) 683-7321 or email: <j_kirkley@umwestern.edu>, or Montana Audubon (406) 443-3949.

Commission-approved Streamside Setbacks Committee, which recently developed a draft emergency zoning ordinance on setbacks for *all new buildings*. The draft ordinance includes 200-foot vegetative buffers/setbacks on the Bitterroot River; 150-foot vegetative buffers/setbacks on the East and West Fork of the Bitterroot; 100-foot vegetative buffers/setbacks on large perennial streams; and 75-foot vegetative buffers/setbacks on small perennial streams.

Whitefish ~ The City of Whitefish is considering adopting setbacks in a Critical Areas Ordinance. It calls for setbacks for *all new buildings*: approximately 100-foot setbacks on the Whitefish River, with 75-feet in native vegetation; 125-foot setbacks on other perennial streams, with 100 feet in native vegetation; 75-foot setbacks on intermittent streams, with 50 feet in native vegetation; and 100 - 150-foot setbacks around wetlands (the size depends on local circumstances).



Montana Audubon
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Magpie Muse

Fall 2007

New Bird List for Montana



A new bird list has been created for the state of Montana. It includes all 421 species approved by the Montana Bird Records Committee (up from 413 species on the list printed in 2004). It can be accessed at:

<http://mtaudubon.org/html/birdwatching_state_bird_list_hotline.htm>

For printing, it is best to have legal paper in your printer (unless your eyes are a lot better than ours!). Thanks to **Coburn Currier** of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (and a Last Chance Audubon Board member) for this new product.

If you would like us to mail you a printed copy of the list, send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Two New Endowment Funds Established For Montana Audubon!



Montana Audubon's Board of Directors recently created two new *permanent* endowment funds: a General Operating Endowment, and the Janet H. Ellis Public Policy Endowment. The purpose of these endowments is to support the organization's General Operations and Public Policy programs, respectively. The Board authorized the allocation of \$250,000 (from a substantial Anonymous gift received last year) for the General Operating Endowment. With the help of a number of generous individuals, the Ellis Public Policy Endowment currently has over \$16,000 donated.

Both endowments are invested with D.A. Davidson. Only the interest/dividend income from these endowments can be accessed and spent each year to support the organization's programs.

We encourage each one of you to consider donating to either fund to help make Montana Audubon an even stronger, more stable institution going forward. You may simply send a donation (check, stocks, etc.) to the Montana

Audubon office, and indicate which endowment fund you wish to contribute to. Thanks for your help!

Thank You!

We want to thank the following foundations & corporations for their support. Their contributions make our work possible:

- Cinnabar Foundation
- Don & Carol Roberts Family Foundation
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation
- Fanwood Foundation
- Liz Claiborne/Art Ortenberg Foundation
- Margaret Reed Foundation
- Raptor View Research Institute
- Crosby Garrett Associates

