

Bitterroot AUDUBON



DECEMBER 2021

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 36, NO. 4

The Hamilton Christmas Bird Count is 35!

By John Ormiston, Compiler

It's getting time to be counting birds in the Hamilton Circle for the 35th time on December 18, 2021. Is it getting old, or becoming a tradition? I prefer to think it's a tradition and we're doing the same thing year after year. We're doing it again. Please take the time to enjoy a day in the field, or counting the birds at your feeders, if you live within 7.5 miles of the Hamilton airport. We need all the help we can get. Meet at The Teller Education Building, at 7:30 (please wear your masks) form small groups and we'll do the best we can to count all the birds in the six circle segments.



Courtesy Micki Long

The Stevensville Christmas Bird Count

By Dave Lockman, Compiler

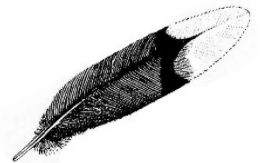
The 57th Stevensville Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 26, 2021. This is a correction to the tentative December 31, 2021 date published in the October BAS newsletter. There are still Covid restrictions on groups using federal offices, so it's likely that we won't be able to gather at the Ranger Station this year. So, like last year, please contact me with your preferred area so we can spread the effort out and get reasonable

coverage. Many of you have counted in the same area for years and know where the birds tend to be, and I encourage you to stick with those same areas again. I can help find places for those new to the count. I'll email more info to those who have participated in the past, but feel free to contact me at stevicbc@gmail.com or on my cell at 406-381-7679.

Letter from the President

By Micki Long, BAS President

It's snowing a bit as I write this letter. Have I mentioned how much I love snow? I really love snow. I used to live in the Lake Erie snowbelt, where I'd get 100 inches a year in my driveway. I loved it (probably because I had a great snowplow guy). Leading snowshoeing hikes led me to research how birds, trees, and mammals survive in a cold and snowy winter. An excellent book by Bernd Heinrich, *Winter World*, gave me information on squirrels, mice, frogs, insects, and Golden-crowned Kinglets, among many other creatures. I found that chickadees have around 7% body fat in the evening but only 3% by early morning. They survive the night by shivering and lowering their body temperature. They work hard to restore those fat reserves by nightfall. Golden-crowned Kinglets, half the size of chickadees, put on the same amount of fat in absolute terms, not relative to size. Amazing! After reading this book, "subnivean" became one of my favorite words. If you haven't read *Winter World*, cold winter days would be a good time to check it out. I also found fascinating information about trees, mostly on university internet sites. I doubt I would have ever read or heard the words "tracheid" or "torus" without mining those sites for information I could use. We have many professional and amateur naturalists and scientists in our Bitterroot Audubon community, and these ideas



may be familiar to them—but it was all new to me. I enjoy winter hikes even more because I'm aware of the incredible adaptations the plants and animals around me use to survive the cold winter months. Below you can see winter adaptations fellow Board member Susan Nelson and I made for a hike at Lee Metcalf, a few years ago. Warm coats, snow pants, hats, gloves, and boots!



Courtesy Micki Long



Courtesy Susan Nelson

As this year winds down, I am disappointed that Covid still hampers our efforts to see one another as much as we'd like. I was hoping we could meet in person by now and only have Zoom meetings when our presenter is not in the area. So many of you attended our Zoom presentations despite complications like wind-battered internet connections. Thank you—it's good to see your faces, if only on a screen. And at least our carbon footprint has been mitigated a little. While we don't

have a December program, we do have Christmas Bird Counts in both Hamilton and Stevensville. Look elsewhere in the newsletter for more information.

I hope you all have a wonderful, snowy holiday season! Now, to dig out the VHS tape of my favorite Christmas movie, *The Bishop's Wife*. Cary Grant is a handsome angel!

Support Audubon Adventures in the Classroom
By Betsy Ballard

Bitterroot Audubon Society board members will be contacting teachers and homeschoolers in the Bitterroot valley for grades 3 through 5 this fall to see if they are interested in a gift of Audubon Adventures curriculum. These curriculums are graciously available through the donations from Bitterroot Audubon Society members. If you would like to donate, the total cost of one printed classroom kit with postage is \$45.95. Individual topic and homeschool kits are available for lesser cost. You can mail donations to:

Bitterroot Audubon Society
PO Box 326,
Hamilton, MT 59840.

Donations by December 10 would be most helpful. The links below have information about the printed and online materials that are available. Thank you in advance for your help!

<http://audubonadventures.org/Purchase.htm>

[Audubon General order form Sep 2021.pdf](http://audubonadventures.org/Audubon_General_order_form_Sep_2021.pdf)
(audubonadventures.org)

Holiday Adopt-A-Raptor!
By Kate Stone



Courtesy Wild Skies Raptor Center

Still looking for a meaningful holiday present for someone in your life? For \$50- \$80, you can “adopt” a raptor from Wild Skies Raptor Center. Your donation will help cover food and care costs for a variety of education birds. Donations of any amount are always appreciated!

You can donate by visiting www.wildskies.org or mail a check to:

Wild Skies Raptor Center
P.O. Box 3676,
Missoula, MT 59806

If you'd like to support Wild Skies with material donations, we could also use:

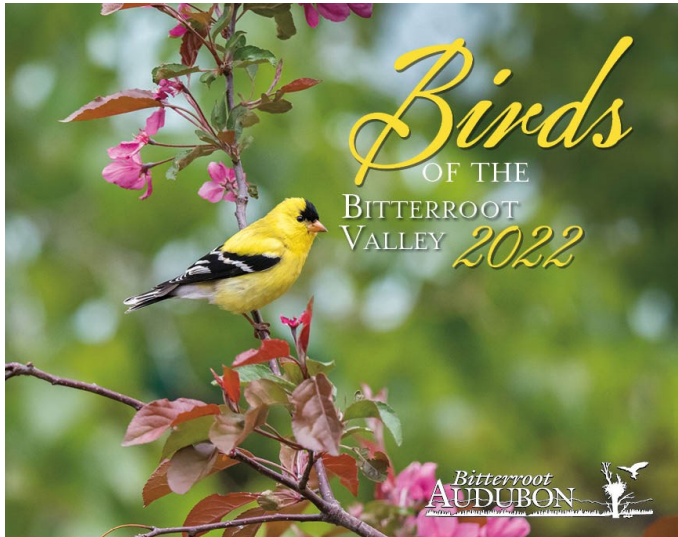
- Old towels, sheets, blankets
- Pet carriers- medium and large dog size
- Lumber- dimensional, full and partial sheets of plywood, tall fence pickets and/or 1x8 reclaimed wood suitable for making a privacy fence
- Postage stamps- standard and postcard
- Gift Cards: Lowe's, Costco

Items like stamps or gift cards could be mailed. Or contact one of our Bitterroot Board Members if you have any questions or to arrange a pick-up of any of the items listed above- Kate (381-1115) or Estelle (381-0474).

Thanks so much!

Gift a calendar to a person in need!!!

By Kate Stone



Covid has made selling our beautiful Birds of the Bitterroot calendars a particular challenge this year, and we're heading into the end of the year with many calendars still on hand. Can you help? Maybe you already bought the calendars you need for yourself, family and friends. Maybe you don't use a paper calendar. But you appreciate Bitterroot Audubon's hard work and the need for funds to support our educational and conservation activities. This year we're trying a new idea- we are asking our members and friends to consider sponsoring a

calendar for a person in need in the Bitterroot Valley. For just \$20, you can provide a calendar for someone else to enjoy. Right now we are working with Sapphire Lutheran Homes in Hamilton and hope to make contact with other retirement communities in the valley. You can sponsor a calendar by going to our website- www.bitterrootaudubon.org - and click the option for a calendar purchase that's a donation to a person in need. Or just mail us a check and put "calendar donation" in the subject line.

Kids' Corner: Seeking Wood Donations for Bird and Bat Houses

By Ada Bernauer (age 10) and Annie Bernauer

Our Girl Scout Troop is planning to make bird houses and bat houses to hang around the community. Since we have limited funds to purchase wood, we are asking around the community for donations of wood scraps. The wood needs to be natural, untreated, unstained, and unpainted. It can be rough cut lumber or previously used as long as it is still in decent shape and not full of nails.

If you have wood you would like to donate to our Girl Scout Troop's project, please contact my mom, Annie Bernauer, Bitterroot Audubon Board Member/Girl Scout Troop leader at 406-239-2152.

We thank you for your support!

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: *To what extent have pesticides affected birds?*

Answer: The first awareness of the potential ecological impacts of pesticides was associated with birds. In the late 1950s, a pesticide applied broadly against a tree-attacking beetle resulted in high numbers of dead robins. But public awareness of the pesticide problem and the likely beginning of the modern environmental movement occurred following publication of the famous book, *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson in 1962 which reported the effects of the insecticide DDT and other pesticides on birds and the environment.

DDT is particularly harmful because it is very persistent and thus is passed along as each prey species is consumed by an animal higher on the food chain until reaching high concentrations in the apex predators, such as raptors. Even worse, DDT doesn't kill the apex predator outright. Rather, it

causes extreme thinning of the birds' egg shells, resulting in the subsequent crushing of the eggs by the incubating adult. The DDT-caused egg mortality caused a tremendous population decline of Brown Pelicans, the extermination of the Peregrine Falcon in the Eastern U.S., and smaller but significant declines in the number of White Pelicans, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and Ospreys. Fortunately, the serious harm being caused by DDT was detected in time and the pesticide was banned in 1972. Populations of the affected birds rebounded after the DDT ban. But small amounts of DDT are still being detected in some southern U.S. birds. It is unknown whether the presence of DDT is due to the continued use of the chemical in some third-world countries or if it is being used illegally in the U.S. The DDT problem was a painful lesson. Extreme vigilance is needed to ensure that environmental harm isn't caused by any of the many pesticides in use today. (Source: Ehrlich et al. 1988. *The Birder's Handbook*).

Local birding expert Jim Story answers your questions about birds and their habits. Jim welcomes your questions at jstory4689@gmail.com.

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.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook and Instagram: If you use Facebook or Instagram, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and "Like" us.

Calendar of Events

- Dec 18:** Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, Teller Wildlife Refuge, 7:30AM.
- Dec 26:** Stevensville Christmas Bird Count, contact Dave Lockman to participate: stevicbc@gmail.com or 406-381-7679.
- Jan 15:** Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.

Bird Shots



Courtesy Carol Babel

Two male Wild Turkeys.

BITTERROOT AUDUBON
PO BOX 326
HAMILTON MT 59840-0326

Officers

President	Micki Long*	440-221-5256
Vice-Pres.	Mike Daniels*	
Secretary	John Ormiston*	360-9530
Treasurer	Jim Story*	493-9813

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At large	Michele Falivene (Mimi)*	
At large	Becky Peters*	
At large	Annie Bernauer*	

* Board Member

EMAIL: contactus@bitterrootaudubon.org

WEBSITE: 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: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____

Send this application with \$15 to:



Bitterroot Audubon Society
PO Box 326
Hamilton, MT 59840-0326

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Audubon

Renew or Sign up
for your
National Audubon Membership at
Audubon.org