

April 2010

Birding Observer



Five Valleys Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Calendar

* **Monday, April 5th, 7pm:** Larry Weeks will host the board meeting.

* **Monday, April 12th, 7:30pm:** Come to the April program meeting to learn about butterflies and moths. The meeting will be held in room L14 (lower level) of the Gallagher Business Building at UM.

* **Friday, April 16th:** Submission deadline for the May edition of the *Birding Observer*.

* **Saturday, April 17th:** Full-day field trip to the Lee Metcalf NWR. Meet in the middle of the field house parking lot at 8:00 AM or at the Metcalf visitor's center at 9:00 AM.

* **Saturday, May 1st:** Full-day field trip to Brown's Lake led by Jim Brown. Meet in the middle of the UM field house parking lot at 8:00 AM.

* **Sunday, May 9th:** Full-day field trip to Smurfit-Stone. Meet in the middle of the field house parking lot at 8:00 AM or at the pulp mill at 8:30 AM.

* **June 4th-6th:** Montana Audubon's Bird Festival will be held in Missoula.

The Secret Lives of Butterflies and Moths

Life history, behavior, and conservation of butterflies and moths will be the topic of the next program on Monday, April 12. Kristi DuBois, Byron Weber, and Jim Brown will provide hints on how to tell butterflies from moths and show pictures of the most common species found in the Missoula area. Byron and Jim will bring some specimens for viewing. Conserving butterflies in the Missoula area will also be covered. The meeting is at 7:30 pm in the Gallagher Business Building, room L14 (lower level) on the University of Montana campus.

Kristi, Jim, and Byron have worked in various careers, but all enjoy learning about butterflies and sharing their many discoveries. Jim has been studying butterflies for the past 15 years, and calls himself a closet lepidopterist. Kristi collected butterflies as a kid, and spends her free time photographing butterflies and moths in their natural environment. Byron enjoys all insects and tells their fascinating stories with kids of all ages during monthly visits to the Pea Green Boat on Montana Public Radio.



Peeps from the Prez

No trip to Argentina can be complete without a visit to Tierra del Fuego. I assumed that going to South America during their summer (our winter) would be warm. However Ushuaia, in Tierra del Fuego is the departure port for visits to the Antarctic and was really cold with a constant piercing wind, hence a buying trip for wind pants and long underwear. However the stunning scenery made up for the cold. The rugged mountains dropping down to the ocean, the beauty of the Beagle Channel when viewed from the walk toward the Martial Glacier above Ushuaia, and the southern beech forest of the national park vie for the most impressionable scenery of the area with each holding its own set of birds. Yellow-bridled Finches and ground tyrants as well as remarkable views of the Beagle Channel and surrounding mountains made a vigorous hike up the local ski area (still with some snow) well worthwhile.

Black-browed Albatrosses, Magellanic Diving Petrels, Southern Fulmars and Gentoo and Magellanic Penguins were the reward for a trip down the Beagle Channel. However, a placid sail changed into an extremely rough ride when major winds, up to seventy miles an hour, began and unfortunately turned Beth green.

The appearance of a Green-backed Firecrown (lifer for our guide), while we were watching an Austral Pygmy-owl, was the most unexpected sighting of the trip. Rio Grande lived up to its reputation of wind with an Austral Canastero proving its hardiness by sitting and singing on an exposed bush while we struggled to hold our binoculars and scopes steady.

We then flew up to Iguazu Falls. This remarkable wonder is split into 270 discrete falls and has the greatest annual flow of any waterfall in the world. It is surrounded by semi-tropical forests rich in bird life. There are thousands of Great Dusky Swifts making dare-devil dives into and behind the falls. Toco Toucans perched high in trees and a late afternoon sighting of a Black-fronted Piping Guan were only a few of the highlights of the trip. An afternoon leisurely watching hummingbirds at feeders, an after dinner walk for Tropical Screech Owl and Common Potoo, a very obliging Rufous

Gnateater in the heat of the day, Robust and Blond-crested Woodpeckers, White bearded and Blue Manakins and Green-headed Tanagers were a few of the more memorable experiences of the week. The combination of such superb forest birding and scenic beauty of the falls makes this one of the best birding destinations one can imagine, as a stand-alone trip or as in our case, as a perfect culmination to a month of birding in Argentina.

Bird Festival Update



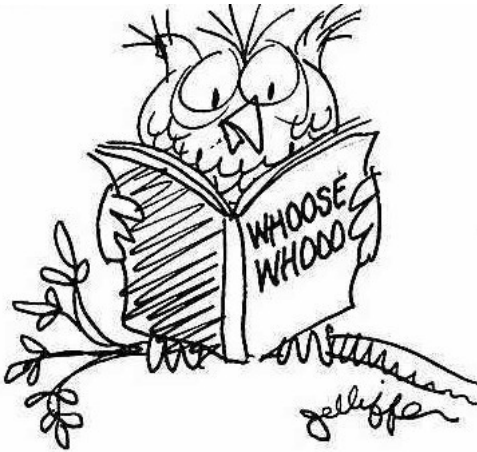
The annual Montana Audubon Bird Festival is coming to a town near you. Well, if you have not heard, it will be here in Missoula the first week-end in June. Planning has been underway for several months. Please start thinking about **volunteering** a few hours and **donating** items for the Silent Auction. More info later.

New to the Silent Auction this year is the opportunity to bid on the services of one of our experienced trip leaders for a personal full day tour. Successful bidders will be able to choose tours from various parts of the State and target specific birds.

Experienced trip leaders are being asked to donate one day. For further information, please contact Jerry Dirnberger at 542-7043 or Larry Weeks at 549-5632.

Now let's talk money. From past experience, the Festival is requesting checks be used by the successful bidders of the auction items (and other purchases) as it speeds up the process since MT Audubon does not have the ability to do on-line credit/debit card processing at the Festival. Another request is to mail in your registration with a check, if possible, in order to avoid the cost of on-line processing. Your co-operation is ALWAYS appreciated.

Workshop for Intermediate Birders



The Five Valleys Audubon Society will offer a workshop for intermediate birders again this year. This workshop should appeal to birders who enjoy birding and want to improve their identification

skills. It will consist of three classroom sessions and one field trip. The classroom sessions are scheduled for Thursday, April 8th, Thursday, April 15th, and Thursday, April 22nd. The field trip will be held on Saturday, April 10th at the Lee Metcalf NWR. The classroom sessions will be held at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Regional Office at 3201 Spurgin Road and will start at 7:00 PM and last until 9:30 PM. The program will include a full session on hawks, eagles and owls, and 30-minute to 60-minute sessions on waterfowl, woodpeckers, shorebirds, warblers, sparrows, and birding-by-ear. There will be a \$35 charge for the workshop. To sign up, call Larry Weeks at 549-5632 or email him at bwsgenea@onlinemt.com. The workshop will be limited to 30 participants.

Field Trip by Larry Weeks

Saturday, February 27, 2010: The weather was spring-like for the tour of the Mission Valley. There was no snow in the valley and the snowline was almost half way up the Mission Mountains. The group from Missoula met up with additional birders at the Ninepipes Lodge. We have used the Lodge as a restroom stop but unfortunately, it is now closed due to foreclosure. The route included Rocky Butte Road to Polson with a return trip through Valley View since the Back Road is still under construction. Raptors were very plentiful and every time we stopped, we were able to locate multiple raptors as we scanned the fields.

As usual, the rough-legged hawks were the most abundant and I'm sure we must have seen over 50. The red-tailed hawk numbers were close behind and we had at least 3 Harlan's red-tails. The calving was in progress and there must have been over 30 bald eagles. The most surprising find was 5 great horned owls and they were all on nests. One of the owls was nesting across the street from the courthouse in Polson, and another was at the corner of the highway to Charlo and Piedalue Road (near the dam on Ninepipes Reservoir). Other raptors included northern harriers, American kestrels and 1 prairie falcon. Other birds included 2 northern shrikes, Brewer's blackbirds and a western meadowlark. We also found 2 trumpeter swans; one had yellow legs and feet and the other had the expected black legs and feet. According to Janene Lichtenberg, wildlife biologist, Confederated Salish & Kooteni Tribes, the one with yellow legs is leucistic, which means it is white in parts of the bird but not albino. Fifteen people participated on the field trip and we tallied 33 species.

2010 Field Trip Schedule	
Date	Location
Saturday, April 17 th	Lee Metcalf NWR
Saturday, May 1 st	Brown's Lake
Sunday, May 9 th	Smurfit-Stone
Saturday, May 29 th	Spring Gulch
June 4 th through 6 th	MT Audubon Bird Festival
June 19 th through 20 th	Freezout Lake
July 8 th through 11 th	Glacier Park Campout
Saturday, August 7 th	Glenn Lake
Saturday, September 11 th	Ninepipes/Kicking Horse
Saturday, October 2 nd	Flesher Pass
Saturday, October 9 th	Lee Metcalf NWR
Saturday, November 6 th	Maclay Flat
Sunday, December 5 th	Mission Valley

When I was growing up in the 1950's and 60's, the Peterson Field Guide was *the* standard reference. I still have my 1948 edition. Since then, bird books have proliferated – Audubon, Sibley, National Wildlife Federation, Eastern, Western, Gulf States, etc. And I now have ten specific country bird books, associated with travel.



On a recent trip to the Oregon coast, I was attempting to identify some birds in the surf. A larger than expected wave caused a rapid retreat and I dropped my bird book. Now I have a salt water bird book!

Roosts and Roosting Behaviors by Bill DeCou

Some species of birds have communal roosts they return to nightly. These can range from 10-15 birds to thousands. Some of these roosts are longstanding. In the mid-1950's, we had a ring neck pheasant roost of about 15 birds, which returned each evening after a day in the soybean fields. Around 1960, I observed hundreds of herons and egrets coming to roost at dusk at Stone Harbor on the New Jersey coast. And in 2000, my mother, wife and I stayed at a motel in Patagonia, a small town in Central Arizona and witnessed hundreds of turkey vultures coming in to roost. We had not known there was a roost and were rather surprised. The pheasant roost has been replaced by suburbia, and in 2007, when I visited Stone Harbor, the roost had been long abandoned, but I don't know about the continued status of Patagonia. The roosting can be an interesting experience – usually encountered only by local knowledge or good luck.

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

We are now seeking nominations for 4 awards that will be given away at Montana Audubon's annual meeting this year. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

To nominate your candidate, please call the Montana Audubon office to request an award nomination form or download the form from our website at <<http://mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html>>. To be considered for this year's award, nominations and all supporting material must be postmarked no later than May 14, 2010. All nominations and supporting material should be sent to Montana Audubon, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: (406) 443-7144. The award ceremony will take place on June 5 at Montana Audubon's Bird Festival in Missoula. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or <jellis@mtaudubon.org>.

This drawing of bluebirds was created by a student in Kathy Heffernan's biology class, SaNia S.



Welcome to Our New Members

Lois Crepeau
Margaret Goode
Amanda McInnis

Weston Cruz
Laura Hinthner
Dana Warren

Gardar G. Dahl
Robert Howard
Gerome Weinand

Jack Fleming
Jill King

Thanks to Our Returning Members

Pat & Jeff Aresty
Will Butler
Mr. & Mrs. Harold H. Herbig
Shannon Parsons

Kathleen Baird
Elaine Caton
Evelyn King
Dale Thompson

William Belkowski
Kevin & Judy Fredenberg
Wallace & Karla Long

Monica Best
Dorothy Hebert
Robert Mc Kelvey

Hi Friends! Go Green,

Save Paper and Other Costs

View your ***Birding Observer*** newsletter even sooner, only **on-line**.

Just send us an email request with your name to Vick Applegate at k7vk@arrl.net.

We will alert you each month when the newsletter becomes available on-line.

Join The National Audubon Society

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

\$20 for a one-year membership
for an individual or family

Please make the check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. **COZ N53 OZ**

Join The 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 (optional): _____

\$15 is enclosed for Chapter 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.

Five Valleys Audubon Society

PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807

<http://www.fvamisoula.org>



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