

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 Dec 2018 - Jan 2019

Rehabilitation of Wild Birds

Tues., December 4, 2018
****Please Note – Program is
the First Tuesday!**

Program begins 7:00 p.m.

**Cookies, Conversation, and
CBC Slideshow 6:30 – 7:00**

**Montana WILD
2668 Broadwater Ave.**

FREE – All Are Welcome

Have you ever wondered what happens to an injured bird or mammal that is brought to Montana WILD? Join Lisa Rhodin as she explains the concept and history of wildlife rehabilitation, using Montana Wild as an example. Learn what to do when you find an injured bird or mammal. Find out how Montana WILD staff try to figure out what has happened, how they will treat the animal, and what happens next. Lisa will bring some of the ambassador birds from the Wildlife Center as examples of rehabilitation.



Golden Eagle release. Photo by Bob Martinka.

Lisa Rhodin is the wildlife rehabilitation coordinator for the Montana WILD Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Helena. She says she cannot remember a time when she was not finding or caring for some injured wild creature. Lisa has worked at large wildlife rehabilitation facilities and she started TLC for Wildlife, her own home-based facility, while in Florida. This non-profit took in everything from reptiles and small mammals to shorebirds and raptors, and an occasional panther. She also volunteered at the Florida Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Florida where she learned eagle protocol and “much, much more.” Lisa says moving to Montana was a dream come true. Being in Montana and helping the vast array of wildlife in this state is “living the dream.”

Plan to arrive early this month – Sharon Dewart-Hansen will be giving a **pre-program slideshow of winter birds**, in preparation for the Christmas Bird Count.

Behavior and Vocalizations of Antarctic Penguins

Tues., January 8, 2019

**Program begins 7:00 p.m.
Cookies and Conversation 6:30 – 7:00**

**Montana WILD
2668 Broadwater Ave.**

FREE – All Are Welcome

Join Angie Leprohon and David Nimick for an entertaining and educational program describing their trips to Antarctica, a land of spectacular, pristine whiteness with huge glaciers, towering icebergs, and sea ice galore festooned with petrels, albatrosses, seals, whales, and thousands upon thousands of penguins. This presentation provides an overview of penguin populations and behavior with an in-depth look at the vocal and non-vocal communications used during the breeding season by the brush-tail penguins of the Antarctic Peninsula and the king penguins of South Georgia Island. Learn the importance of stones as gifts; the difference between gakkering, courting bows, and loud mutual displays; and the value of the essential but humorous feeding chase. In addition to photographs, videos, and audio clips, Angie



Gentoo Penguin by David Nimick.

and David will imitate the vocalizations and behaviors of many of the penguins. Audience participation is encouraged!

Angie Leprohon and David Nimick are long-time Helena residents. Angie taught music and movement to young children in her private studio while David was a research scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey. Now, they are mostly retired and enjoy traveling. Their first trip to Antarctica was in 2015, and they have returned most years since. Both currently work as naturalists for Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic on its adventure expedition ships that cruise the Antarctic region. Angie's Antarctic specialties are seabirds and penguin behavior while David's are glacial geology and effects of climate change on the south polar region.



Helena Rarity: *Two Cattle Egrets recently visited the Helena Valley. First, one was spotted at the County Landfill by Jeffrey Olsson on October 25. Many observers documented two foraging near Merritt Ln. and Valley Dr. through November 3. Photos by Sharon Dewart-Hansen (left) and Bill Rainey (right).*



Lobbying the State Legislature isn't my cup of tea. Is it yours?

Montana Audubon was created in 1976 to give all of the Audubon chapters in Montana, including LCAS, a voice in the State Legislature. The focus was protecting Montana's wildlife and their habitats.

Janet Ellis became a lobbyist for MT Audubon – and the rest of us – beginning in 1983. She served as MT Audubon's Senior Director of Policy from then until earlier this year, 2018. Several conservation organizations have recognized her work with awards, including the MT Environmental Information Center, MT and National Wildlife Federations, and MT Native Plant Society.



*Tundra Swans watch a Coyote at sunrise on Benton Lake NWR.
Photo by Dan Ellison.*

Janet served two sessions in the MT House of Representatives (2015 and 2017). During that time she worked for laws such as clean drinking water from the tap, funds for public health and safety maintenance for our state parks, criminal justice reform, and Earned Income Tax reform, to name just a few.

Now she has won a seat as the State Senator for Senate District 41.

We at LCAS say a hearty, *“CONGRATULATIONS to you, Janet!”* And a doubly hearty *“THANK YOU for all you have done for wildlife and wildlife habitat over the years! We are here to support you as you represent us at the 2019 State Legislative Session.”*

Sincerely,

Janice Miller

President, LCAS

Last Chance Audubon Presents:
The 119th Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Saturday, December 15, 2018

**Meet at Jorgenson's Restaurant in Helena (1720 11th Ave)
Meeting Time: 7:00 a.m.**

Everyone is welcome!

Is it a fun social event? Is it a great way to learn about birds? Is it a long-running, important project of conservation science? The Christmas Bird Count is all of these, and more!

We encourage everyone to come out for this fun event. You need not be an expert. Our group leaders are all very experienced and enjoy the opportunity to share what they know. Participants can sign up for a half day or full day in the field.

We meet on the morning of the count at Jorgenson's Restaurant at 7:00 a.m. (come earlier if you want to eat breakfast). Teams will leave for their designated areas around 8:00 a.m.

Last Chance Audubon Society also hosts an evening potluck dinner to celebrate the day. Join us at St. Paul's Methodist Church (corner of Lawrence and Cruse) starting at 6:00 p.m. We'll share food and stories!

If you have questions, please contact Coburn Currier (CBC Coordinator) at 449-2475 or email him at clcurrier@hotmail.com.

Looking for more winter birding fun? CBCs take place across Montana between December 14 and January 5. To find more CBCs, check out National Audubon's website for information and a map: www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count.



Mountain Bluebirds by Dan Ellison. Every year we find a few winter surprises on the CBC—even including some hardy bluebirds! This group was enduring a major spring snowstorm in the Helena Valley.



Rusty Blackbird by Sharon Dewart-Hansen. Last winter's count yielded a record high for the Helena CBC—nine. Check out all of last year's results [here](#).

The View from Sevenmile Creek: November

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.

The woodpecker bounded past me through the crisp November air, framed against the string of gray alders along the creek. A speckled bird with a white stripe down the back, it must have been either a Downy or a Hairy, and it seemed larger, like a Hairy. If so, it was the first one I had seen here, after a year and a half of surveys. I searched upstream to confirm, but it was either gone or well-hidden.

“Peek!” I heard the unmistakable call of a Hairy Woodpecker the next week, on a warmer and sunnier day, now from the east end of the PPLT property. The stream still cuts a deep channel through silt here. I was sure I hadn’t imagined the call, but where was the bird? Soon I spotted him, well-hidden among the dense, bare shoots of a Diamond Willow (*Salix eriocephala*) a few yards north of the channel. Often I could barely see his head among the veritable forest of upright stems as he tapped vigorously on one, then hitched himself to another. After 20 minutes, he finally moved into plain sight higher in the willow and launched downstream with a last “peek!”

This sighting brings us to a total of four woodpecker species known to visit this site. Northern Flickers are fairly frequent throughout the year, and Downy Woodpeckers have shown up between late summer and late fall. Once in June, a male Red-naped Sapsucker passed through.

For months now I had been wondering, “why no Hairies?” It was exciting to see one, finally. According to the Vancouver Avian Research Centre, this species migrates altitudinally, descending from the mountains during winter. That pattern could match with this observation.

As we continue bird surveys at Sevenmile Creek, what else will we find? Could any other woodpecker species show up? Perhaps a Pileated or a Lewis’s Woodpecker in the fall, when the chokecherries are ripe?

Time will tell. If you have ideas about woodpeckers and habitat, or would like to join me on a survey, please get in touch.

-- Shane Sater



Male Hairy Woodpecker (bottom, upper left) well-hidden among branches of a Diamond Willow (top, center). Can you find it? Photos by Shane Sater.

Membership Renewals

As winter approaches and we gear up for the Christmas Bird Count, it's a reminder that membership renewals are coming up. Last Chance Audubon's members support the chapter in our shared dream: promoting "understanding, respect, and enjoyment of birds and the natural world." Your dues do great work – from monthly programs, the March Natural History Lecture Series, and this newsletter to bird monitoring, annual scholarships, and support for conservation efforts in the community.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement!

Photo Submissions

Do you have a photo and short story about birds, birding, or habitat from around the Helena area? Would you like to share it with Last Chance Audubon? Submissions from our members enrich our newsletter—and teach us something new about birds! Send your submission(s) to Shane Sater, shsater@gmail.com. We will incorporate them as space allows.



Gray-Crowned Rosy-Finch by Shane Sater. Several appeared last November, foraging at the roadside near Forestvale Cemetery. Keep your eyes open!



Wood Duck at the Lewis and Clark Fairgrounds by Dan Ellison. These gorgeous ducks are present year-round in or around the Fairgrounds pond.

Membership Report

Please welcome **Last Chance Audubon Society new members:** Derik Reed and Robert Carroll.

Sincere thanks to **Last Chance renewing members:** Mary Jane Bradbury, Gail Kuntz & Terry Wheeler, Rich Wirak, Leonard John, Brian Shovers & Jo Lace, Bryce Maxwell and Sharon & Slim Miller.

Please also welcome **National Audubon Society new members:** Leslie Bass, Earl Dorsey and Linda Galloway.

Sincere thanks to **National Audubon Society renewing members:** John Oitzinger, Leroy & Diana Schramm and Eliza Wiley.

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, smdewarthansen@charter.net



Bohemian and Cedar Waxwing by Dan Ellison. A few Cedars were foraging with a large flock of Bohemians in crab apples at the Masonic Home last winter. What will this season bring?

Last Chance Audubon Society
PO Box 924
Helena, MT 59624

First-Class
Postage
Required
Helena MT 59601



<https://www.facebook.com/lastchanceaudubon>

Website: <http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/>

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

LCAS BOARD

PRESIDENT: Janice Miller, 439-5762, jan2854@gmail.com
SECRETARY: Brian Shovers, 443-6640, sholace0848@gmail.com
TREASURER: Sue Jackson, 443-4486, suejacksonmt@gmail.com
WEBSITE/BOARD: Stephen Turner, 521-0000, turnstonest@gmail.com
EDUCATION/BOARD: Sumner Sharpe, mtnutmeg@gmail.com
NEWSLETTER/BOARD: Shane Sater, 208-597-0488, shsater@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP/BOARD: Sharon Dewart-Hansen, 422-4546, smdewarthansen@charter.net
BOARD AT LARGE: Coburn Currier, clcurrier@hotmail.com
BOARD AT LARGE: Bob Martinka, 449-3313, rmartink@aol.com
BOARD AT LARGE: Jo Lace, 443-6640

LCAS COMMITTEE CHAIRS/ CONTACTS

Birdathon: Jo Lace 443-6640, sholace0848@gmail.com
Birdseed Sale: Sue Jackson & Sandy Shull, 443-4486 or 449-0904
Christmas Bird Count: Coburn Currier, clcurrier@hotmail.com
Conservation: Brian Shovers, 443-6640, sholace0848@gmail.com
Monthly Program: Sandy Shull & Liz Hiltunen, 449-0904 or 227-5492
Publicity: Liz Hiltunen, 227-5492, lhiltunen@q.com
Silent Auction: Sandy Shull & Jo Lace, 449-0904 or 443-6640
Meeting Set-up: Doug Hansen, mthusker@charter.net
Field Trips: Don Skaar, 442-3254, tedradon@gmail.com
Habitat: open
MT Audubon State Office: 443-3949