

# May 2022

## Birding Observer



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

### Calendar

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- **Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00-8:00pm:** Please join us in the Blackfoot Room of the Missoula Public Library, for the Five Valleys Audubon Society Board Meeting.
- **Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm:** Attend our May meeting to hear Patrick Donnelly of US Fish and Wildlife Service present on climate change and its effect on wetlands and waterbirds. We will meet in Room 110 of the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building (ISB) at UM.
- **Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:00am-1:00pm:** Beginning Bird Walk at the Lee Metcalf NWR. Meet the field trip leader at the Refuge Visitor's Center. This trip will include a mile of level hiking. Note, we will continue to practice social distancing. There is an outdoor toilet at the Visitor's Center.
- **May 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>:** Two-day field trip to Freezout Lake. See details in write-up on page 4.

### May Program Meeting: Wetland & Waterbird conservation

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Please join us on Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM for our last chapter meeting before the summer break. Our speaker, Patrick Donnelly, will present his talk on wetland and waterbird conservation in the new era of climate change. Patrick will review his recent research on climate change and its effect on continental wetland networks supporting waterbird migration, including connectivity of greater sandhill crane migration in western North America.



Patrick is the lead research scientist for Intermountain Mountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) (<https://mbjv.org/>) and an employee of US Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Program. Patrick conducts research at the University of Montana in Missoula as a faculty affiliate in the Wildlife Program. His work for the IWJV focuses on applied science addressing waterbird conservation solutions that reduce the impacts of increasing water scarcity and wetland loss in western ecosystems.

Following Patrick's presentation, Josiah Kaderis, a 2020 P.L. Wright Research Awardee, will present his project entitled *Crouching Helminths, Hidden Infection: An Analysis of Co-Infection & Physiological Immunity in Deer Mice (Peromyscus maniculatus)*. \*See more details about Josiah and his work on page 3.

The meeting will be held in Room 110 in the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building (ISB) on the University of Montana campus. The building lies on the south end of campus on Beckwith Avenue between Maurice and Mansfield avenues. Currently, masks are encouraged but not required by the University. Because our membership is composed of many older adults, we encourage attendees to continue to wear masks at our in-person meetings. Because in-person attendance has been low during the pandemic, there should be plenty of room in ISB 110 to socially distance yourself from others, so that you feel comfortable attending. You also have the option of watching the meeting over the zoom link.

**To attend the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting virtually and hear Patrick Donnelly's presentation, note the Zoom details below.**

**Topic: FVAS MEETING**  
**Time: May 9, 2022, 7:00PM Mtn Time (US & Canada)**

**Join Zoom Meeting**  
<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/97410692394>

**Meeting ID: 974 1069 2394**  
**One tap mobile**  
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**Dial by your location**  
**+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)**  
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## Peeps from The Board: Beginning Bird Walks By Larry Weeks

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The Beginning Bird Walks at the Lee Metcalf NWR are held on the third Saturday of each month except for December. The third Saturday in December conflicts with the Missoula Christmas Bird Count except for those years when it can be held on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The bird walks start at 10:00 am at the Visitors Center and last for about 3 hours. The first half of the trip includes a short hike on the Kenai Trail and then it moves to the Wildlife Viewing Area.

During the past 2 years, the attendance has varied considerably due to COVID. The January and February trips in 2020 had 29 and 31 participants, respectively. Then COVID hit and the attendance dropped to about seven participants per walk during the remainder of 2020. Most of the time it was the same people that attended. The only trip that was canceled was April 2020. The attendance picked up a little in 2021 with an average of almost eleven per trip. Then the attendance soared in 2022 to 20 in January, 50 in February, and 30 in March. About half of these people were from the Bitterroot. Due to the large numbers, the group was split up in March to reduce the congestion. Rose Stoudt led half of the group on the Kenai Trail, and I led the other half at the Wildlife Viewing Area, and then we swapped.

During this 2-year period, 121 bird species were documented. As you would expect, we did very well on ducks, with 19 species. The Virginia Rail was present on most every trip, even throughout the winter. The Great Horned Owls used the cavity nest along the asphalt trail in 2020 and 2022. They used a tree close to the river in 2021 and the one owlet was predated; the suspected culprit was a pine marten. We saw some immature female Bobolinks on August 2021. These were probably from the Larry Creek colony. Other one-time sightings included a Short-eared Owl, Forster's Tern, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, American Redstart, Nashville Warbler, Rufous Hummingbird, Horned Lark, and American Pipit. Porcupines were observed on seven different trips.



Pine Marten

## A Guide to Organic Lawn Care By Anne Greene

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Bombus bee illustration  
by Isabel Quiram

Have you ever wondered how to have a beautiful lawn without using pesticides and chemical fertilizers that harm birds and other wildlife? The non-profit Grow Safe: Non-Toxic Missoula has just published a guide that shows you how.

Grow Safe is a small group of volunteers dedicated to reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in Missoula. With the support of Missoula's Parks and Recreation Department and Missoula County Extension, the group has written *A Guide to Organic Lawn Care* that gives clear instructions for achieving a safe and beautiful lawn by building healthy soil.

The guide is full of useful information that I will admit, I didn't know before I began reading it! For instance, healthy soil is full of trillions of microorganisms – bacteria, fungi, protozoans, and invertebrates. These microorganisms provide nutrients to plants by breaking down organic matter in tiny air spaces around the roots. You can encourage these microorganisms by aerating your soil and adding organic amendments. The result, over time, is a lawn which is not only attractive and safe, but compared to conventional lawns, more resilient to drought and capable of out-competing weeds.

Many common lawn care products are highly toxic to soil microorganisms, wildlife, and you and your family. Roundup® and TruGreen® contain the herbicide glyphosate. Glyphosate harms birds, bees, and fish and is an endocrine disrupter and a probable carcinogen. Another product, Weed and Feed™, contains the herbicide 2,4-D, a key ingredient in Agent Orange.

If you are interested in transitioning away from chemicals and toward organic lawn care (or know someone who is), there are plenty of resources in Missoula listed in the guide that can help. You can find physical copies of the guide at Currents Aquatic Center, Missoula County Extension, Montana Natural History Center, Caras Nursery, and Ace's The Garden Place. Digital versions and additional resources can be found on the Grow Safe website: <https://www.growsafemissoula.org/>.

## Field Trip Summaries

By Larry Weeks

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**Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>:** The March field trip was to the Lee Metcalf NWR. The first thing we spotted when we arrived at the Visitor's Center were several Trumpeter Swans that were scattered on ponds 5 and 6. Although the duck numbers were down, there was still good diversity. The Great Blue Heron rookery is decreasing in size and there were only a couple of nests that were active. I suspect that some of the herons have moved to the rookery at Teller. There were 2 Red-tailed Hawks sitting in the rookery pine trees. As we walked the Kenai Trail, there were Tree Swallows flying around and we flushed a Great Horned Owl from the riparian area beside pond 8. A Virginia Rail gave us its grunt-grunt-grunt call from the cattails. We walked to the end of the Kenai Trail, but the only new birds we found were 3 Double-crested Cormorants. A hen Ring-necked Pheasant exploded from the side of the trail during our return, and we had a Sandhill Crane fly by. We then moved to the Wildlife Viewing Area where we viewed the Great Horned Owl cavity next to the asphalt trail. Although we could not see the female owl, the male was very prominent in a nearby pine tree. A Pileated Woodpecker was consistently vocalizing during the hike. Other birds included a male Belted Kingfisher, a male Red Crossbill and multiple, White-breasted Nuthatches. The best bird of the trip was a Spotted Towhee that was digging in the leaf litter. Although we did not see an Osprey at the refuge, two were sighted on the drive from Missoula. There were sixteen people on the trip, and we had 49 species.

**Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** This was a late afternoon field trip to look for Short-eared Owls doing their courtship displays. I did a scouting trip on March 30<sup>th</sup> but did not see a single Short-eared Owl, and I stayed until 8:30 pm. It was a windy and cool day, and the owls did not fly while it was still light. The weather forecast for April 2<sup>nd</sup> was equally bad with 8 – 16 mph winds, cool temperatures, and a chance for showers. As a result of the forecast and my scouting trip, I discouraged people from attending. Now, they are going to be upset with me because we did see several Short-eared Owls. We had bad weather when we started the trip at 5:15 pm but miraculously, the wind stopped blowing and the sun came out just before 7:00 pm. Our first owl was on Duck Road. It was sitting on a metal post by the side of the road, as I drove past it. Then the couple from Coeur d' Alene Idaho excitedly reported the owl over the radio and told me to back up. I backed up not knowing where the owl was and ended up about thirty feet from the owl. It then flew and landed in some nearby grass. Not everyone saw the owl, so I walked into the field and flushed the owl for everyone to see. It was a life bird for the couple from Idaho. Then we returned to the area on Ninepipes Road south of Olson Road and found at least

seven more owls and 2 were flying high and occasionally doing their display. The Stierles stayed on Duck Road for a while and saw two more owls. So altogether, it was estimated that we saw ten owls. Earlier in the field trip, we had a flock of about 20 Snow Geese fly by and when we reached the dam on Ninepipes, there was a flock of about 150 Snow Geese on the shore of the reservoir. I was able to find one Ross' Goose. Other birds included 2 Sandhill Cranes, a Great Horned Owl just west of the dam, several Red-tailed Hawks, several Northern Harriers, at least one Rough-legged Hawk, and a pair of Trumpeter Swans. There were eighteen people on the trip, and 24 bird species were counted.

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### P.L. Wright Research Scholarship Awardee will Present at the May Program Meeting in May

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Josiah Kaderis is a P.L. Wright Research Awardee from 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Josiah had to delay his field work until 2021. He will present the results of his work to Five Valleys Audubon at our General meeting, May 9th. A future graduate



Josiah holding a Deer Mouse

student of the wildlife biology program, Josiah describes himself as a dedicated worker in both lab and the field, with a passion for wildlife and science. He collaborated with his mentor Professor Angela Luis, Associate Professor of Population & Disease Ecology in the College of Forestry & Conservation. His project is entitled Crouching Helminths, Hidden Infection: An Analysis of Co-Infection & Physiological Immunity in Deer Mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*).

When more than one pathogen co-exists within the same host, it is referred to as co-infection. These interactions can have positive or negative effects on the parasites themselves and can also affect the host response to infection. Josiah asked the fundamental question - how does macroparasite infection influence physiological immunity in deer mice? He proposed to examine helminth infection in deer mice, by taking advantage of an on-going study in the Luis Lab at the University of Montana. This larger study is examining external drivers of transmission in deer mice, specifically measuring immunity and contact rates. Josiah found that the role of macroparasitic infections had not been considered, so he decided to study it himself. He will share his results with us.

## Upcoming Field Trips

By Larry Weeks

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The 2-day field trip to Freezout Lake and the Rocky Mountain Front is scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>. The plan is to leave Missoula at 7:00 am on May 28<sup>th</sup> and drive to Freezout Lake. We will spend the night in Choteau and stay at the Stage Stop Inn (406-466-5900). Participants are asked to make reservations in advance. Plan to take lunches for 2 days. We will eat dinner together at a local restaurant. Breakfast is provided by the motel. Please contact Larry Weeks if you plan to attend and he will coordinate carpooling. There is a \$10 charge for multi-day field trips.

A 4-day field trip to Malta and Bowdoin NWR has been scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. We will camp at James Kipp the first night and the city park in Malta the next 2 nights. If someone wishes to stay in a motel, the recommended options are the Maltana (1-406-654-2610) and the Country Inn (1-866-925-4143). If you plan to go and stay in a motel, I recommend that you make your reservations now. Please contact Larry Weeks if you plan to attend and he will coordinate carpooling.

## Breathing In, Breathing Out

**Our deep relationship with the trees of the Boreal Forest**  
By Jeff Wells, Audubon's VP of Boreal Conservation

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As people around the world celebrate Earth Day this week, it is hard not to reflect on the relationship humans have with the natural world around us. I am specifically fascinated by the special bond we have with trees. We breathe out Co2, which trees take in. Trees breathe out oxygen, which in turn we breathe in. This constant sharing of breath—in and out, out and in—as if the whole world is breathing together as one complete organism. How could you be any more connected than that?

Trees go beyond supplying us with air to breath. They store carbon, provide habitat for vast numbers of species, and bring an abundance of joy into our lives. It makes me think, what are we doing for the trees? In some parts of the world, the answer is a lot! Across the Boreal Forest in Canada, Indigenous stewards of the land have been caring for the trees for time immemorial. Indigenous-led conservation is helping to protect them from destructive development, climate change, and biodiversity loss. So, even as deforestation has fragmented and eliminated forests in many places around the globe, the Boreal Forest in Canada remains the largest intact forest on the planet.

Stretching from Alaska to Labrador, North America's Boreal Forest provides nesting grounds and migratory stopovers for nearly half of the common bird species found

on the continent. Every spring, up to three billion birds pour into the forest, traveling north from backyards, parks, and wildlands throughout the Western Hemisphere. Countless other species, such as caribou, bears, wolves, lynx, and wolverines, thrive in the boreal in numbers rarely seen elsewhere.

The Boreal Forest captures and stores enormous amounts of carbon, especially within its soils, peatlands, and permafrost. Canada's Boreal Forest alone holds about 12 percent of the world's land-based carbon reserves. It is home to a quarter of the world's wetlands, with millions of lakes—including some of the largest and most pristine on Earth—and the longest free-flowing rivers remaining in North America.

Many Indigenous Nations in Canada are honoring their connection to the land by establishing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) to sustain the places salmon, caribou, birds, and many others need. IPCAs also protect huge storehouses of carbon. Indigenous Guardians help provide the ongoing management for these protected areas.

This combination of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Indigenous Guardians programs is very effective. Canada has not only pledged to protect 30% of its lands by 2030 as one of the countries pushing for the UN Convention on Biodiversity to set that new benchmark goal for all nations, but they have also set their own national goal of reaching 25% by 2025. The biggest, most ambitious plans for conserving lands are coming from Indigenous Nations across the Boreal Forest. Supporting these proposals will bring Canada close to meeting its conservation goals.

The theme for Earth Day this year is "Invest in our Planet." To fulfill its stewardship responsibility to the world, including its birds and other biodiversity, it is imperative that Canada makes it a priority to provide funding for IPCAs and Indigenous Guardians programs across North America's amazing Boreal Forest.



## Wild Skies Raptor Center Field Trip

By Kate Stone and Rose Stoudt

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The staff and board of Wild Skies Raptor Center are excited to welcome Five Valleys Audubon members to our Potomac facility on Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30am. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the work and care that goes into raptor rehabilitation and to view the ambassador birds who bring the stories and natural history of raptors to people of all ages.

Wild Skies Raptor Center began in 2010 and operates on about twelve wooded acres near Potomac. The staff includes Executive Director and founder Brooke Tanner and Assistant Director Jesse Varnado. They split their time between the Center's two main missions: education and the treatment of injured raptors. Their work is supported by a small board and a network of dedicated volunteers. Financial support comes from grants, foundations, and individual donors in the community; they do not receive any taxpayer dollars to support their work. The facilities include intake, assessment, treatment, healing, and training areas for birds in rehabilitation, as well as permanent housing for seventeen education birds. Wild Skies operates with all necessary permits issued by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. They work with a network of rehabilitators across the state, but generally serve the Missoula, Bitterroot, and Blackfoot Valleys. Most intakes come from Missoula and Ravalli Counties, but in 2021 they handled birds from an additional eight counties. That's a lot of miles to cover!

Almost half of the 122 raptors brought to Wild Skies in 2021 were Great Horned Owls or Red-tailed Hawks, but the other eighteen species included everything from two tiny Northern Pygmy-owls to nine Bald Eagles. Just under half of the birds cared for were released back into the wild, some after more than six months of rehabilitation and flight training. Most raptor intakes are related to anthropogenic causes, and almost 75% involve collisions of some kind. These statistics demonstrate why the educational component of Wild Skies is so important; educational programming includes helpful tips for how each person can make their own home and community safer for birds of all kinds.

Five Valleys Audubon and its members have been wonderful supporters of Wild Skies Raptor Center in the past, and the staff and board look forward to seeing many of you in person at the June field trip. If you cannot make the trip, or just want more information, you can visit the Wild Skies website to learn more. You can also sign up to receive newsletters, learn about volunteer workdays, and hear about other ways to be involved.

## Directions for Wild Skies Raptor Center field Trip:

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**Directions from Bonner exit:** 200 E to Potomac, just past mm 16 and the Sinclair/Cully's take a Right on Potomac Rd, right on Swanson Ln, Left on Camas (sign on tall stump, turns to gravel), Right on Spirit Trail, first driveway on Left 33634. Big blue barn and other outbuildings.

**The presentation begins at 9:30am, Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup>.**

We would like to encourage carpooling as much as possible to reduce the number of vehicles on-site and conserve resources. In that vein, we will meet at the NW corner of the Adams Center parking lot at 8:30am, Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. You can also meet us at 9:15am, a couple hundred yards along the Potomac Rd or on site.

Bring your portable chairs or other sit up on, as well as water and other food items you may need. Dress appropriately for the weather, rain or shine, as the presentation will be outside.

### Any further questions:

Please contact Rose Stoudt at 406-880-8060.



A young Red-tailed Hawk is released back into the wild near its nest and parents. Photo courtesy Wild Skies Raptor Center/Jesse Varnado.



Jesse Varnado and Frith the Great Horned Owl interact with the public at the Teller Youth Expo.



**Montana Audubon's 2022  
Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival**

Mark your calendars for the Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival 2022. This traditional Montana Audubon event is scheduled to take place in Lewistown from June 3<sup>rd</sup> through June 5<sup>th</sup> and headquartered at The Yogo Inn. Montana Audubon's annual gathering draws birders and wildlife enthusiasts from around the state and beyond.

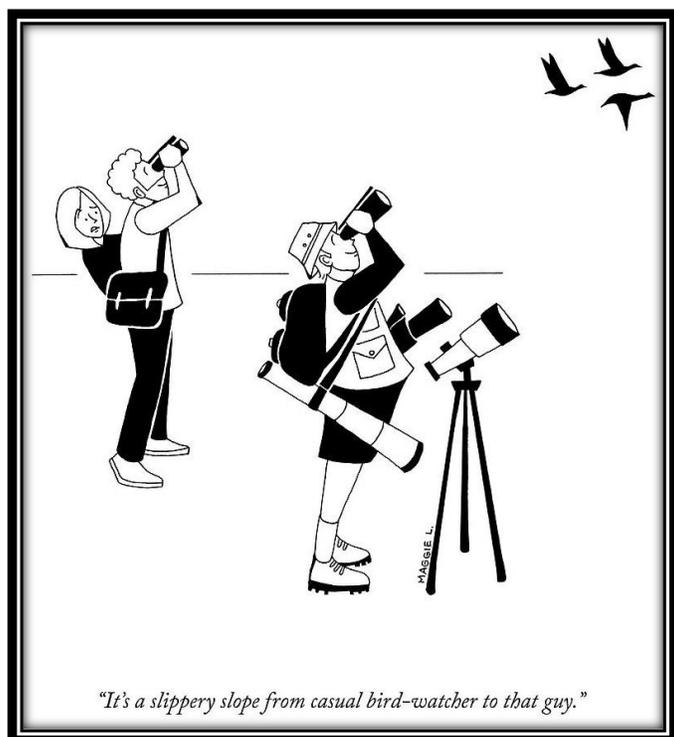
The registration form can be found on the Montana Audubon website at:

<https://montanaaudubon2022.regfox.com/wings-across-the-big-sky-2022>

Check out the brochure to choose your field trips and see who is presenting this year.

<https://mtaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/207976-NL.pdf>

There's rumor of an ice cream bar as well, and who wouldn't want to cool off after a whole day of birding in June? If you have any questions, you can email [info@mtaudubon.org](mailto:info@mtaudubon.org) or give us a call at 406-443-3949.



**St. Louis Cardinals Team Name History**  
Source: MLB.com

The St. Louis Cardinals are one of the most iconic franchises in Major League Baseball. Despite the team using the image of the Cardinal as their logo, the reason for their name had nothing to do with the bird. The Cardinals got their name before the bird was featured on their jersey. So how did the name come to be?



1892: The St. Louis Browns joined the National League and has been a member ever since.

1898: The team's owner, Chris Von der Ahe went bankrupt, and the Robison Brothers stepped in to purchase the Browns.

1899: The Robison Brothers, Frank and Stanley, replaced the name Browns with the Perfectos. The team was also outfitted in new red striped stockings and red-trimmed uniforms. When sportswriter Willie McHale, of the St. Louis Republic, overheard a female fan praise the color as "a lovely shade of cardinal," the new nickname was used in his column, and struck a chord with St. Louis fans.

1900-1921: For twenty-one years, the St. Louis Cardinals' uniforms sported logos with only solid red letters.

1922: It wasn't until 1922 that the bird images appeared in the logo, with two Cardinals perched on a black bat facing each other. Below the birds were the name of the club—Cardinals. And the point of attraction is how the letter—C changed on the baseball bat. Both the wordmark and birds were colored in red. The birds looked more like cartoons. This logo ruled for almost five years.

Over the next 100 years, the logo changed six more times, but the bird remained the team's indelible mascot.



## A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Steve Bert                      Nancy Cooper  
Martha Des Georges        Philip Jones  
John Kittelson                Claudia Stahl  
Darcy Thomas                Mary Thomas  
Thula Weisel

# THANK YOU

for joining us!

**Please 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](mailto:treasurer@FVAudubon.org) or Membership Promotion Chair, Thomas Kallmeyer at [thomas@tarns.net](mailto:thomas@tarns.net).**

### 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](http://fvaudubon.org/join)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 FVAS membership, includes newsletter sent via email.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Phillip L. Wright Fund, small grants for student research.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 FVAS membership, includes newsletter sent via USPS.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Legacy Fund, creating and supporting local urban bird habitats for citizen enjoyment without leaving the city.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Free for students, includes FVAS newsletter, sent via email.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

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](http://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



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Newsletter Editor	Beverly Orth	(303) 944-0183	<a href="mailto:orthbev@hotmail.com">orthbev@hotmail.com</a>
PL Wright Endowment Program	Andrea Stierle	(406) 782-6419	<a href="mailto:andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu">andrea.stierle@mso.umt.edu</a>
Publicity	Susie Wall	(406) 274-0548	<a href="mailto:susiewall2@gmail.com">susiewall2@gmail.com</a>
Social Media	Cathy Nolan	(206) 920-2288	<a href="mailto:canolan4@outlook.com">canolan4@outlook.com</a>
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