

Bitterroot AUDUBON



FEBRUARY 2021

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 35, NO. 6

It's Five O'clock Somewhere

By Kate Stone



Courtesy Kate Stone

Common Nighthawks migrate long distances. Where might they be now?

Many of us are lamenting the ability to travel to warmer climes in a pandemic world. Sandy beaches, tropical sun, sparkling water—all out of reach. At a time when we're striving for connections in as many ways as possible, let the travel paths of birds serve as a means to make you feel more connected to the larger world. Kate Stone will take us there by sharing the travel routes and overwintering destinations of many of our local favorites—including Osprey, Turkey Vultures, Gray Catbirds, Common Nighthawks, and more. Who goes east, west, or directly south? Where do our species overlap? How fast do they travel? And how do their habitats compare between summer and winter?

Kate Stone is a well-known and highly respected scientist who specializes in ornithology. She has worked as an Ecologist at the MPG Ranch, a private conservation property in Florence, MT. since 2010. Her work covers many bird species, with a special focus on insectivores like Lewis's Woodpeckers, Common Poorwills and Common Nighthawks. She

serves on the Bitterroot Audubon Board and the Ravalli County Open Lands Board.



Courtesy William Blake

Kate Stone & a Lewis's Woodpecker for which we have little "travel information."

She also has cats and as a serious birder she knows that cats are lethal to birds so she built a "Catio" for her cats so they can still enjoy the out of doors but not kill birds!!

On Monday, February 15th at 7:00 P.M. (mountain time) via ZOOM, Kate will share how she is able to "travel" with these birds by using highly sophisticated tracking devices.

She will discuss some of the methods used to safely capture these species, the technology that makes such knowledge possible, and conservation applications to this research.

Come join Bitterroot Audubon for Kate's travel log!

When: Feb 15, 2021 07:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada).

You are invited to a Zoom meeting. Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91012020000>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Letter from the President

By Micki Long, BAS President

To those who were at the last meeting and experienced Zoom-bombing firsthand, I'm sorry! For future meetings, we will require registration and a passcode. In addition, I've learned about various settings I can use to minimize the chance of being bombed again. Bitterroot Audubon Zoom meetings will be safe again! For the February meeting, Kate Stone will present a program called "It's Five O'clock Somewhere." The title alone should make you want to join the meeting! See Kay Fulton's description of Kate's presentation elsewhere in this newsletter. **Be sure to join the meeting by 7:15, as we will not allow anyone to join after that time (another security measure).**



An eagle-eyed (or should I say falcon-eyed) BAS member, Colleen Powell, contacted me about a film called *The Falconer*, which will be shown during the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival (<http://www.bigskyfilmfest.org>). The festival begins February 19th and will be virtual this year. The subject of *The Falconer* is Rodney Stotts, one of few black falconers in the United States. You may recall a story about him on Audubon's website:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/may-june-2016/how-falconry-turned-one-mans-life-right-side>.

I'm really looking forward to this film and many others, including one called *Bitterroot*, which is indeed about our valley and the filmmakers' parents. While the pandemic has made life more difficult (and for many people, more tragic), the availability of endless programs that I can watch in my own home, with my comfortable stretchy pants on, is a benefit for me. Thanks for the heads-up, Colleen!

Like so many others, I love owls, and I am lucky enough to hear two pair of Great Horned Owls nearly every day—I must be near a territorial boundary? I can also hear a fifth Great Horned Owl, maybe last year's offspring looking for a mate? He calls and calls but gets no answer. However, I am no owl expert; maybe my interpretation of this owl neighborhood is incorrect. And Audubon's "13 Fun Facts About Owls"

(<https://www.audubon.org/news/13-fun-facts-about-owls>), while indeed fun, has not given me enough information to satisfy my desire to learn more. So I signed up for an online course about owls, offered by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This course and rereading Jim Robbin's *The Wonder of Birds*, in preparation for our special event near the end of March, help fill my days. See the "Save the Date" announcement below.

I also plan to participate in a citizen science project this month, offered by National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Great Backyard Bird Count is being held from 2/12-2/15.

Save the Date and Read a Book!

Join Bitterroot Audubon for a Special Zoom Event on March 25th, at 7 p.m. We'll discuss the very interesting and enlightening book *The Wonder of Birds* with its author, Jim Robbins. Robbins, a resident of Helena, has written for *The New York Times* for 35 years. *The Wonder of Birds* is his fifth book. Books are available at our valley's public libraries, at Chapter One bookstore in Hamilton, and online.

Registration will be available in March. This event is in addition to, not in place of, our regular meeting and program on March 15th.

Join birders from around the world and count birds for as little as 15 minutes, in your own backyard, or all four days, from any location and for as long you choose. See <https://www.birdcount.org> for details about participating.

I hope to see you at the meeting! Happy birding—and stay safe!

Final Reminder: Local Chapter Member Renewal

By Heather Miller

BAS membership renewal for 2021 was due by January 31st. It is only \$15. Renew online through the BAS website to support Bitterroot Audubon: <http://www.bitterrootaudubon.org/membership> and click on the "Join Now" button to pay with credit card. You can also renew through mail by sending your name, address, email, and check (made out to the Bitterroot Audubon Society) to:

Bitterroot Audubon Supporting Member
P.O. Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840

We Need Pollinator Gardeners

By Becky Peters

That means we need YOU! I am sure BAS members are aware of what climate change, loss of habitat, chemicals, invasive plants, etc. are doing to our population of pollinators. You have personally noticed, I'm sure, that there are less bug splatters on your windshield now than 15 years ago. And you have heard about the decline just in the bee populations. All this equals less pollinators. Well, we can do something about it and there are techniques that have been proven to work. We have an ongoing group of BAS Pollinator Gardeners in the valley and I would like to get more of you involved. My aim is to have a something like a ribbon or corridor throughout the Bitterroot valley – a Community Pollinator Ribbon you could say. It has been done in other communities with the help of city councils, garden clubs, schools, scouting groups, and local citizens. Last year about 21 of us started in with Pollinator Gardeners. If you are interested in joining us I need you to email me and I will put you on my list and see if we can get this project to expand. Do not worry if you are starting a garden from ground zero or don't have much of a garden space because whatever you do the pollinators will love you! So, email me, Becky Peters rpeters@montana.com. And subject line: Pollinator Gardeners. I have lots of helpful links to send you and much more because now is the time to

start planning your garden and thinking about native seed and native plant orders! Here's a link to a video that is fun to watch.

<https://www.facebook.com/CatherineVioletHubbardAnimalSanctuary/videos/842929736245108>

Thank you and bzzz, bzzz!

Big Sky Film Festival: 'The Falconer'

The Film will air at 10 AM on 2/22 & it can be seen 2/23, 2/24 & at midnight on 2/25

Director: Annie Kaempfer

Producer: William Stefan Smith

2020, USA -- 75 minutes

NORTHWEST PREMIERE

Rodney Stotts is one of the few African-American falconers in the United States, and his path to this ancient practice was not an easy flight. Growing up in Washington, DC during the crack epidemic, Rodney lost friends and family to drugs and street violence. He was destined for the same, until he joined Earth Conservation Corps, an organization that included inner city kids to clean-up local rivers and habitat to encourage wildlife restoration. Discovering a love of birds along the way, Rodney devoted himself to the art and sport of falconry. An intimate and soaring portrait of Rodney's passion as he passes on his wisdom to his son, and pursues his dream of building a bird sanctuary outside the nation's capital to share his love of birding with the next generation.



Website: <http://www.thefalconerfilm.com/>

Contact the Big Sky Film Festival in Missoula at 541-3456 or go online for ticket information:

<http://www.bigskyfilmfest.org/festival/films-2021-view/falconer/>

It should be noted that National Audubon Magazine published an extensive article about Rodney in their May-June, 2016 edition. It is entitled "How

Falconry Turned One Man's Life Right Side Up.”
Click on the link to read the article:
<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/may-june-2016/how-falconry-turned-one-mans-life-right-side>

Calendar of Events

- Nov-Apr:** Project Feeder Watch, see Micki Long's November "Letter from the President" for more details.
- Feb 12-15:** Great Backyard Bird Count
- Feb 15:** **ZOOM** Audubon Meeting, It's Five O'clock Somewhere, by Kate Stone, 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Mar 15:** **ZOOM** Audubon Meeting/Program, details to be announced, 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Mar 25:** **ZOOM** meeting for *The Wonder of Birds* with author Jim Robbins
- Apr 19:** **ZOOM** Audubon Meeting/Program, details to be announced, 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.
- May 17:** **ZOOM** Audubon Meeting/Program, details to be announced, 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: *Rails such as the Sora and Virginia Rail are seldom on birder's lists in Montana. Are they disappearing?*

Answer: No. Both species are common and reportedly have stable populations in Montana. The Sora is abundant throughout the state while the Virginia Rail is common in all but central Montana. Both birds occupy shallow wetland areas containing abundant cattails and sedges. The reason for their

Bird Shots



Courtesy Robin Dewey
Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, fall 2020.

absence on birder lists is their extreme secretiveness – they are very hard to see! They are cryptically colored, move very slowly, and seldom leave dense cover. The Virginia Rail has a very thin (laterally compressed) body which makes it almost invisible in cattails. In contrast to most marsh birds which will readily flush and make alarm calls when approached, the rails remain hidden in the foliage and completely silent. If necessary, rails will even submerge and travel rapidly underwater using their feet and wings. Both birds have distinctive calls; listening for those calls is often the best way to determine their presence.

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

News and Notes

Bird Walks at Lee Metcalf NWR, Stevensville, MT

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

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!

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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



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