

# May 2016

## Birding Observer



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

### Calendar of Events

---

- **Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>:** The board meeting will be held at Rose Leach's home. A potluck dinner will be held at 6pm, and festival planning will be from 7-9pm.
- **Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>:** Full-day field trip to Smurfit-Stone. Meet in the northwest corner of the Adams Center parking lot at 7:45 am or at 8:30 am at the main gate to the old plant site.
- **Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>:** Photographer John Ashley will present on nighttime photography in Montana at the May meeting, at 7:30pm, in room L14 of the Gallagher Business Building at UM.
- **Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>:** Submission deadline for the June edition of the *Birding Observer*.
- **Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>:** Bird walk at Lee Metcalf NWR from 10:00am-Noon. Meet the field trip leader at the Refuge Visitor's Center.
- **May 22<sup>nd</sup>:** National Wildlife Federation and Big Sky Film Institute will present an evening of short birding films at 7:00pm in the Silver Theater at the Wilma in downtown Missoula.
- **May 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>:** Two-day field trip to Freezout Lake. See write-up on page 2 for further details.
- **June 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>:** Wings Across the Big Sky festival.
- **July 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>:** Four-day camping trip to Glacier National Park. See write-up on page 3 for details.

### The Nature of Night

---

The chapter's last meeting before the summer break will be on Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm in the Gallagher Business Building room L14 on the UM campus. Join professional photographer John Ashley for a visual feast, as he time travels with Charlie Russell through the past 135 years. "The Nature of Night, What's Been Lost and What's Been Found" celebrates Montana's naturally-dark night skies while looking at the growth of artificial light at night, back to 1880 when Montana's first light bulb began to glow in a Butte mine shaft. John is the author of "Glacier National Park After Dark," the

culmination of nearly three decades of night time photography in Montana's most famous wilderness.

Our natural day/night relationship with light has shifted dramatically due to the growth of artificial lighting at night. Today three out of four of the world's children cannot see the Milky Way from where they live due to light pollution. Fortunately, people took notice and the night sky preservation movement was born. The first step towards bringing back the night sky is realizing what's been lost. Much of Montana still harbors dark, star-filled skies. John's nighttime photographs remind us of what's at stake: dancing northern lights, awe-inspiring comets, the shimmering arc of the Milky Way, and much more. Natural darkness is our shared heritage that our children's children deserve to inherit.

In 1977, John's grandmother gave him \$200 to start his college fund. Instead, John used the money to buy his first 35mm camera, and then he used the camera to put himself through college. He earned a biology degree from the University of Montana, and became an award-winning photojournalist at newspapers in Florida and Montana. But the frantic, deadline-driven lifestyle lost out to the more humble call of the natural world. Along this path, John worked as a field biologist for many years, working to conserve California Condors, Bald Eagles, and his favorite -- Harlequin Ducks.

John completed the circle by combining both of his passions -- photography and conservation -- in the form of fine art photography. Through his lens, John hopes to remind you of the natural beauty and humor that is inherent in wild places and wild critters. He lives with his wife and business partner, Tracy, and their two dogs at the end of the road, just a little ways past the "town" of Kila, in northwestern Montana.



John Ashley

## Field Trip

### By Larry Weeks

---

**March 26, 2016:** Nine people met at the UM field house parking lot and carpooled to the Lee Metcalf NWR. We stopped on the east side highway where you come to the north end of the refuge. There were a couple of Trumpeter Swans on the pond and a strange looking goose in a flock of Canada Geese in a field east of the highway. The goose was larger than the Canada Geese, had orange legs and an orange bill, a white strip on the back of the neck, and a whitish face. Rose thought it might be a Snow Goose/White-fronted Goose hybrid. However, the consensus of the birders that saw the bird later felt it was a domestic goose. Four more people met the field trip at the Metcalf Visitor's Center. We spent quite a bit of time scanning Ponds 5 and 6 by the Visitor's Center. There were 2 Sandhill Cranes west of Pond 6 and at least 12 Great Blue Herons at their nests in the pine trees. There was a good diversity of ducks and a Pied-billed Grebe. We then hiked the Kenai trail to get a look at Pond 8. The only new species on Pond 8 was a pair of Cinnamon Teal.

After eating lunch near the Visitor's Center, we hiked the trails at the Wildlife Viewing Area. We heard a Wood Duck on the south trail and flushed a Great Horned Owl that we were able to follow to a perch in a pine tree. Even with spotting scopes, it was difficult to see the owl because it blended in with the bark. On the north trail, we got a scope view of a Pileated Woodpecker, and found a man taking photos of something in a pine tree. The individual turned out to be Ken Stoltz and he was photographing a Great Horned Owl. When we returned to the vehicles, we had an immature Bald Eagle in the sky, and on the drive back to the Visitor's Center, a Turkey Vulture floated by. There were 13 people on the trip and we saw 45 species.



Great Horned Owl

**April 9, 2016:** This field trip was a late afternoon and evening outing to the Ninepipes area with the primary objective of viewing the mating displays of the Short-eared Owls. Several people joined the group at the 44 Bar across from Dublin Gulch Road. The first stop was at the cattail marsh on Hatchery Road where we had 2 Virginia Rails answer their call. We also had a Red-tailed Hawk on a nest and a Wilson's Snipe at that location. We then traveled west on Dublin Gulch Road to highway 212 and then came back on West Post Creek Road where we had a Cormorant, a Yellow-headed Blackbird and several ducks which included Cinnamon Teal. Going north on Logan Road, we had 2 Trumpeter Swans near Logan Pond and a pair of Great Horned Owls at a nest in the willows at the corner of Olson Road and Logan Road. There was some down feathers visible in the nest and I'm sure there were owlets in the nest. The next stop was a wetlands on Logan Road which had 4 Black-necked Stilts, a yellowlegs and a Rough-legged Hawk. On Ninepipes Lane, we had a second Rough-legged Hawk and a Short-eared Owl. The owl ended up displaying for us. We then went to the "sweet-spot" on Ninepipes Road where the Short-eared Owls put on a spectacular display. One particular owl displayed for over 30 minutes and rose to an estimated height of 1,000 feet. It would suddenly drop 50 – 100 feet to the oohs and ahhs of the onlookers. Some of the birders were able to hear some hooting by this owl. In addition to the owls, there were many Northern Harriers all over the area. There were so many owls in the air and on the ground that the birders actually got their fill. Rose Leach estimated that we saw upwards of 12 Short-eared Owls. The owls started showing up at 7:00 pm and we were able to get an early start back to Missoula before it got dark. There were 26 people on the trip and I had a list of 33 birds.

### Two-Day Field Trip to Freezout Lake

---

The 2-day trip to Freezout Lake and the Rocky Mountain Front has been scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The plan is to leave Missoula at 7:00 am on May 21<sup>st</sup> and drive to Freezout Lake. The group will bird Freezout on Saturday and the Rocky Mountain Front on Sunday. We will spend the night in Choteau and the motel options include the Stage Stop Inn (1-888-466-5900), Bella Vista Motel (1-406-466-5711), Gunther Motel (1-406-466-5444), and Big Sky Motel (1-406-466-5318). Participants are asked to make reservations in advance. Please call Larry Weeks if you wish to attend and he will coordinate carpooling. Plan to bring lunches for both days. There is a \$10 charge for multi-day field trips.

## 4-Day Campout to Glacier Park

---

The 4-day campout to Glacier Park is scheduled for July 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>. The plan is to camp at St. Mary Campground on July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, and at Fish Creek Campground on July 9<sup>th</sup>. One campsite has been reserved at St. Mary for July 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 campsites have been reserved at St. Mary for July 8<sup>th</sup>, and 3 campsites have been reserved at Fish Creek for July 9<sup>th</sup>. The reason that only one campsite has been reserved at St. Mary for July 7<sup>th</sup> is because all the other sites have been reserved. I will keep checking on a regular basis to see if any cancellations occur for St. Mary on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise, we may have to use the Rising Sun Campground which is a first come, first serve campground. We can have up to eight people, two cars and two tents per campsite; so we should be OK for the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>. If you are planning to go to Glacier, call Larry Weeks at 549-5632 or email him at [bwsgenea@gmail.com](mailto:bwsgenea@gmail.com). Larry will be planning for potluck dinners. Participants need to plan for their own breakfasts and lunches. We will plan to meet at 5:00 pm at C-135 in the St. Mary Campground on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

## We Need Your Help Monitoring Birds

---

Bitterroot Audubon is trying to get a sense of how bird populations are doing in the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area (IBA). The IBA stretches from Woodside Crossing near Corvallis north to Lolo. Besides getting a general species list for sites within the IBA, we're interested in finding out how these focal species are doing and where they occur: Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Willow Flycatcher, and Red-eyed Vireo.

We'd like to encourage Five Valleys Audubon members to survey for our focal species this spring and summer. If you are familiar with using eBird, we've set up some Hot Spots with the IBA.

Please see Bitterroot Audubon's [IBA web page](#) for information on where your birding can help out and how to record information. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Ritter at (406) 370-4778 or [sherryritternature@gmail.com](mailto:sherryritternature@gmail.com).



## Philip L. Wright Memorial Research Awards by Bill Gabriel

---

The awards committee received 11 proposals from UM students in April 2016 and made the following 5 awards:

- Alicia M. Deal, \$995 to describe the alarm calls of the Columbian ground squirrel.
- Clancy Jandreau, \$700 for a survey called "Fostering conservation on private lands: an exploration of incentive-based conservation of sage grouse."
- Sophia Weinmann, \$ 540 toward reducing human-elephant conflicts in Kenya through beehive fencing & non-palatable crop planting.
- Mandy Slate, \$700 to investigate the role of Moss-dominated soil crusts as ecosystem regulators in Northern Rocky Mountain grasslands.
- Trevor L. Smith, \$700 to investigate meso-predator release theory: the effect of cougar occupancy on meso-predator co-occurrence and prey availability in Northeastern Washington.

The 5 recipients have been invited to report how they used the grants and the results of their investigations at a Five Valleys Audubon meeting early in 2017.

In the 36 year history of grants for small research projects, FVAS has awarded \$38,676.50 to 80 recipients at an average amount of \$483.46.



June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

Step back in history and learn how Montana Audubon began as a fledgling organization 40 years ago; hear the highlights of these last 4 decades of conservation successes! What have they been doing since 1976 and who has been part of that journey?

Meet the authors of the long-awaited *Birds of Montana* at this year's festival and get your autographed copy! Hear Erick Greene as he brings you fascinating stories of how birds communicate to alert each other to danger and get a bird's-eye view of the Clark Fork watershed. Learn about Kate Davis' raptor education in the Bitterroot, as well as the important work of the American Prairie Reserve.

Five Valleys Audubon (FVAS) has been working with local schools to bring some "Art" to the Festival. They are offering an abundant variety of silent auction items, along with some great custom field trips. There are going to be some creative desserts for our Dessert Auction, so come prepared to bid to enjoy your beautiful dessert at the banquet.

FVAS has also done a fantastic job providing a great selection of field trips – but they are filling up fast, so please register as soon as possible. Register by mail, or online at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). Also—be sure to reserve your rooms at the Holiday Inn Downtown by calling 1-406-721-8550 or 1-800-399-0408. (For the discount, you need to mention that you are part of the Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the group rate. Use the code MAS.)

Call the Montana Audubon office at (406) 443-3949 if you have any questions about the festival or registration.

### **Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!**

---

Please nominate a deserving person for their work for conservation and/or Audubon! We are now seeking nominations for individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. You can nominate your candidate by May 19<sup>th</sup> via email. Contact Janet Ellis at [jellis@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org).

### **Call for Donations to Dessert Auction**

---

If you can donate to the dessert auction on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, please call Rose Stoudt at (406) 880-8060.

### **Call For Bird Art**

---

We plan to have an exhibit of bird-related art and photos at the Bird Festival in June. Items can be either for sale or for display only. In most cases, sale items would be donated to Five Valleys Audubon as silent auction pieces.



Display space is limited however, so it will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact Andrea Stierle ([andrea.stierle@umontana.edu](mailto:andrea.stierle@umontana.edu)) for more information if you are interested in showing some of your artwork at the Bird Festival in June.

### **Silent Auction at the Bird Festival**

---

As you probably have figured out by now, the Montana Audubon's annual bird festival, *Wings Across the Big Sky*, is being co-hosted by Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS) and held in Missoula this June. One of the intriguing traditions of the meeting is the silent auction. This year half of the proceeds from the silent auction will start a fund to enhance birding 'hotspots' in our Missoula urban area. These hotspots would be open for the enjoyment of the public and perhaps include water features, benches and signs, so that they increase awareness not only of birds but conservation in general.

Support birding in Missoula by donating silent auction items. We all have items around our homes that we seldom use yet they would be valuable to others. Downsizing or simplifying? Consider donating those 'extras'. Services, like taking a few people on a birding walk, allowing use of a cabin, or helping establish a native plant garden, are coveted items, as well. Stretch your imagination, you'll think of something to donate that will help build FVAS' birding hotspots. Budding birders in Missoula *thank you* for your support.

Please let Jean Duncan know what you are donating at [jeanclaire@montana.com](mailto:jeanclaire@montana.com) or (406)396-1171. Items can be stored at her home ahead of the Festival if getting them to the Festival on Friday afternoon, June 3, is inconvenient.

## Welcome New Members

Lars Anderberg  
Shirley Cabot  
Glenn Grandjean  
Judy Kelly  
Jeff & Nancy Larson  
Michael Peters  
Laurie Schlueb  
Jackie Thorpe  
Charles Wayland  
Emily Withnall

Guy Bingham  
Stephanie M Gilman  
Mark Hollinger  
Linda Krieg  
Rita Marie Norton  
Barbara Rudio  
David Scott  
Jane B Thompson  
Janet Whaley

Janet Bowker  
Clifford Goodman  
The Jeffs  
Mary Laporte  
Brittany Nowak  
Angela Sandberg  
Ann Sneath  
Kalyn Ward  
Judy Whiddon



### Go Green and Save!

Do you want to help Five Valleys Audubon Society save money, paper and volunteer time? Please consider reading your *Birding Observer* online. Your online copy will contain content in color, and you will receive your newsletter much earlier than the mailed hard copy! If you wish to receive your *Birding Observer* via email, just send us a request with your name to Vick Applegate at [k7vk@arri.net](mailto:k7vk@arri.net). You can also find your current newsletter on the Five Valleys Audubon Society website at [www.fvaudubon.org](http://www.fvaudubon.org). Thanks!

#### Join Five Valleys Audubon Society

Please enroll me as a Chapter member of the Five Valleys Audubon Society. I will receive the *Birding Observer* and may participate in all local Chapter activities. I understand that my dues remain entirely with the Chapter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: The newsletter will be delivered electronically unless requested otherwise.*

\_\_\_ \$15 for a 1-year, Chapter-only membership

\_\_\_ An additional sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is also included to support Chapter activities.

Please make check payable to the Five Valleys Audubon Society and mail to:  
**Five Valleys Audubon Society**  
PO Box 8425  
Missoula, MT 59807

#### Join National Audubon Society & Five Valleys Audubon Society

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local Chapter. I will receive the *Audubon* magazine and *Birding Observer*, and I may participate in all local Chapter activities. I understand that my dues are shared between NAS and my local Chapter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: The newsletter will be delivered electronically unless requested otherwise.*

\_\_\_ \$20 for a 1-year membership

Chapter Code: N53

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society:

**National Audubon Society, Inc.**  
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10014  
Attn: Chance Mueleck

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



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

TO:

Five Valleys Audubon Society  
PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807  
[www.fvaudubon.org](http://www.fvaudubon.org)

**OFFICERS:**

President	Rose Leach	721-0779	<a href="mailto:rleach-2@bresnan.net">rleach-2@bresnan.net</a>
Vice President	Thomas Kallmeyer		<a href="mailto:thomaskallmeyer@yahoo.com">thomaskallmeyer@yahoo.com</a>
Secretary	Andrea Stierle	782-6419	<a href="mailto:andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu">andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu</a>
Treasurer	Jean Duncan	396-1171	<a href="mailto:jeanclaire@montana.com">jeanclaire@montana.com</a>

**DIRECTORS:**

2016-2019	Rose Stoudt	880-8060	<a href="mailto:ras120656@yahoo.com">ras120656@yahoo.com</a>
2016-2019	Susie Wall	274-0548	<a href="mailto:susiewall2@gmail.com">susiewall2@gmail.com</a>
2015-2018	Paul Loehnen	721-7517	<a href="mailto:ploehnen@gmail.com">ploehnen@gmail.com</a>
2015-2018	Catherine Goodman	549-5404	<a href="mailto:catherine.goodman08@gmail.com">catherine.goodman08@gmail.com</a>
2014-2017	Carolyn Goren	544-1060	<a href="mailto:carolyngoren@gmail.com">carolyngoren@gmail.com</a>
2014-2017	Gerhard Knudsen		
2014-2017	Scott Hampton	417-343-3499	<a href="mailto:wscotthampton@gmail.com">wscotthampton@gmail.com</a>
2013-2016	Ed Monnig	549-0580	<a href="mailto:emonnig01@gmail.com">emonnig01@gmail.com</a>

**COMMITTEES:**

Member Records	Vick Applegate	549-0027	<a href="mailto:k7vk@arri.net">k7vk@arri.net</a>
Membership Promotion	Jerry Dirnberger	360-5133	<a href="mailto:dirnberger@aol.com">dirnberger@aol.com</a>
Program	Susie Wall	274-0548	<a href="mailto:susiewall2@gmail.com">susiewall2@gmail.com</a>
Habitat Protection	Jim Brown	549-8052	<a href="mailto:brownjs2@bresnan.net">brownjs2@bresnan.net</a>
Field Activities	Terry Toppins	214-1194	<a href="mailto:tertop@aol.com">tertop@aol.com</a>
Publicity	Poody McLaughlin	543-4860	<a href="mailto:pmcregan@bresnan.net">pmcregan@bresnan.net</a>
Education	Larry Weeks	549-5632	<a href="mailto:bwsgenea@gmail.com">bwsgenea@gmail.com</a>
PL Wright Endowment	Bill Gabriel	273-6880	<a href="mailto:biograf@earthlink.net">biograf@earthlink.net</a>
University Liaison	Chad Bishop	243-4374	
Newsletter Editor	Bev Orth Geoghegan	406-750-0149	<a href="mailto:orthbev@hotmail.com">orthbev@hotmail.com</a>
Newsletter Circulation	Hedwig Vogel-Wright	549-7251	
Web Site	Pat Little	493-7115	<a href="mailto:roughleg@gmail.com">roughleg@gmail.com</a>
Archivist	Shirley Holden		
Audubon Adventures	Barbara Ross	552-0500	<a href="mailto:bjmross@gmail.com">bjmross@gmail.com</a>
Christmas Bird Count	Larry Weeks	549-5632	<a href="mailto:bwsgenea@gmail.com">bwsgenea@gmail.com</a>
Past President	Pat Little	493-7115	<a href="mailto:roughleg@gmail.com">roughleg@gmail.com</a>

Montana Audubon  
PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624  
(406) 443-3949  
[www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org)

Steve Hoffman, Executive Director  
[shoffman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:shoffman@mtaudubon.org)

Janet Ellis, Senior Director of Policy  
[jellis@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org)

Norane Freistadt, Director of Operations  
[norane@mtaudubon.org](mailto:norane@mtaudubon.org)

David Cronenwett, Development Specialist  
[david@mtaudubon.org](mailto:david@mtaudubon.org)

Sara Lipscomb, Office Manager  
[mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org](mailto:mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org)

Cathie Erickson, Accounting Specialist  
[cerickson@mtaudubon.org](mailto:cerickson@mtaudubon.org)

Marco Restani, Director of Bird Conservation  
[restani@mtaudubon.org](mailto:restani@mtaudubon.org)

Amy Seaman, Bird Conservation Associate  
[aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org)

Trinity Pierce, Land Stewardship Coordinator  
[restoration@mtaudubon.org](mailto:restoration@mtaudubon.org)

Jonathan Lutz, Director, MT Audubon Center  
[jlutz@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jlutz@mtaudubon.org)