

March 2021

Birding Observer



Five Valleys Audubon Society, a Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Chapter Board Meetings

Through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, Five Valleys Audubon Society Board meetings will be conducted via Zoom.

When: 1st Monday of the Month, from 7:00-9:00pm

Where: Zoom Meeting

Contact: To join, contact Andrea Stierle at andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu in advance.

The Red-tailed Hawk Project The Subject of Our March Program Meeting

Please join us on **Monday, March 8th at 7:00pm** for another exciting Zoom presentation, featuring speaker Bryce W. Robinson. Bryce will present his talk entitled, "The Red-tailed Hawk Project - Phylogenomics and the evolutionary role of plumage diversity in *Buteo jamaicensis*."



The
**Red-tailed Hawk
Project**

The Red-tailed Hawk project is a research collaboration focused on movement ecology, systematics, and genomics of *Buteo jamaicensis*. Bryce will tell us about current research that the Red-tailed Hawk Project has undertaken, with a focus on genomic investigations aimed at resolving the evolutionary relationships between the multiple subspecies. The project currently has two objectives: connect phenotype and genotype to a breeding location and resolve the status of polymorphism in

the subspecies *abieticola*. The project also strives to provide educational resources to the public. They hope to grow this effort as a strategy for obtaining breeding provenance for population genomics work, while developing a growing data set to answer questions including, but not limited to, the phenology of movements, differential movements between and within populations, and to better understand plumage type as an indicator of geographic origin.

Bryce W. Robinson is an ornithologist and illustrator who has conducted research on birds across North and Central America, and Australia. He currently lives in Ithaca, New York, where he is working towards a PhD at Cornell University and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. As part of his dissertation work, Bryce leads this research project focused on the Red-tailed Hawk. Find out more about this project at www.redtailedhawkproject.org, and explore more of Bryce's work, including his bird illustration at www.ornithologi.com.

To Attend Bryce W. Robinson's Presentation, please tune in on March 8, 2021, shortly before 7:00pm, Mountain Time.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/96095749841>

Meeting ID: 960 9574 9841

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,96095749841# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,96095749841# US (San Jose)

PEEPS from your Bean Counter

By Jean Duncan



Put your numbers hat on, everyone! Here come the 2020 numbers from Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS).

Our operating income for the year was \$16,237 with expenses of \$10,729, netting \$5,508. Lower

both in income and expenses than 2019 but considering the 'shelter in place' orders of 2020 financially we did fine. We are all missing the comradery of birding trips and in-person meetings, though!

At the end of 2020 FVAS had assets of \$163,361 of which \$93,334 is in the Phil L. Wright Endowment. In 2020 \$1,165 was donated specifically to the Endowment. This endowment provides scholarships for UM student's bird and habitat related research projects. Our investments did well this year.

Five Valleys Audubon donated \$7,120, 66% of 2020 expenses, to several bird research and habitat protection nonprofits as well as Montana Audubon. For the current year, 2021, FVAS board has approved a budget which includes setting aside \$11,000 for land conservation in the Missoula area. We are currently participating in on-going meetings dealing with the future of two important bird habitat areas in the valley—the former Smurfit Stone site, and the former gravel pit ponds, located west of Fort Missoula Park area. See the Peeps story by Rose Leach in the Birding Observer, December 2020, for more information about on-going projects.

Newsletter mailing expenses were lower in part to those who opted to save paper and get their newsletter via email. Thank you! However, membership dues did not cover newsletter expenses again this year. If you wish to receive our newsletter and other bird news by email, saving trees and reducing FVAS newsletter expenses, please send your email address to our Membership Promotion Chair, Scott Kluever at sjkluever@gmail.com.

Please direct any questions about the finances of FVAS to Jean Duncan, Treasurer@FVAudubon.org.

We are looking forward to another year of supporting birds and their habitat in Montana with your **help and involvement!**

Why Birds Matter

Reprinted from 3billionbirds.org

Helping birds helps us all... and birds need your help! The loss of 3 billion breeding birds is a problem for humans as well—here are five real-life examples of how birds make our lives better.

BIRD HABITAT SUPPORTS CLEAN WATER

Protecting waterways and their surrounding watersheds protects bird habitat and clean water. More than 60% of drinking water comes from rivers and streams. For example, research shows that protecting forested land in upstate New York watersheds is the most cost-effective way to provide clean water in New York City.



BIRDS AND THEIR HABITAT SUPPORT YOUR HEALTH

Experiencing nature can improve physical health and decrease stress, with benefits for recovery after surgery, test-taking performance, and workplace satisfaction. In fact, listening to bird songs and calls can help improve a person's mood and attention.

BIRDS ARE GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

Birdwatching generates almost \$100 billion in economic impacts, and more than 45 million people in the U.S. watch birds. Certain bird species can make a big impact on local economies. For example, Northern Pintails generate \$100 million annually from bird watchers and hunters spending on hotels, sporting goods stores, gas stations, and other local businesses.

BIRDS BENEFIT YOUR BEVERAGES

Insect-eating birds protect farm crops, including the key ingredients in coffee and wine! A single bird can save up to 24 pounds of coffee beans per acre each year from pest damage. On vineyards, birds respond quickly to pest outbreaks by eating insect larvae and protecting grapes.



BIRD HABITAT BOOSTS PROPERTY VALUES

Parks and wildlife refuges can be good for birds and property values. One study showed that the presence of birds and green space can increase property values by up to \$32,000!

Five Valleys Audubon Society Welcomes Your Submissions to The Birding Observer

The Five Valleys Audubon Society publishes ten newsletters each year, from September through June. We welcome articles, announcements, field trip reports, book reviews, and/or anything that relates to birds, ecology, and conservation. Feel free to include photos, clipart, and/or one or brief biographical information about yourself. All items should be emailed to Beverly Orth Geoghegan at orthbev@gmail.com. The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the month prior. For example, the deadline for the April 2021 newsletter is March 15, 2021.

International Ornithological Congress (IOC) Spelling Rules

The construction and spelling of English names of birds have a significant history, including a seminal paper by Kenneth Parkes (1978, *The Auk* 95:324-326), thoughtful treatments in the authoritative publications of the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union (RAOU), American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), and British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) as well as in many major field guides and handbooks. We strived to unify, clarify, codify, and extend these building blocks. Briefly, the rules that we adopted are as follows:

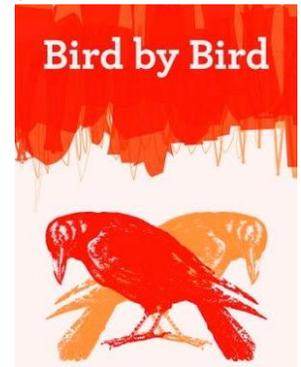
1. Official English names of birds are capitalized, as is the current practice in ornithology (e.g., Yellow-throated Warbler).
2. Patronyms are used in the possessive case (e.g., Smith's, Ross's).
3. Names on this list do not include diacritical marks.
4. There are compromises between British and American spellings in this list.
5. Those who adopt the list should spell and add pronunciation marks as preferred.
6. Geographical words in a name may be in noun or adjective form but must be consistent for that location (e.g., Canada, not Canadian).
7. Compound words conform to a series of rules that consistently address relationships between the two words and readability.
8. Use of hyphens in compound group names to indicate relationships among species is minimized, contrary to Parkes (1978).
9. Hyphens are used in compound names only to connect two names that are birds or bird families (e.g., Eagle-Owl, Flycatcher-shrike) or when the name would be otherwise difficult to read (e.g., Silky-flycatcher, White-eye).

For more details, please visit <https://www.worldbirdnames.org/new/>.

Quotes from *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, by Anne Lamott

"Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul."

"Thirty years ago, my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report written on birds that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books about birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird."



"E.L. Doctorow once said that 'Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.' You don't have to see where you're going, you don't have to see your destination or everything you will pass along the way. You just have to see two or three feet ahead of you. This is right up there with the best advice on writing, or life, I have ever heard."

"I know some very great writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much."

"If you are a writer, or want to be a writer, this is how you spend your days--listening, observing, storing things away, making your isolation pay off. You take home all you've taken in, all that you've overheard, and you turn it into gold. (Or at least you try.)"

"If something inside of you is real, we will probably find it interesting, and it will probably be universal."



"I don't think you have time to waste not writing because you are afraid you won't be good at it."

Announcements from Montana Audubon Submitted By Carmen Borchelt, Conservation and Legislative Assistant

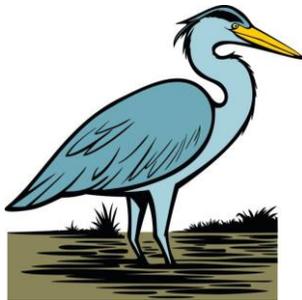
LBCU Citizen Science Announcement

Are you ready to hear the ‘currllleeee’ of the Long-billed Curlew? Well, grab your binoculars and get ready. It’s almost curlew season! These charismatic shorebirds will be trickling back into the state in less than two months, and we need your help finding as many as possible in and around the Mission, Blackfoot and Helena Valleys!

Since 2013 volunteers have recorded curlew sightings, and data is informing statewide habitat models as well as highlighting important tracts of intact grassland that need conservation. The Long-Billed Curlew Citizen Science survey will take place from April 8 - May 31. Please email Peter Dudley at peter@mtaudubon.org or Carmen Borchelt at carmen@mtaudubon.org to sign up!

GBHE Citizen Science

The Great Blue Heron is one of Montana’s avian species of concern. While herons nest in colonies, or rookeries, along major waterways, Breeding Bird Survey data indicates that populations have declined every year from 1966 to 2015. Several factors may be affecting the population’s decline, including the decline of riparian cottonwood stands, increased urban sprawl and human disturbance, or changing conditions of the waterway. As conditions change, it is not uncommon for herons to abandon their nests and establish elsewhere. As a result, they may move to more remote and undisturbed areas making population monitoring difficult. To better track this iconic species, Montana Audubon has partnered with the Montana Natural Heritage Program to improve and support greater statewide inventory and monitoring.



The Great Blue Heron Survey will take place May 1st - June 15th, with an online training on April 22nd at 6pm, please email Peter Dudley at peter@mtaudubon.org or Carmen Borchelt at carmen@mtaudubon.org for the training information.

67th Legislature Update

We are nearing the half-way mark of the legislative session, and that means all efforts are running full tilt. In just two weeks, most of the regular pieces of proposed legislation will need to have had their first committee hearing. Right now our efforts are divided between defending against time-tested efforts to redefine bison

and allow county commissioners to direct their movement within the state and reinvigorated efforts to pick away at our subdivision and review policies. Already about half a dozen bills have been heard between the Senate and House local government committees that would upend subdivision review as we know it, catering to developers at the expense of local communities. The way it looks right now, this suite of issues is likely to move towards the Governor’s desk very rapidly in the next two months, unless we can push back in a major way.

More surprising than the attacks on wild bison are provisions proposed to alter our state energy policy. Most striking is House Bill 273, which could eliminate restrictions on nuclear facility development. This bill proposes to strip state provisions within the Major Facility Siting Act that require voter approval for proposed nuclear facilities and would instead involve the public only after a facility receives its permit. That bill passed in the House on February 15th, and so will be moving on to the Senate where we will hope to have another strong hearing in opposition. While this piece of legislation is taking our state back to the debates of the 1970’s, issues concerning renewable energy tax policy also felt like they were trying to stall Montana’s entry into a clean energy future. Fortunately, for a bit of good energy policy news, Senate Bill 85, that would have taxed wind energy disproportionately high compared other sources, is for the time being tabled in committee.



There have been some other positive actions for wildlife as well. Habitat Montana, Future Fisheries, and the Upland Game Bird programs, now moving on to the full Senate finance committee are fully funded, though an effort to increase the amount of funding put towards Fishing Access Site acquisition failed during those same hearings. And House Bill 241, which would allow public hunting on private lands within Tribal Indian Reservations was tabled.

But there is a lot left to do the next 2 ½ months and we will make sure to keep our regular “Action Alerts” going to help guide you to your legislators to submit comments on important committee hearings and critical votes. If these issues are important to you, make sure to reach out and speak up. Also, please head to MT Audubon’s website to find more information on how to get involved: www.mtaudubon.org/conservation-policy/legislative-participation. And if you have any questions, reach out to Amy Seaman (aseaman@mtaudubon.org) or Carmen Borchelt (carmen@mtaudubon.org).

Welcome New Members



Genevieve & Cole Athens	Crackle Bingham
Daniel Brzozowski	Sarah Elsasser
J. Gore	Bette Lowery
Joan Melcher	Jalalieh Morrow
Judy L. Rangitsch	

**To be an environmental and fiscal heroine or hero,
Sign up for emailed newsletters!**

If you subscribed to Audubon through National Audubon, we may not have your email address. To receive our newsletter and other bird news by email, saving trees and reducing FVAS newsletter expenses, please send your email address to Treasurer, Jean Duncan at treasurer@FVAudubon.org or Membership Promotion Chair, Scott Kluever at sjkluever@gmail.com.

Five Valleys Audubon Society Membership Application

Please support Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS). There are several ways to donate. Any method ensures that you will receive our *Birding Observer* newsletter and may participate in all chapter activities. *Please help us reduce our \$3,700 annual newsletter cost by signing up for email delivery. FVAS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit.

Make checks out to Five Valleys Audubon Society and mail to: PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807
Or donate on our website: fvaudubon.org/join

\$ _____ \$15 FVAS membership only, includes newsletter sent via email.	\$ _____ Legacy Fund, creating and supporting local urban bird habitats for citizen enjoyment without leaving the city.
\$ _____ \$25 FVAS membership only, includes newsletter sent via USPS.	\$ _____ Total contribution
\$ _____ General Fund, use as needed for conservation, field trips, education and outreach.	_____ Volunteer - Please contact me. I would like to know more about how I may help birds and FVAS.
\$ _____ Phillip L. Wright Fund, small grants for student research.	

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: (Required to receive the newsletter and birding alerts via email.) _____

Please note: FVAS does not share email addresses with anyone except Montana Audubon. Your email address is safe with us!

Please be aware that membership in Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS) alone does not confer membership in the National Audubon Society (NAS). FVAS and NAS are separate 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. To become a new member of NAS and receive Audubon magazine (or to renew a current or lapsed membership) visit the website: fvaudubon.org/nas. Using this website will ensure that FVAS receives a \$20 one-time credit for your NAS membership. All NAS members become members of FVAS. A third organization, Montana Audubon (MTA), is also an independent organization and receives no financial support from NAS. MTA handles statewide issues and is responsible for its own fundraising. To assist in this important statewide work you may contact MTA through their website: <http://mtaudubon.org/>. Please give generously to each organization. Although independent, we work together to protect what we all love.

Five Valleys Audubon Society
PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
MISSOULA, MT
59807
PERMIT NO. 490

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

Five Valleys Audubon Society
PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807
www.fvaudubon.org

OFFICERS:

President, 2018-2021	Rose Leach	(406) 721-0779	rleach-2@bresnan.net
Vice President, 2020-2023	Jeffrey Ipsen	(406) 493-2586	jeffaipen@gmail.com
Secretary, 2018-2021	Andrea Stierle	(406) 782-6419	andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu
Treasurer, 2020-2023	Jean Duncan	(406) 396-1171	treasurer@fvaudubon.org

DIRECTORS:

2017-2020	Jim Brown	(406) 549-8052	brownjs2@bresnan.net
2018-2021	Larry Weeks	(406) 549-5632	bwsgenea@gmail.com
2019-2022	Ed Monnig	(406) 549-0580	emonnig01@gmail.com
2019-2022	Rose Stoudt	(406) 880-8060	ras120656@yahoo.com
2020-2023	Jacob Glass		jacobpglass@gmail.com

COMMITTEES:

Archivist	Barbara Ross		bjmross@gmail.com
Audubon Adventures	Scott Kluever	(907)854-3192	sjkluever@gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count	Larry Weeks	(406) 549-5632	bwsgenea@gmail.com
Education	Larry Weeks	(406) 549-5632	bwsgenea@gmail.com
Field Activities	Larry Weeks	(406) 549-5632	bwsgenea@gmail.com
Habitat Protection	Jim Brown	(406) 549-8052	brownjs2@bresnan.net
Habitat Protection	Gerhard Knudsen	(406) 251-2765	gmk@bresnan.net
Membership Promotion	Scott Kluever	(907)854-3192	sjkluever@gmail.com
Newsletter Circulation	Hedwig Vogel-Wright	(406) 549-7251	hedwigvw@fastmail.fm
Newsletter Editor	Bev Orth Geoghegan	(303) 944-0183	orthbev@hotmail.com
PL Wright Endowment	Andrea Stierle	(406) 782-6419	andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu
Program	Susie Wall	(406) 274-0548	susiewall2@gmail.com
Publicity	Cathy Nolan	(206) 920-2288	canolan4@outlook.com
Social Media	Thomas Kallmeyer		thomaskallmeyer@yahoo.com
University Liaison	Chad Bishop	(406) 243-4374	chad.bishop@umontana.edu
Web Site	Pat Little	(406) 493-7115	roughleg@gmail.com

Montana Audubon
PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
(406) 443-3949
www.mtaudubon.org

Larry Berrin, Executive Director
lberrin@mtaudubon.org

Angela Swatek, Development Director
angela@mtaudubon.org

Heather Bilden, Adult Programs
Coordinator hbilden@mtaudubon.org

Cathie Erickson, Accounting Specialist
cerickson@mtaudubon.org

Robin Larson, Office Manager
info@mtaudubon.org

Amy Seaman, Director of Policy & Science
aseaman@mtaudubon.org

Gabi Morey, Center Director
gmorey@mtaudubon.org

Rachel Van Wingen, Board President