

Last
Chance
Audubon
Society



Last Chance Chat

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

Published September to May Helena, MT September 2018

Montana Audubon: Birds and Beyond

Tuesday, September 11, 2018
Program begins 7:00 p.m.

Cookies and Conversation 6:30 – 7:00
Montana WILD, 2668 Broadwater Ave.

FREE - All Are Welcome

Join Larry Berrin, the new Executive Director of Montana Audubon (MA), as he shares what the future will look like with the launching of MA's three-year strategic plan. Come hear about innovative projects focused on expanding the organization's reach state-wide. Larry will also describe the exciting bird conservation work of MA over the years. Today, 42 Important Bird Areas (IBAs), encompassing 11 million acres, have been officially designated in Montana. Learn about the new Montana eBird website and how it is being used as part of their citizen science initiative. Finally, Larry will highlight some of the conservation work around the state including the Golden Eagle Migration Survey, Long-billed



Larry Berrin at the GEMS Site. Photo by Janice Miller.

Curllew Initiative, Black Swift research in Glacier Park, and a new partnership with the Smithsonian Institute on monitoring grassland birds in eastern Montana.

Larry has been involved in the field of conservation for over 25 years. His previous positions include Vermont State Education Director for the National Audubon Society, President/CEO of Asbury Woods Partnership (Pennsylvania), and Director of Conservation Education for Discover Your Northwest (where he led the campaign to develop the first children's forest in the Northwest). Larry is an avid birder and has led international eco-trips to Mexico, Costa Rica, the Galapagos, the Amazon, and Kenya.



President's Perch

Fall is in the air. The birds have stopped singing to defend their territories and the young juveniles are challenging our birding skills by looking nothing like their parents. There's smoke in the air. Many hummingbirds have already migrated and the shorebirds are en route to their southern homes. Before long the Golden Eagles (and other raptors) will soar past the Big Belt Mountains, and snow will not be far behind. Now our children have returned to school, and many of them will be able to learn more about birds with the help of donated field guides and able assistance by LCAS volunteers.

The LCAS Board has been busy planning the 2018-2019 year of programs, field trips, and surveys. We continue our mission to promote education, habitat protection, and environmental advocacy on a local level, and we contribute to state-wide efforts via MT Audubon. We are open to your conservation suggestions as we go forward as a Chapter.

To learn more about Montana Audubon, mark your calendar for Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2018, to hear the NEW MT Audubon Executive Director, Larry Berrin, speak at our LCAS membership meeting.

Keep up-to-date by visiting the LCAS website: <http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/>

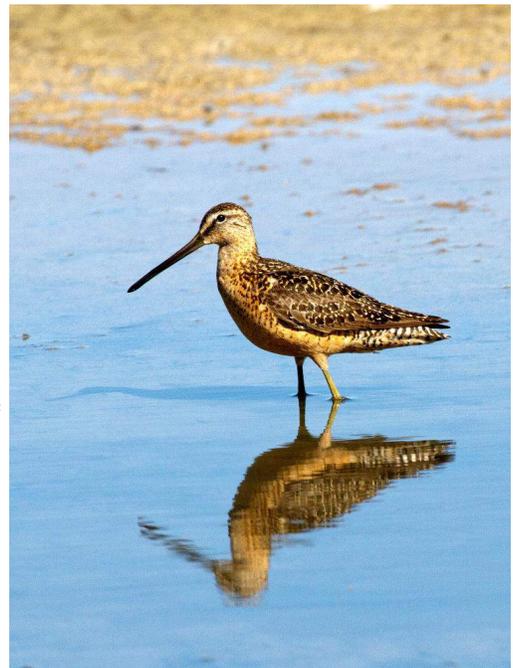
Happy Autumn!

Janice Miller
President, LCAS

World Shorebird Day Field Trip

LCAS will once again support the World Shorebird Day effort by surveying shorebirds and other bird species at the Canyon Ferry WMA on Sunday, September 9. The group will meet at the northeast end of the Costco parking lot at 7:00 AM. Please plan to arrive a few minutes early. The return trip will leave the WMA no later than noon.

This field trip is free to current LCAS members and has limited space availability. Members are encouraged to register for the field trip as soon as possible. Non-members are welcome. The cost of the field trip for non-members is \$15, which includes a one-year membership to LCAS. Register by contacting Stephen Turner at turnstonest@gmail.com.



Long-billed Dowitcher by Bob Martinka

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. We'll have a sign-up sheet at the September meeting so you can place your order. Alternatively, you can call Birds & Beasleys (449-0904) or Sue Jackson (443-4486) to order seed – or if you're at the store buying birdseed, just let them know it's part of the LCAS fundraiser.



The prices are the same as last year:

- 20# black oil sunflower seed, unshelled – \$28.00
- 20# medium sunflower chips, shelled – \$38.00
- 10# nyjer thistle – \$20.00
- 20# nyjer thistle – \$38.00
- 20# millet – \$22.00

Please pick up your birdseed at Birds & Beasleys, 2 S. Last Chance Gulch, by Halloween. Thanks to Sandy Shull and her crew for helping with this event every year.

-- Sue Jackson

2018 Birdathon

LCAS's 2018 Birdathon featured three amazing teams of birders (9 birders total), pledges by some 75 supporters, and a total of \$4,034.84 raised so far. The money raised will be split between LCAS and Montana Audubon. Thanks to everyone who made a pledge and congratulations to all of the Birdathoners – Janice Miller, Brian Shovers, Jo Lace, Don & Andrea Stierle, Larry Urban, Curt Larsen, Sara Toubman, and Cedron Jones – for a great fundraising event! See the team reports here: <http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/services/birdathon/>.

-- Sue Jackson

LCAS Board Meeting: September 2018

- 2018-2019 preliminary budget approved
- Membership: total of 388 members: 140 LCAS dues-paying and 240 National Audubon affiliates
- Dates announced
 - World Shorebirds Day (field trip) is September 9, 2018



Wild Turkey by Janice Miller



Solitary Sandpiper by Shane Sater

- Christmas Bird Count Date set for December 15, 2018
- Preliminary schedule presented for 2018-2019 LCAS programs at Montana Wild
- Letters written to Congressional representatives and to the IR Editor on the International Migratory Bird Treaty and other topics affecting birds and their habitats
- A Boy Scout requested LCAS support for an educational raptor silhouette project. The Board made several recommendations. A final decision is pending further discussion with the Scout.

-- Sumner Sharpe

Check Out Montana eBird!

Montana Audubon launched its Montana eBird portal during the 19th annual Wings Across the Big Sky bird festival in Kalispell in June 2018. On this site you can access a great deal of Montana-specific bird information on species, recent checklists, local hotspots, and links to data collected by thousands of other eBirders across the state.

In addition, photos from local birders, sightings of uncommon birds, and Montana Audubon's news feed can easily be found there. Montana eBird is seamlessly integrated into the popular and global eBird database.



Rufous Hummingbird by Bob Martinka

Visit www.ebird.org/mt and make it your homepage today!

FY 2019 Budget

As specified in our chapter bylaws, the LCAS Board approved a budget for FY 2019 (July 2018 – June 30, 2019). Revenues for the upcoming year are anticipated from sources and events including membership dues, donations, 2019 Birdathon, annual birdseed sale (see article in this issue), fall fundraiser, and a stipend from the National Audubon Society. Expenses for FY 2019 will include production of monthly newsletters, scholarships and other educational activities, donation(s) to Montana Audubon, meeting expenses, liability insurance, website maintenance, post office box rental, Secretary of State annual fee, and donation of National Audubon Society magazine membership to our local public library.



Cedar Waxwings by Janice Miller

-- Sue Jackson

LCAS 2018 Scholarship Recipients Announced

Helena High School seniors Jordan Straub and Brett Traxler are the recipients of the third annual LCAS

Scholarship Award, which Sumner Sharpe presented at the LCAS May 11 meeting. This award provides support to a college or university-bound high school senior who plans to pursue a course of study consistent with the LCAS mission.

Jordan plans to study Environmental Studies and Policy at Smith College with the eventual goal of practicing environmental law. At Helena High she was active with the Outdoor Club, Mock Trial, Soccer, Cross Country, the 3-7-77 Service Club and the National Honor Society. Jordan also served as a legislative page during the 65th session, a Forward Montana intern, Make-A-Wish volunteer, and a student representative to the 2017-2018 Helena School Board.



American Kestrel by Janice Miller

Brett intends to study Wildlife Biology at the University of Montana and has been accepted into the university's Davidson Honors College. He is interested in both aquatic and terrestrial biology and plans to go on to graduate studies. He intends to work in wildlife and habitat preservation. At Helena High he was a member of the Outdoor Club, the LINK Crew (introducing new students to Helena High), and the National Honor Society. Brett also volunteered with Helena Food Share and Our Lady of the Valley Church, and took part in gill net surveys with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks staff.

-- *Sumner Sharpe*

Field Sightings

Amid the wet fields of the Helena Valley this May, Kris Bakula found roughly 40 White-faced Ibis foraging along the frontage road, wading in the company of a few Yellow-headed Blackbirds and some American Crows.

Do you have a bird photo and accompanying story from the Helena area? Tell us about it! Please submit to Shane Sater (contact info on page 8). Sightings will be published when space is available.



White-faced Ibis by Kris Bakula

The View from Sevenmile Creek: July/August

Note: The surveys on Sevenmile Creek are a collaboration between LCAS and Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT). PPLT acquired the Sevenmile property in 2016 for open space and habitat purposes. Stream restoration activities in the area are ongoing, and public access is not permitted at this time. PPLT provides access to LCAS volunteers specifically to conduct these bird surveys. Questions? Contact Nate Kopp, nate@pricklypearlt.org.

Amid July's lush grasses, the restoration site seemed incongruous: a patch of bare earth with a new stream channel meandering through it. I was home briefly from a summer of field work, and Stephen Turner and I had managed to fit in another bird survey on Sevenmile Creek. As excavators moved soil and sculpted the stream's new floodplain, bird activity in that section was predictably quiet.



Restoration site in July. By Shane Sater

The habitat downstream was busy, though, and much had changed since 2017. Bank Swallows had taken up residence: a stream cut boasted 51 freshly excavated burrows, and at least 10 swallows darted through the sky. A pair of Bullock's Orioles led us to a surprising nest in a small Russian-olive tree, its rim embroidered with baling twine. We heard Grasshopper Sparrows from a lush field and Clay-colored Sparrows from the creek, both new finds for the breeding season. Ornithology is not a static science, as Sevenmile Creek was reminding us. Another change seemed equally puzzling: last year's House Wrens were missing.

I visited the creek again in late August, following a shorter route with fellow birders on a walk sponsored by Birds and Beasleys and approved by PPLT. We crossed the new channel and found the old one transformed. Amid the thickets of alder and willow, the restoration crew had sculpted a series of ponds.



*Pond in completed restoration zone on stream reach 3.
By Shane Sater.*

We focused our eyes and ears on the landscape, excited and attentive. At times, birds appeared so quickly that we couldn't keep up, losing sight of one to identify another. A few Solitary Sandpipers foraged on the bare shores and floating logs. Two Northern Waterthrushes made metallic "pink!" calls. Alder leaves floated in the mirror-still water, and a flock of waxwings passed overhead. Robins and catbirds flew from the thickets. A Yellow Warbler fed a drab grayish fledgling. Vesper and Savannah Sparrows visited the pond edges, and an American Redstart flashed its yellow tail patches. As the morning grew hot and bird activity quieted, we ended our walk inspired. If Sevenmile Creek can host so many birds already, what will it be like in 5 years?

--Shane Sater

Membership Report

Please welcome **Last Chance Audubon Society new members:** Aaron Millis, Ken Kailing.

Sincere thanks to **Last Chance renewing members:** David & Deborah Cooper, Len & Concetta Eckel, Mary Beaudette, Pam Harris, Sara Grotbo, Beverly Pickett, Mary & Jack Kelley, Mary Yeshe, Sandra Wunderlich, Deborah Stafford, Jenny Kelly, David & Nancy Ewer, Glenda & Stan Bradshaw, James Driggers.

Please also welcome **National Audubon Society new members:** Susan Vanliere, Kathleen Culver, Michele Munsey, Christopher Manos, Vickie Langevin, Tina Engel, Tom Steinert, Steven Blaricom, John Wilson, Chris Alke, Phillip Lundquist, William Ballinger, Vicki Rice, Stephen Wallace, Michelle Silverthorne, and Lisa Smith.



Red-shafted Flicker by Shane Sater

Sincere thanks to **National Audubon Society renewing members:** Randolph Bradley, Steven Liston, Vicki Downhour, Eleanor Parker, Russell Wrigg, Cindy Yarberry, Susan Near, John Hoffland, Victoria Wolfe, Leroy Schramm, Montana Outdoors, Brad Robinson, Laura Quintrell, Kathleen Culver, James Driggers, Cindy Greiman, and Pete Strazdas.

LCAS MEMBERSHIP: A new membership or renewal is \$15 per household and is current for one year, January 1 through December 31. Please be sure we receive all your correct contact information by filling out a registration form located either in this newsletter or printed from www.lastchanceaudubon.org. Please send completed registration form and your \$15 check to: LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena, MT 59624.

PRINTED and ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS: We want all our members to stay informed about chapter news and happenings. If you do not have access to email, staying current with your chapter membership to Last Chance Audubon Society guarantees that you will continue to receive a printed version of our newsletter. If you do have email access, please help us keep printing costs to a minimum and opt to receive our newsletter electronically. Those dollars we save will be spent for important bird habitat, education and outreach. Thank you.

NAS MEMBERSHIP: If you would like National Audubon Society membership information or to renew with them, please direct an email to www.customerservice@audubon.org or contact them directly by phone at 1-844-428-3826. We are unable to forward memberships to National Audubon.

-- Sharon Dewart-Hansen, Membership Chair

Last Chance Audubon Society
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Clip and mail to:
PO Box 924, Helena MT
59624 with check for
\$15.
All contributions are tax
deductible.

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