

Field Trip Descriptions for *Wings Across the Big Sky* 2010 Bird Festival

Saturday, June 5

SA-1 CLARK FORK RIVER-GRASS VALLEY IMPORTANT BIRD AREA. We will visit 2 or 3 properties in the IBA. Efforts by the Five Valleys Audubon Chapter to stimulate conservation and to protect important bird habitat will be discussed. We will walk about 1 mile and expect to observe waterfowl and songbirds such as Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh Wren, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Bluebird, Gray Catbird, and Black-headed Grosbeak. *Leader: Jim Brown*

SA-2. NINEPIPES-KICKING HORSE. Join Pat Little and Denver Holt for a morning of birding at Ninepipe and Kicking Horse reservoirs, and surrounding areas on the Flathead Indian Reservation. This will be a driving tour with little walking. Common birds of the area which we should see include four grebe species, ducks, trumpeter swan, raptors and grassland birds. Some of the less common species we may see, depending on weather, water levels, and luck, include: Clark's and horned grebes, sandhill crane, black-necked stilt, Forster's, black, and Caspian terns, eurasian collared dove, short-eared and long-eared owls, black swift (very slight chance), and western kingbird. Leaders: Pat Little and Denver Holt

SA-3 MACLAY FLAT. An easy 2-mile walking tour along the Bitterroot River through shrubs, grassland and plantation Ponderosa Pine. Birds will include chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, Clark's Nutcracker, Red Crossbill, Western Bluebird, and Red-tailed Hawk. *Leader: Virginia Vincent*

SA-4 KIM WILLIAMS TRAIL. A 3 – 4 mile walking tour along the Clark Fork River that starts and ends at the Holiday Hotel. Possible birds will include Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, American Redstart, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, and Lazuli Bunting. *Leader: Jim Sparks*

SA-5 PATTEE CANYON – SAM BRAXTON TRAIL. A 3-mile hike on a National Recreation Trail through Ponderosa Pine, Western Larch and Douglas Fir forests with an elevation gain of 300 feet. Possible specialty birds include Clark's Nutcracker, Steller's and Gray Jays, Three-toed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Red Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak. *Leader: Paul Hendricks*

SA-6 LEE METCALF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. A flat 2-mile hike on the Kenai Trail along 3 large shallow ponds with beautiful views of the Bitterroot Mountains. Most of the ducks, geese, swans, and grebes should be present. Other common birds will include Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, and at least to the ear, Virginia Rail and Sora. If time and water levels permit, we'll also walk through the floodplain of the Bitterroot River and search for a variety of passerines and woodpeckers. *Leader: Brian Williams*

SA-7 JIM CUSKER RANCH. This is a 200-acre ranch with 2 miles of Clark Fork Riverfront and a conservation easement. Birds likely to be seen include Gray Catbird, Osprey, Swainson's Hawk, Lewis's and Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern and Western Kingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, and Sandhill Crane. The landowner plans to address the group. This trip will involve some hiking. *Leader: Larry Weeks.*

SA-8 CSKT HABITAT RESORATION PROJECTS. This tour will visit 1 – 2 stream restoration sites on the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Reservation near Arlee and listen to the CSKT Natural Resources Department staff describe their efforts. Birds that should be present include Bobolink (not easy to find in western Montana) and a great diversity of wetland and riparian species. *Leader: Rose Leach*

SA-9 BASS CREEK-LARRY CREEK. This area combines wetlands, upland meadow, foothill forest, and riparian habitat. The primary target species of the trip is the bobolink (nesting colonies). Additional likely species include Wilson's Snipe, Common Yellowthroat, Savannah and Song Sparrow, Red Crossbill, Belted Kingfisher, and Spotted Sandpiper, as well as a variety of woodpeckers, thrushes, warblers, chickadees, nuthatches, and kinglets. A visit with one or more Bass Creek landowners to discuss conservation projects is also planned. *Leader: Bill Boggs*

SA-10 YARDS FOR THE BIRDS. See what homeowners are doing to attract birds. We will visit 2 or 3 homes in the Missoula area and talk to their owners about landscaping and native plants. This field trip will leave the Holiday Inn at 7:00 AM. *Leader: Jerry Covault*

SA-11 SWAINSON'S HAWK NESTING SITES. Rob Domenech with Raptor View Research Institute, will lead a field trip to several Swainson's Hawks nesting sites in the Missoula Valley. Locating these sites has led to more protection of some additional habitats from subdivision proposals. Rob will also describe aspects of Raptor View's eagle research projects. *Leader: Rob Domenech*

SA-12 BURNT FORK. This trip will be along the Burnt Fork Creek which is 4 miles East of Stevensville. The area is a Ponderosa Pine, Douglas Fir forest with cottonwood intermixed. Birds that could be seen include flycatchers (Hammond's, Olive-sided, Willow, and Dusky), Swainson's Thrush, Ruffed Grouse, Red-naped Sapsucker, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, warblers (MacGillivray's, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, and Common Yellowthroat), and vireos (Cassin's and Warbling). *Leader: Jim Story*

SA-13 RATTLESNAKE RECREATION AREA. This field trip will hike from the Rattlesnake Trailhead along streamside and older low elevation coniferous forests. We'll see or hear a wide variety of western Montana songbirds (Cordilleran Flycatchers and up to 7 warbler species including MacGillivray's and Orange-crowns). The emphasis for part of the hike will be on songs and calls. Easy to moderate hiking up to 3 miles. *Leader: Amy Cilimburg*

SA-14 JOE BOYER RANCH. This is a 750-acre working cattle ranch West of Frenchtown which has been preserved in a conservation easement with the Five Valleys Land Trust. Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Calliope Hummingbirds, Lazuli Buntings, Vesper Sparrows, and Black-headed Grosbeaks can be found on the property. In addition to the upland grasslands, there are 300 acres located on the riverbottom which have waterfowl, Sora, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Common Yellowthroat. *Leader: Cynthia Hudson*

SA-15. BITTERROOT RIVER IMPORTANT BIRD AREA. Join members of Bitterroot Audubon on a tour of a private conservation property within the boundaries of the Bitterroot River IBA. Participants will look for bird species that helped define this IBA, including Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-eyed Vireo, Willow Flycatcher, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Bald Eagle. We will look for other species typical of Black

Cottonwood-Ponderosa Pine floodplain forests. Participants will learn more about the IBA program, Bitterroot Audubon's outreach and education efforts, and one private landowner's efforts to conserve bird habitat. *Leader: Kate Stone*

Sunday, June 6

SU-1 BROWN'S LAKE. Brown's Lake is located in the Ovando Valley. The route will include prairie potholes, aspen stands, riparian zones, Brown's Lake, and grasslands. Expect to see up to 5 species of grebes, most duck species, Sandhill Crane, Bald and Golden Eagle, Black Tern and possibly Long-Billed Curlew and Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsucker. *Leader: Jim Brown*

SU-2 JIM CUSKER RANCH. This is a 200-acre ranch with 2 miles of Clark Fork Riverfront and a conservation easement. Birds likely to be seen include Gray Catbird, Osprey, Swainson's Hawk, Lewis's and Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern and Western Kingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, and Sandhill Crane. The owner plans to address the group. This trip will involve some hiking. *Leader: Larry Weeks*

SU-3 LEE METCALF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. A flat 2-mile hike on the Kenai Trail along 3 large shallow ponds with a beautiful view of the Bitterroot Mountains. Most of the ducks, geese, swans, and grebes should be present. Other common birds will include Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, and at least to the ear, Virginia Rail and Sora. If time and water levels permit, we'll also walk through the floodplain of the Bitterroot River and search for a variety of passerines and woodpeckers. *Leader Brian Williams*

SU-4 WARM SPRINGS PONDS. These ponds were originally constructed by The Anaconda Company to treat sediments from its mining activities upstream. Through improvements over the past 50 years, the number of ponds has expanded to 21 with more than 6500 acres of land. These ponds have evolved into an impressive wildlife management area in which local birders have identified 203 species of birds. Birds we can expect to see include Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-necked Grebe, Black-crowned Night Heron, Virginia Rail, Sandhill Crane, Long-billed Curlew, and other shorebirds. *Leader: Gary Swant*

SU-5 LOLO PASS. The final destination of this field trip will be Packer Meadow, which is on the Montana-Idaho divide near Lolo Pass. Snow conditions could prevent access to the higher elevations but there will be several birding stops along highway 12 in any event. Birds that can be expected are Steller's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Fox Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow. *Leader: Terry Toppins*

SU-6 NINEPIPES-FLATHEAD LAKE. Join Dan Casey on a field trip as he returns to his home in Somers. Birding stops along the way will include Ninepipes and several birding spots along Flathead Lake. Birds should include American White Pelican, Trumpeter Swan, Western Grebe, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Marsh Wren, and several species of ducks and gulls. *Leader: Dan Casey*

SU-7 UPSATA LAKE-MONTURE CREEK This trip through the Ovando Valley will include a drive up Woodworth Rd. to Upsata Lake, looking for Bobolinks, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, Long-billed Curlews, Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, and Common Loon. We'll then drive up Monture Creek Rd.

to the Monture Campground. As we walk through the old growth Douglas Fir and Western Larch forest and the cottonwood and spruce along Monture Creek, we'll see and hear riparian and forest species such as American Redstarts, Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Pileated Woodpecker, and perhaps an American Dipper. *Leader: Elaine Caton*

SU-8 NATIONAL BISON RANGE. Join us for a guided tour of breeding birds and baby bison. We'll look for grassland, shrub, forest, and riparian birds in some of the less accessible areas of the Bison Range. Expect to see Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Mountain Bluebird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat (if we're lucky), Short-eared Owl, and assorted raptors. If interest exists, we may also tour Ninepipes NWR in the afternoon. *Leader: Ty Smucker*

SU-9 CSKT HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS. This tour will visit 1 – 2 stream restoration sites on the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Reservation near Arlee and listen to CSKT Natural Resources Department staff describe their efforts. Birds that should be present include Bobolink (a species that is hard to find in western Montana) and a great diversity of wetland and riparian species. *Leader: Rose Leach*

SU-10 MACLAY FLAT. An easy 2-mile walking tour along the Bitterroot River through shrubs, grassland and plantation Ponderosa Pine. Birds will include chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, Clark's Nutcrackers, Red Crossbills, Western Bluebird, and Red-tailed Hawk. *Leader: Virginia Vincent*

SU-11 KIM WILLIAMS TRAIL. A 3 – 4 mile walking tour along the Clark Fork River that starts and ends at the Holiday Hotel. Possible birds will include Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, American Redstart, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, and Lazuli Bunting. *Leader: Jim Sparks*

SU-12 PATTEE CANYON-CRAZY CANYON TRAIL. A 5 – 6 mile walking tour along a dirt road and trails through Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine forests with an elevation gain of 1200 feet. Birds will include chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, warblers, vireos, and thrushes. Possible specialty birds include Clark's Nutcracker, Steller's and Gray Jays, Three-toed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Red Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak. *Leader: Paul Hendricks*

SU-13 GLENN LAKE. Visit one of the most beautiful high-elevation lakes in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on this full day birding trip. Habitats we will encounter include mid- to high-elevation Western Larch, Alpine Larch and Whitebark Pine forests as well as mixed-conifer forest burned in the 2006 Gash Creek fire. We will look for high elevation birds, including the Black-backed Woodpecker, Three-toed woodpecker, Mountain Bluebird, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Be prepared for approx. 5 miles of moderate hiking at high elevation with the possibility of snow. *Leader: Kate Stone*

SU-14 POINT SIX. This will be a driving tour on a Forest Service road behind a locked gate which will climb to an elevation of 6500 feet. Birds that can be expected include Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers, Clark's Nutcracker, Steller's and Gray Jays, Hammond's Flycatcher, and Red Crossbill. *Leaders: Sue Reel and Dick Hutto*

SU-15 BIG HOLE-BANNACK-CLARK CANYON. Join Sherry Ritter for a 2-day trip to the Big Hole Valley

and Bannack area with an overnight stay in Dillon. The trip will leave Missoula at 6:00 AM on Sunday, June 6th, bird Joseph Creek, the Big Hole Battlefield and other birding hot spots in the Big Hole Valley. On Monday, you will bird the Bannack campground, road to Grant and Clark Canyon Reservoir. Birds that you can expect to see are Pine Grosbeak, Lincoln's Sparrow, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Sandhill Crane, Rock Wren, Gray Flycatcher, Sage Thrasher, Sage Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, American White Pelican, Common Loon, and Burrowing Owl. The field trip will return to Missoula late Monday.

Leaders: Sherry Ritter and Steve Hoffman

For more information regarding cost and to register, visit www.mtaudubon.org or contact the Montana Audubon office at 406-443-3949.