

OCTOBER**MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Last Chance Audubon Society will meet Monday, October 17, at 7 pm at the Montana Wild Center, 2668 Broadwater Ave.

The program -- *Montana's Important Bird Areas: Saving Bird Habitat* -- will be presented by Steve Hoffman.

The Important Bird Area (IBA) Project was started in Europe in the mid-1980s by BirdLife International. This program establishes clear priorities for bird habitat conservation worldwide. Thus far more than 5,000 IBAs have been identified in the US, with 40 already designated in Montana since 1999. These 40 sites encompass more than 11 million acres of public and private lands throughout Montana. We in Helena are fortunate to live close to three of these: Lake Helena, Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area and the Blackfoot Valley.

Come learn about the history and status of the IBA program in Montana, the potential for new IBAs, which bird species in Montana are of greatest conservation concern, and what MT Audubon and various Audubon chapters are doing to advance this highly effective voluntary bird habitat conservation initiative.

Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon since 2006, has dedicated his entire 31-year career to wildlife conservation. He worked 10 years for the BLM and the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a wildlife biologist and an endangered species specialist. He then launched HawkWatch International, a non-profit dedicated to research and conservation of hawks, eagles and other birds of prey. Twelve years later, he became the Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Pennsylvania. In 2004 he moved to Montana to serve as Executive Director of Predator Conservation Alliance. Steve has authored more than 30 scientific papers and given hundreds of presentations on various wildlife conservation and bird identification topics. He earned his M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University.

ANNUAL BIRDSEED SALE

Last Chance Audubon Society, in partnership with Birds & Beasleys, is now taking orders for the chapter's annual birdseed sale. Here's a chance to stock up on seed for your feathered winter guests and at the same time help our chapter raise money for educational and conservation projects. All profits from this sale go to LCAS.



- 25# black oil sunflower seed,
unshelled - \$30.00
- 25# med chips – \$43.00
- 10# nyjer thistle - \$20.00
- 20# nyjer thistle - \$39.00
- 25# millet - \$19.00

Place your order by Nov. 15 with Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904, or with Sue Jackson, 443-4486.

Pick up birdseed at Birds & Beasleys, 70 S. Park Ave., Nov. 1 - Nov. 15.

LCAS FALL SILENT AUCTION

This year's silent auction will be held at the November membership meeting. There's a new twist in this year's auction: We're going GREEN. That means you'll have an opportunity to make a general donation and not have to take an auction item home. In other words: *I want to support LCAS* (continued on next page)

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(*SILENT AUCTION ... continued from previous page*)
but I don't need any more stuff, so here's my
monetary donation. Not to worry, there will still be
some great items to bid on, just not as many as in the
past. We will also have two trips to bid on. One is a

dragonfly fieldtrip for 1-3 people with Bob Martinka
and the other is a trip with Coburn Currier. Come to
the October meeting for more details. If you can't
attend the November meeting, contact Jo Lace, 443-
6640, or Sandy Shull, 442-0200, and we'd be more
than happy to proxy bid for you.

BIRDNOTE: BLACKFOOT VALLEY HAS SOMETHING TO TRUMPET ABOUT
excerpt from *The Blackfoot Challenge & Great Falls Tribune*, 8/18/11

The efforts of landowners, biologists, school children, dozens of volunteers, and the hopes of many Blackfoot Valley residents came to fruition recently when four downy trumpeter swan cygnets peered out from under their mother's wing. These four chicks are the first trumpeter swans known to have hatched in the Blackfoot River Valley in over a century.

By the early 1900's trumpeter swans were gone from the Blackfoot and nearly extinct throughout their entire range. The few remaining trumpeters were protected by the creation of Red Rock Lakes National Refuge in 1937. Trumpeter numbers have increased since that time, largely owing to their population expansion in remote Canadian breeding areas.

Efforts of local landowners, agencies and organizations have helped conserve more than 30,000 individual wetlands in the Blackfoot, many of them providing ideal habitat for swans and other waterfowl. But it wasn't until 2003 that a pair of these largest of North American waterfowl attempted to nest in the Blackfoot River Valley, selecting a secluded wetland on private land near Lincoln. Tragically, as the female left the nest one night to fly to a nearby wetland, she collided with a power line and died. Quick thinking by the landowner turned this tragedy into a wonderful opportunity. Discovering the dead swan the morning following the collision, he paddled out to the nest, gathered the four eggs, and with the help of others relayed the eggs to Ronan, where Montana Waterfowl Foundation facility Director John Jarvis placed the eggs in the nest of a surrogate pair of captive trumpeters. They hatched three of the four eggs and raised the three cygnets.

This Lincoln-area nesting attempt became the catalyst for creation of a partnership of private landowners, foundations, conservation groups, and others to help the trumpeters reclaim their ancestral Blackfoot home. A trumpeter reintroduction program was begun in 2005. Since then, 143 trumpeter swans have been released on several wetlands in the Blackfoot. The Blackfoot restoration effort took an encouraging step forward in 2009 when the birds began forming pairs and defending nesting territories on a few Blackfoot wetlands. Similar behavior was observed in 2010 but no nests were found. At the end of 2010, no more than three Blackfoot pairs were known to exist.

So it was in Nature's own miraculous way that the cool, wet spring of 2011 brought two ardent swan pairs to two separate wetlands in the Blackfoot where they not only established territories but created nests into which they laid the first eggs. The reward for these swan parents and those who have championed their cause is seven downy cygnets now paddling their way through the quiet waters of the timeless Blackfoot Valley.



What's next for the Blackfoot Trumpeters? Just as their biological drive to survive and to reproduce has carried them through time and space to the production of seven cygnets this year, the goal for this flock is to establish seven pairs in the Valley.

For more info see the *Blackfoot Challenge*, <http://blackfootchallenge.org/> / 406-793-3900; or visit the *Blackfoot Valley Adopt-A-Swan* website at <http://blackfootchallenge.org/SwanProject/>.

*Last Chance Audubon Society promotes understanding, respect and enjoyment of birds
and the natural world through education, habitat
protection and environmental advocacy.*



Killdeer by James Cox

**CARLA WAMBACH NAMED 2011
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR
AT MT AUDUBON BIRD FESTIVAL**

Last Chance Audubon member Carla Wambach was named Educator of the Year by Montana Audubon and honored at the 2011 bird festival held June 3-5 in Glasgow, MT. Carla is a retired educator who has volunteered much time and effort to conservation education. She helped to develop the very successful Adopt-a-Species Program and has gone into numerous classrooms to share her knowledge and enthusiasm for wildlife, habitat and watchable wildlife ethics. Carla has several programs dedicated to birds, feathers and flight. In addition to sharing her knowledge and love of nature and the outdoors with youngsters in classrooms, she has presented programs at International Migratory Bird Day celebrations and to Last Chance Audubon.

Congratulations, Carla, on your well-deserved award!

**THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY
22ND CONFERENCE**

The 22nd Biennial Conference of The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) will be held in Polson, Montana, on October 11-14, 2011. The biennial conferences of TTSS provide the only public forum in North America that brings together private citizens and conservation groups, policy makers, swan managers, and researchers to examine the status and needs of Trumpeter Swans in the U.S. and Canada and to work together to make all populations secure.

The 22nd Conference will focus on both the successes and challenges involved with long-term management of trumpeter swans. The conference will put special emphasis on the status of swans in the Western United States, including updates about the status and management of the Pacific and Interior Populations of Trumpeter Swans. There will be progress reports on topics such as lead poisoning in British Columbia and Washington State and expansion of Trumpeter Swan populations elsewhere. Learn about Trumpeter Swan restoration efforts in western Montana, as well as challenging issues facing swans in the Pacific Northwest. Presentations will examine the restoration accomplishments and lessons learned and discuss the future challenges to Trumpeter Swan conservation. In addition, the Conference will

include sessions on the biology, habitat concerns, and management of Trumpeter Swan populations throughout North America.

We strongly encourage private partners, agency managers, and biologists involved in Trumpeter Swan restoration, management and research to participate, and we invite all who are interested in Trumpeter Swans to attend the conference. Details of the conference can be found at <http://www.swansociety.org/22nd-trumpeter-swan-society-conference.html>.

**MORE COMING EVENTS &
REMINDERS**

- **LCAS Nov./Dec. Newsletter Deadline:** There will be a single newsletter for Nov. and Dec. Please submit newsletter items by **Tues., Nov. 1.**
- **Project FeederWatch** is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. This data helps scientists track broad-scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution. For more information, see <http://www.birds.cornell.edu.pfw>.

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Treasurer Dan Sullivan 443-4229

Board of Directors:

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Program Sara Toubman 442-1271
Publicity Jim Greene 495-9270
Silent Auction Sandy Shull/Jo Lace 449-0904/443-6640
Website Dan Sullivan 443-4229

Committee Chairs/Contacts

Birdathon Jo Lace 443-6640
Birdseed Sale Sue Jackson/Sandy Shull 443-4486/449-0904

Website: www.lastchanceaudubon.org; Contacts: Birdseed - Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904; Montana Audubon - 443-3949/
www.mtaudubon.org. Non-members may receive the newsletter for \$5.50 per year. Send check to LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena 59624.

MEMBERSHIP FROM SARA TOUBMAN:

Please welcome the following new and renewing National Audubon Society members. New: Tammy Henderson, Doris Bergstrom, Sharon Dewart Hansen. Renewing: Laura Quintrell, Sue/Mark Reynolds, Joy Ritter, Mike/Helen Murray, Juday Bayless, Diana Longdon, R. Johnson, Eliza Frazer/Barry Hood.



**Last Chance Audubon Society
Membership Form**

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Send your \$15 check with this form to Last Chance Audubon Society, PO Box 924, Helena, MT 59624. All contributions are tax deductible.