

# Bitterroot AUDUBON



NOVEMBER 2018

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 33, NO. 3

## THE GALÁPAGOS: WALTZING WITH AN ALBATROSS

### Slides & Stories of a Not-So-Tough-Trip through a Naturalist's Paradise

By Nan Christianson



*Courtesy Linda Raymond  
'James Island' Galápagos Tortoise with Nan in background for scale.*

Nan Christianson, a retired career professional with the US Forest Services who describes herself as a "jack-of-all -trades naturalist" will present a program at the Bitterroot Audubon's November meeting where she will share slides and stories depicting her 2015 trip to the Galápagos Islands which she describes as "a naturalist's paradise."



*Galápagos Marine Iguana.*

*Courtesy Nan Christianson*

She will take us on a 'visit' of 15 of the Galápagos Islands and with a sampling of the diverse landscapes, geology, and flora. The majority of the slides will showcase the rich diversity of the marine and land-based birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, many of which are found nowhere else in the world! If there is time and interest, she will also 'visit' the Chocolate Cloud Forest and see several species of hummingbirds plus other birds found high in the Andes.



*Courtesy Nan Christianson  
Sally Lightfoot Crab with a Blue-footed Booby*

Nan's childhood was spent in rural Kentucky, with forays throughout Canada and the United States via her family's annual fishing/camping trips. It was no surprise when she pursued a natural resource field of study at the University of Montana and her geology degree led to a 38-year career with the U.S. Forest Service. Her worked ranged from research to land management and from the Bitterroot Valley to other locations throughout the Intermountain West. She retired in 2016 to her small farm along the Bitterroot River located, much to her disappointment, just

outside of Audubon's Bitterroot River "Important Bird Area."



*Courtesy Nan Christianson*

*Lava Heron.*

**Come join Bitterroot Audubon for this sure to be lively, informative and entertaining program Monday, November 19th, 7:00 P.M. at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, north of Stevensville, on Wildfowl Lane. The public is invited. For more information, contact Becky Peters at 369-5210.**

### **Letter from the President**

*By Becky Peters, BAS President*

It's November, the month to acknowledge what we value, what we treasure.



The first, immediate treasure is my family, whether they be kin or dear friends. The next treasure is a great home to live in which includes our inside house and our outside house - nature. And that leads me, sadly, to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report about Climate Change. Bear with me because I warned you last month I would be sharing information about saving our space ship. I finally dug in and read articles about last month's IPCC report. The panel looked at over 6,000 studies. Boy, I kept putting this off. We have 4 grandchildren so this report really involves their future, not ours. Our generation blew it for them. Did you know that the report the IPCC put out is a consensus and only a median projection? The part we didn't see is that the majority of the IPCC voted for an even more dire projection!! The IPCC did not take in to account the permafrost melt, the albedo effect (less ice mean more absorbed sunlight), more cloud cover or the dieback of forests. So we've got 11 years. That is not a sleep aid for sure.

Here's some links I looked into for this letter in case you want to check anything out:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/10/ipcc-report-climate-change-impacts-forests-emissions/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/mar/22/sea-level-rise-james-hansen-climate-change-scientist>

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/environment/a9791/climate-scientists-ipcc-is-wrong-we-need-a-1-degree-limit-on-warming-16228387/>

<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/07/climate-change-earth-too-hot-for-humans.html>

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Yes, they are all depressing. Do not read them until you are ready but please get ready as soon as possible. You know a lot all ready, so I'll try to highlight some of the major points:

- The impacts of global warming are far greater than expected: sea levels rising, acidic and low oxygen level oceans, extreme weather events, coral bleaching, droughts, storms, forest fires, heat waves, floods, and largescale disruption to infrastructure and migration.
- There are diseases trapped in the Arctic ice that have not circulated in the air for millions of years. That means our immune system can't fight them when the Arctic ice melts.
- Droughts and famine increase the likelihood of armed conflicts.
- A third of the world's major cities with their power plants, ports, navy bases, fisheries, river deltas, marshlands, etc. will flood more easily and more regularly.

Now, breathe!! And then get to work! How are you going to help??

**What we need to do, globally, to lessen the impact (but especially the U.S. because Americans use up most of the earth's resources):**

- no home, business, or industry heated by gas or oil; no vehicles powered by diesel or gasoline; all coal and gas power plants shuttered; the petrochemical industry converted wholesale to green chemistry; and heavy industry like steel and aluminum

production start using carbon-free energy sources

- widespread dietary shift to eating less meat and reduced material consumption
- Reforestation and improving forest management together to help remove CO2 from the atmosphere,
- land may have to be converted to growing bioenergy crops
- global tax on carbon emissions,
- carbon capture programs
- city-wide renewable energy programs
- Every person joins **350.org**
- Change the politicians that don't enact these programs to politicians who will. Did you know that our EPA website no longer has a climate change section??
- The four actions that most substantially decrease an individual's carbon footprint are: eating a plant-based diet, avoiding air travel, living car-free, and having smaller families. Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-effective-individual-tackle-climate-discussed.html#jCp>

So yes, I am thankful for our one and only space ship and it needs our help. I hope in 11 years or less that it will be thankful for us!

### **Get your 2019 Bitterroot Audubon Calendar!**

*By Becky Peters*

Have you purchased your copy of that exquisite 2019 BAS Calendar Yet? You can purchase a calendar for only \$15 and all proceeds stay here in the valley for our Education, Conservation and Scholarship Funds! This is truly a one of a kind calendar! You won't get one in the mail like this because no one makes them like this, not even National Audubon! We give you a place to track the birds you see each month, information about where to find which birds each month plus simply stunning photos of birds taken here in the Bitterroot by photographers from the Bitterroot. There is an added bonus of adorable drawings of birds done by Victor 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Everything is locally made by your non-profit Bitterroot Audubon! You can purchase the calendars from our website for \$20, or for \$15 at our November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, at the Stevensville or Corvallis Holiday Craft Shows, or at these



fine stores that support us: In Hamilton – Bitterroot Drug, Art Focus, Robbin's Hallmark, Hamilton Gifts, and Artisans on 2<sup>nd</sup>. In Corvallis – Corvallis Merc. In Victor – Noah's Ark. In Stevi – Valley Drug and Variety, and Ace Hardware. In Florence – Ace Hardware. This is our only fund raiser. Thank you so much for supporting us and what we do to help the birds and their habitat here in the valley.

### **SAVE THE DATES: Hamilton, Stevensville and The Big Hole Christmas Bird Counts**

*By John Ormiston*

The leaves have mostly fallen (not necessarily raked), deer are showing signs of the coming rut, Christmas merchandise is on display in some stores, and it is time to start thinking about Christmas Bird Counts. Please mark December 15, 2018 on your calendar for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Hamilton CBC. The Stevensville CBC will occur on December 29, 2018, and you'll have a chance for a unique winter birding opportunity in the Big Hole in the first week of January 2019.

### **Scavengers in the Bitterroot**

*By Kate Stone*

What's your favorite scavenging species? In the Bitterroot, we have a wide array of scavengers, ranging from teeny insects to golden eagles up to mountain lions. How prevalent are they, what ecological roles do they play, and what do we know about their life history? Hunters-what comes to the gut piles you leave in the field?

Would you believe thousands of Turkey Vultures migrate through the valley each spring and fall? That the Golden Eagles overwintering here largely breed in the far north? That foxes often take the risk of feeding at a carcass with a skunk? Kate Stone

will share stories and information from several local scavenger projects, including the Bitterroot Valley Winter Eagle Project and a new project working with hunters to see what scavenges their gut piles. You'll find out how you might get involved with learning more about scavengers. You'll also get to see the new scavenger art exhibit going up in the North Valley Public Library. Be ready for a small dose of gore, fur, and feathers.

Join Kate Stone from Bitterroot Audubon and the MPG Ranch at the North Valley Public Library on Wednesday, November 28 at 5:30 pm. Social time at a local watering hole to follow!



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*A young Bald Eagle bumps an adult off a deer carcass as part of the Bitterroot Valley Winter Eagle Study.*



*Courtesy Kate Stone*

*A pregnant, female mountain lion was one of the larger scavengers participating in the Bitterroot Valley Winter Eagle Study.*

## **These Boots Are Made for Flying**

*By Kate Stone*

Those of us involved with Bitterroot Osprey research have been holding our breaths to witness the next step in what has been an incredible journey for one young Osprey fledged from a Florence, MT nest. "Boots" left his/her nest this fall, headed almost 900 miles east, and ended up at a lake near

Winger, MN. As more than a month passed and Boots stuck close to this region, we wondered if he/she would suffer the fate of some other young Osprey we've tracked that made the wrong migratory movement or didn't migrate at all. But not only did Boots start heading south, Boots took a route we've never seen a Montana Osprey make: south and east, flying over 1,800 miles towards the wintering grounds of east-coast Osprey. Boots is currently enjoying the sun and surf of the Bahamas, after a brief visit to Cuba. If you'd like to see where Boots or many other Osprey go next, Google "MPG Ranch Raptor Tracker". Enjoy the journey!!



*Courtesy Raptor View Research Institute and MPG Ranch*  
*The flight path Boots took on his/her first migration covers more than 3,000 miles. Fingers crossed that Boots survives the winter!*



*Courtesy Raptor View Research Institute and MPG Ranch*  
*Most of our Osprey head south to either coast of Mexico for the winter. This year our project is focusing on young Osprey. While you can see the majority have headed for known wintering areas, we still have a few taking a more exploratory approach to migration. Boots and all of these Osprey were banded by Raptor View Research Institute with financial support from the MPG Ranch.*

## What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

**Question:** *Why haven't birds advanced past egg laying and started to bear live young?*

**Answer:** The answer to this question is not known but several theories have been presented. One theory is that viviparity (live bearing) is incompatible with flight, but that theory doesn't hold for bats. Another theory is

that because birds tend to produce multiple young to maintain the species, the added weight associated with the retention of multiple live young in the body would be a serious disadvantage to the female. Also, the help of males in the care of offspring might be reduced or lost. And, it has been suggested that the heat of the female's body may be too hot for internal egg development. Regardless of the reason, the continued use of eggs has obviously been a very successful strategy for birds.

*Local birding expert Jim Story answers your questions about birds and their habits. Jim welcomes your questions at [jstory4689@gmail.com](mailto:jstory4689@gmail.com).*

## Calendar of Events

- Nov 19:** THE GALÁPAGOS: WALTZING WITH AN ALBATROSS Slides & Stories of a Not-So-Tough-Trip through a Naturalist's Paradise, Audubon Meeting, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, Stevensville, MT, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Nov 28:** Scavengers in the Bitterroot presentation by Kate Stone, North Valley Public Library at 5:30 pm. Social time at a local watering hole to follow!
- Dec 15:** Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, details TBA.
- Dec 29:** Stevensville Christmas Bird Count, details TBA
- Jan 2019:** Big Hole Christmas Bird Count, details TBA

## News and Notes

### Call for Photos

Bitterroot Audubon is seeking images of birds for a feature in our newsletter: *Bird Shots*. If you have taken a great photo and would like to submit it for consideration, please email the jpeg image, with a brief description, to [BASeditors@gmail.com](mailto:BASeditors@gmail.com).

### Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook and Instagram

If you use Facebook or Instagram, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and "Like" us!

## Bird Shots



*Courtesy Mike Daniels*

*Rough-legged Hawks have returned to the Bitterroot Valley, November 2018.*

BITTERROOT AUDUBON  
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\* Board Member

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WEBSITE: [www.BitterrootAudubon.org](http://www.BitterrootAudubon.org)

### Chapter Only Membership

The Bitterroot Audubon Chapter Only Membership is \$15/year. These members will be supporting local chapter activities, receive the full color e-newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Send this application with \$15 to:



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