

MONTANA  
Audubon



eNewsletter — July 2011



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## Summer News from Montana Audubon

### Yellowstone River Oil Spill

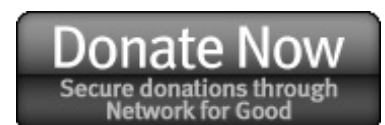
For Montana Audubon, the "news" of July has revolved around the Exxon Mobile oil spill on the Yellowstone River. As many know, our Audubon Conservation Education Center is located along the river on the southern edge of Billings. It's a treasured spot for Audubon and the community. And the Yellowstone is a rich and priceless river.



We have links to excellent commentary and news reports [here](#). And for those in the Billings area, we include a list of ways [you can help](#).

We have spent the month fielding calls, directing folks to the rescue and clean up crews, and working with colleagues and friends about how to strengthen our laws and regulations to ensure both true river protection and a path to move away from dirty fossil fuels. **This work will go on long after the spill recedes from the news headlines.**

Everyone can help the Yellowstone and all our rivers. Please consider a special donation to Montana Audubon so we have the resources to monitor and protect birds, rivers and watersheds in the months and years to come. Thank you!



*A special message from Steve Hoffman, Executive Director*

It's *still* **Bird-a-thon** season! Today you can support Janet and Norane's very recent birdathon efforts -- all to keep our programs running -- [here](#).

They found piles of avocets, a sleeping nighthawk and many more Helena-area birds. [Help them out!](#)

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

Support Montana  
Audubon:



Interested in local  
**Audubon Chapter**  
activities this

## Comment Deadline Extended - Mercury Emissions

In our June eNews we told you of an opportunity to protect our air and water from mercury and other toxins. Didn't get a chance to comment? You still can - through August 4.

**A quick note to the EPA can help ensure Clean Air and water.** Please add a simple, personal note to this [Action Alert today](#).

Loons are particularly susceptible to mercury pollution. We don't have to accept poisoned birds, tainted fish and polluted waters. This is a problem that can be solved if tougher standards are imposed on polluters. [Take Action](#).

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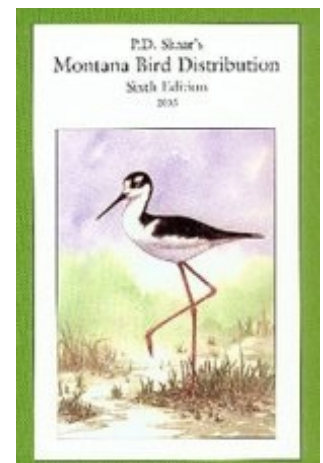
## Montana Bird Distribution--Deadline Extended

*Hot off the press* : We need your continued help with bird observations. Please contribute bird records to the next edition of *Montana Bird Distribution*. The 7th edition will not be released until the spring of 2012. Therefore, we will be taking sightings through December 31, 2011. We apologize for the delay - but this gives *you* more time. There are many options for how to get your records in. Remember - improving our understanding of Montana's bird distributions allows improved conservation and your data is VALUABLE! For more information on how to participate, click [HERE](#).

THANKS for your help!

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## Northern Goshawk ~ July Bird-of-the-Month

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

I'm walking in the foothills of the Lewis & Clark National Forest this morning; still kind of bleary-eyed and not as alert as I should be. At 5200' elevation, this country is a textbook example of the Montane ecotype; a paradise of lush meadows interspersed with Douglas Fir-dominated forest. It is the kind of landscape that our ancestral hunters would have sought out, with excellent grazing habitat and wooded areas in ideal proportion. Low-angle morning light casts a glow on this quiet world. When I come around a bend in the trail a striking, slate-colored blur catches my eye. It flies directly into a dense thicket of trees without slowing. Even in my dreamlike state, I'm surprised, gasping when it registers in my mind what I've seen; the "Gray Ghost" of the woods, a Northern Goshawk.



This bird is the largest of our three *Accipiter* species in Montana. It is a creature that often prefers mature forests for nesting, especially those near meadow complexes; ecotones, where two or more habitats meet, are very productive hunting areas for these aggressive raptors. Goshawks (from the Old English "Goose Hawk") are capable of impressive speeds when diving on prey, which is interesting given their wing structure, like that of Cooper's Hawks and other forest dwelling birds, is rather short and broad and not really suited for high speed. This design, in addition to the bird's notably long tail, is all about maneuverability through dense woods.... **The rest is [HERE](#)**

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## New Staff at Our Audubon Center in Billings

Welcome Mihail! We are thrilled to have a new Land Stewardship Coordinator at our Audubon Center and we couldn't be happier with the person recently hired. Mihail has been part of the Audubon team for less than a month and has accomplished so much already. He has been busy laying sod in our new amphitheater, working with several volunteer groups in restoration efforts, and looking to streamline our irrigation system. As Land Stewardship Coordinator he will oversee all of the restoration and land management of the 54 acres, work with volunteers and student groups in restoration efforts, help with maintenance on our building, and help with securing funding for these efforts.



**More about Center activities and staff: [www.mtacec.org](http://www.mtacec.org).**

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## Annual Audubon Festival: What a Hoot

People are still talking about this festival! Our ***Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival*** was held in Glasgow in June. A few T-shirts... and we now have links to photos, bird lists, award winners and more [here](#).

Thanks to the over 200 friends who found their way to Glasgow, met up with old and new friends, saw great birds, and learned about grassland and sagebrush conservation.

See you next June in Kalispell!

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Enjoy summer and thanks for all you do.

Amy and the Montana Audubon Staff



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