

APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Last Chance Audubon Society will meet on Tuesday, April 15, at 7:00 pm in the large meeting room of the Lewis and Clark Library.

Denise Pengeroth, the Helena National Forest Wildlife Biologist and the Elkhorns Coordinator, will present our April program. Her topic, *Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People*, is the theme of this year's International Migratory Bird Day.

Nearly 5000 bird species depend on the habitats of the Americas. These habitats range from the tundra, to boreal forests, wetlands, grasslands, coastal areas, and tropical forests. Several of these species migrate long distances between breeding and non-breeding sites throughout the Western Hemisphere. The largest threat to these birds is loss and degradation of habitat. Denise will talk about the birds that make these fantastic journeys, the habitats on which they depend, and the people who are important to the conservation of birds and their habitats along the way. We will learn to recognize the important habitats in our area – grasslands and sagebrush communities, aspen, ponderosa pine, wetlands - and the groups and individuals who contribute to their protection. Explore what each habitat offers migratory birds, whether it is a place to rest, a nesting site, or a winter home.

Denise has been with the Helena National Forest almost 7 years. Originally from the east coast she went to school at University of Montana and studied striped skunks in the Mission Valley.

2008 NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES ON MONTANA PRAIRIES

April 8. Mike Madel – The Prairie Grizzly Bear.
Time: 7 pm • Place: FWP Commission Room at FWP Headquarters, 1420 E. 6th Ave (Access the building through the west side door.) • Cost: \$5.00
This is the final lecture of the series.

PLANTING AT SPRING MEADOW LAKE - APRIL 26TH

Each year LCAS devotes monies raised through Birdathon to the Habitat Protection Fund, and this year a \$2,000 grant was presented to the Lewis & Clark Water Quality Protection District for re-vegetation projects. The chapter chose to earmark those funds to aid Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in planting native trees and shrubs lost in the devastating arson fire at Spring Meadow Lake in September 2007. Spring Meadow Lake has been home to a host of songbirds and the park plays a key role in LCAS Beginning Birding classes held each spring.

We need volunteers for the April 26th planting; if you want to take part in helping to restore Spring Meadow to its former glory call Brian Shovers at 443-6640.

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FLAMMULATED OWLS AND CITIZEN MONITORING by Amy Cilimburg

The Avian Science Center at The University of Montana and the Helena National Forest are planning a citizen science monitoring effort for Flammulated Owls around the Helena area this summer. This will be similar to the successful pilot program initiated in the greater Missoula area in 2007. With financial support from MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, we plan to build upon our 2005 (continued on next page)

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study of these owls and build a long-term monitoring project in this region. And we need the help of a handful of volunteers!

As volunteers, you can “adopt” a survey route which you complete twice sometime between the 3rd week of May and 1 July. You will work in pairs and can hike or drive to survey your route. You’ll stop at established points and play an owl caller. Plan to be out from 10 pm until ~ 1 or 2 am). The Avian Science Center and the Helena NF will provide training, equipment, and protocols. We plan to determine a May evening training date during the April 15 Last Chance Audubon Society meeting – this training will be held sometime during the week of May 19-22. If you cannot attend the April 15 LCAS meeting and are interested in being a “night owl” a couple nights this summer or if you would like to know more, please contact Denise Pengeroth (Helena NF) at dpengeroth@fs.fed.us or 406-495-3736. For more information see http://avianscience.dbs.umt.edu/research_landbird_flam.htm. Thanks for your help!

**♪ BIRDNOTE: 2007 BIRDATHON REPORT
FROM BROTHER CAN YOU
SPARROW DIME?
a/k/a Jo Lace and Brian Shovers and
Don and Andrea Stierle
ALL THIS, AND NO BLACK-CAPPED
CHICKADEE?**

We take just about the same route for our Birdathon every year, and we almost expect to see certain birds in certain places. In some cases, we do. We missed some of our regulars this year, but we had some great moments. At Spring Meadow State Park a Northern Waterthrush sang and sang until we finally spied it in a willow. There were Trumpeter Swans on Lake Helena and Lark Sparrows along the way to York Road. Just before the turn into the Regulating Reservoir we found eight Sandhill Cranes in a line, moving along, eating dinner in a plowed field. They were our last image on Saturday evening.

Sunday morning at Giant Springs State Park we found a Great Horned Owl gliding silently through the trees. Benton Lake was a bonanza, as usual. As we drove through the refuge we saw White-faced Ibis, a Golden Eagle soaring, a Northern Shrike on a post, lots of Willets, Eared Grebes, and Say’s Phoebes. There were frogs singing in some of the ditches. Another benefit of all the rain we’ve had was the fabulously green countryside.

We all agreed that one of the best moments of Birdathon occurred at Freezout Lake. We had just turned north on the loop road and we came across an American Bittern standing on the road. He sidled into the grass, bill pointed skyward in a vain attempt at camouflage, then lifted off, green legs dangling. Within yards, a Black-crowned Night Heron sat at the edge of a channel in all of his beautiful breeding plumage. And finally, a gang of baby Killdeer ran amok on the road in front of us.

We had a Ruffed Grouse drumming in Little Prickly Pear Canyon, where it started to rain. By the time we got to Duffy Lane the rain stopped and the fence lines were adorned with Bobolinks. Another great experience altogether! (Total species – 107)

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LAST CHANCE AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING AND SUMMER 2008 FIELD TRIPS

April 19, Saturday - BLM's McMaster Hills, at the mouth of Spokane Creek

Join Cedron Jones for this local birding adventure. It will be a partly off-trail walk of about 5 miles round trip, with occasional steep and/or rocky slopes. Highlights are a lush riparian habitat at the mouth of Spokane Creek, views of Hauser Reservoir, an intriguing wooded and rocky canyon, and open grasslands. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the Good Samaritan Store. Please pre-register by calling Cedron at 442-1271.

April 26, Saturday - Spring Meadow Lake State Park

Sara Toubman would like to share the avian surprises at nearby Spring Meadow Lake. Meet her at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Spring Meadow Lake State Park, on the road to Fort Harrison. To sign up, call Sara, 442-1271.

April 26, Saturday - Spring Meadow Lake State Park

As an adjunct to Sara's trip, or as a separate experience, meet James Wilbur of the Prickly Pear Creek Watershed Group to help plant shrubs to help Spring Meadow recover from last summer's fire. Our chapter has given them \$2000 to assist in the effort, so this would be a good chance to participate in the Park's program to replace the vegetation that hosts the birds in the area that we so enjoy. Meet James at 8:45 in the parking lot of the State Park and bring a shovel and gloves. The group will work from 9 to 12, then gather for a bring-your-own picnic lunch.

May 14, Wednesday - Evening Last Chance Gulch Bird Walk

Meet Cary Lund at the Lewis and Clark Library at 5:30 p.m. for an easy stroll around the neighborhood close to the library, looking for a variety of local species. Call Cary at 449-3180 to sign up.

May 17, Saturday - Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Jo Lace, Brian Shovers and Bob Johnson will lead a group to Benton Lake near Great Falls. This is an excellent opportunity to see waterfowl and burrowing owls. Meet at the DOT parking lot at 7:00 a.m., return about 4:00 p.m. Bring a lunch, water, binoculars, spotting scope and dress for any weather. Call to reserve a spot, 15 people maximum, 443-6640.

May 28, Wednesday- Evening Last Chance Gulch Bird Walk

Meet Cary Lund at the Lewis and Clark Library at 5:30 p.m. for an easy stroll around the neighborhood close to the library, looking for a variety of local species. Call Cary at 449-3180 to sign up.

June 6-8, Friday through Sunday

This weekend is the state Audubon Birding Festival. There will be no Helena area trips scheduled, so sign up and plan to go birding in the Billings area! Montana Audubon, 442-3949.

June 14, Saturday - Little Prickly Pear Creek

Set your alarm clock and join early bird Dan Sullivan at 6:50 a.m. to enjoy some fantastic birding from Silver City to Sieben Ranch, where Little Prickly Pear Creek winds through a narrow valley of grass-covered hills and rocky outcroppings. There is a good chance for hawks, rock wrens, cranes, bobolinks, thrushes, orioles and warblers. Dan would like to meet in front of the Good Samaritan Store at Custer and Montana. Please call him at 443-4229 to reserve a spot.

June 28, Saturday - Nevada Valley Trumpeter Swan Release (tentative)

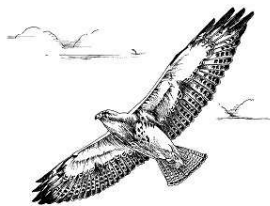
14 Trumpeter Swans were released on two separate ranches in the Nevada Valley in 2007, bringing the total number of swans released in the valley to 41. Biologists anticipate releasing approximately 40 swans in 2008 and will continue releases until 7 active breeding pairs are established in the Valley. A maximum of 20 visitors from outside the Valley are allowed to witness this moving event, so call Nancy Tunnicliff at 442-5024 to confirm the date, reserve a spot, and learn the meeting place and time.

Birds & Beasleys Saturday Morning Bird Walks

A Birds & Beasleys staff person will lead a bird walk every Saturday morning, April 5-November 1. Meet at 7:30 am in front of Birds & Beasleys, 70 S. Park, and enjoy 2 hours of local birding fun. Locations will rotate throughout the summer, but will include Spring Meadow, the Fairgrounds Pond, the Cement Plant, Jane Beasley's backyard, and anywhere else the group decides to go. Reservations are not necessary but would be appreciated - 449-0904.

LCAS FIELD TRIP LEADERS WANTED: Last Chance Audubon can always use new leaders and new ideas for field trips. Please give serious thought to leading a small group to an area that you've enjoyed, or would like to explore with others. Remember: You do not have to be an "ace" birder to lead a trip. Your responsibility is only to choose a location, receive a few phone calls, and get the participants into the field via carpooling. It's a fun, rewarding endeavor. So if you have an idea for a trip, please give me a call—Jim Greene, Field Trip Chair, 495-9270, or you can email me at greenevogt@imt.net.

SATURDAY MORNING BACKUP BIRD WALK LEADER NEEDED: Birds & Beasleys is looking for a backup bird walk leader for Saturday mornings from April-November. The person needs to know birds and be willing to work with a variety of people including kids. The plan is for the field trips to last about 2 hours and they will be to accessible areas like the Fairgrounds, Spring Meadow, and other local sites. This is a paid position. Please call Sandy at Birds & Beasleys for more information. 449-0904.



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT WRAP-UP: A record-breaking 85,000 checklists were submitted during the Great Backyard Bird Count this year, tallying more species than ever before - 635. The Audubon and Cornell Lab media teams also had a banner year, generating 450 stories coast to coast.

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MORE COMING EVENTS

► **INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY:** On Saturday, May 3, 2008, the IMBD Committee is hosting the 5th annual International Migratory Bird Day Celebration at the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir. We are looking for interested people to help lead the early morning bird hikes beginning at 6:30 as well as for hands-on activities throughout the day. Training will be provided.

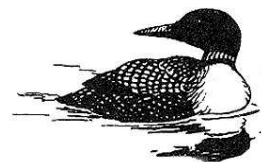
If this event sounds like fun, please come and enjoy! Spotting scopes will be focused on the heron rookery, Bob Martinka will have some of his photographs to enjoy, and Jane Beasley will be helping people learn to draw birds. These activities begin at 9 AM. We hope to see you there!

IMBD is cosponsored by the Helena National Forest; Montana Discovery Foundation; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Birds & Beasleys; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; and the Bureau of Reclamation.

► **MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL:** Montana Audubon and the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Chapter will host the 2008 Montana Bird Festival at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, June 6-8.

► **BIRDS OF THE BIG SKY JURIED ART SHOW:** In conjunction with the Montana Bird Festival, there will be an art show sponsored by the Billings Arts Assoc., Montana Audubon, and Rocky Mountain College. First prize in Art is \$500; first prize in Photography is \$300; **deadline for receipt of entries is May 1.** For information call William Crain, 406-697-9156, or Kayhan Ostorvor, 406-256-7481.

FREEZOUT LAKE HOTLINE: (406) 467-2646.
Call this number to monitor migration information at Freezout.



BIRDATHON 2008 by Lorna Milne

A number of years ago a couple of our members, Sara Toubman and Janice Miller, headed to Portland, Oregon, to receive training for our major fundraising project, the big bird count, aka Birdathon. They educated the rest of us, inspiring some healthy competition among teams. Thereafter, in our heyday, we raised around \$5000 a year for local habitat protection. More recently, we've raised about \$2,500.

Remembering those abundant times, a few of us decided to try and emulate the Audubon chapter in Missoula, which raises about \$8000 a year on their Birdathon. They have 400 members, we have 300. And they go about fundraising a bit differently; they solicit from their entire membership via telephone calls. As most of you know, birders are an interesting but shy lot: observers, not babblers. So finding folks willing to call 30 or so members each has been challenging, but we're plowing ahead. Sometime this month, expect a call, prepare to pledge per species or a certain amount. Our teams will count till they drop some day in May or early June then submit a report to you, which will be your cue to send in your check. If you have a favorite team, just let us know when we call.

This year we've designated \$2,000 for replanting Spring Meadow through the Lewis and Clark Water Quality Protection District. A good cause, you may agree. Go Helena!

NOEL ROSETTA

Noel Rosetta passed away in Missoula on February 21, 2008. He was 91 years old. He was a long-time member of Last Chance Audubon and for years served as the chapter's Conservation chair. Noel led a popular LCAS field trip—a wildflower walk up Mount Helena in early summer. He could identify the grasses as well as the wildflowers. Noel and Irene Rosetta regularly attended LCAS membership meetings, and we miss their presence at our meetings.

Last Chance Audubon extends sincere condolences to Irene Rosetta and the Rosetta family

REMEMBERING NOEL

My introduction to Audubon and birds and Noel Rosetta occurred at my first meeting of LCAS in 1972. Within six months I had read *Silent Spring*, walked in the Gates of the Mountains wilderness, and engaged the Lewis and Clark County Weed Board regarding its mosquito spraying program—all under Noel's guidance. Noel was directly responsible for getting the county to switch from the use of chlorinated hydrocarbons (e.g., Chlordane) to organic phosphates (e.g., Malathion) for mosquito control. As the District Ranger for the "Gates" wilderness, Noel knew where all of the springs were, and he didn't tell very many people of them, and he knew all of the grasses.

Noel Rosetta was a good man, a good friend and a good teacher. I'm sure his spirit is in the wind as it swirls through the grasses of Montana.

--Sam Sperry



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

Membership from Sara Toubman. Welcome and thanks to the following new and renewing members. NAS New: Anne Curran and Jeannine Willison. NAS Renewals: Mary Beaudette, Thomas Altmaier, George/Virginia Holton, Teresa Griebel, Teresa Sampson, David Jordan, Loren Graham, James Gilmore, and Bob Kirchberger. LCAS New/Renewals: John/Carla Cronholm. James/Diann Fradette, Karen Walker, Sumner Sharpe, Jim Greene/Martha Vogt, Pat Pasini, Bob Martinka, Lorenzo Clark, Robert/Ruth Champion, Eric/Ellen Feaver, Lorraine Kuntz, Marie McAlear, Bobbi Dancer, Brian Shovers/Jo Lace, Pat Helvey, Constance Enzweiler, and Deborah Hayden.

MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: Please submit May newsletter items by Thursday, May 1. Thanks!

**Last Chance Audubon Society
Membership Form**

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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

LAST CHANCE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Secretary	Officers: Brian Shovers 443-6640	Christmas Count	Sue Newell-442-8142/Cedron Jones 442-1271
Treasurer	Dan Sullivan 443-4229	Circulation	Sam Sperry/Joyce Beckes 458-8170
Bob Martinka	Board of Directors: 449-3313	Conservation	Brian Shovers 443-6640
Don Skaar	442-3254	Education	vacant
Jim Greene	495-9270	Field Trip	Jim Greene 495-9270 - greenevogt@imt.net
Coburn Currier	ccurrier@mt.gov	Habitat Protection	vacant
Lorna Milne	443-7162	Membership	Sara Toubman 442-1271
Martha Vogt	495-9270	Nat. Hist. Series	Don Skaar 442-3254
	Committee Chairs/Contacts:	Newsletter	Joyce Beckes 458-8170 - samsper@mt.net
Birdathon	Jo Lace 443-6640	Program	Sara Toubman-442-1271/Nancy Tunnicliff-442- 5024/ Coburn Currier-ccurrier@mt.gov
Birdseed Sale	Sandy Shull-449-0904/Sue Jackson-443-4486	Publicity	Jim Greene 495-9270
LCAS Website: www.lastchanceaudubon.org .		Silent Auction	Sandy Shull-449-0904/Jo Lace-443-6640
Contacts: Birdseed – Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904; Shade Grown Coffee – Joyce Beckes, 458-8170; Montana Audubon – 443-3949 / www.mtaudubon.org .		Website	Christian Frazza
Newsletter available to non-members for \$5.50 per year. Send check to LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena 59624.			

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Gray Catbird by Larry McQueen

