

Bitterroot AUDUBON



MARCH 2021

NEWSLETTER

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Nature as a Muse ...and so much more

By Micki Long

The March Bitterroot Audubon program will be a little bit different from our usual programs, through which you have learned so much about birds, habitat, and recent research. We are lucky enough to have three area artists join us to discuss the role of nature in their art. Nature has been inspiring artists since humans first began drawing animals on cave walls (and maybe even earlier, as yet undiscovered). Art can be a means to express emotions, values, and opinions; a way to inspire others; and a record of a time and place. And art tells us stories, of families, of cultures, of individuals.

Our three artists, Dulcie Belanger, Karen Savory, and Uschi Carpenter, all use nature in their art. Join us in an informal conversation with them about their work. Feel free to explore their websites before the program and to think about questions you could

pose to one, two, or all three of the artists. Dulcie's site: <https://www.dulciebelanger.com>; Karen's site: <http://simplysavoryart.com>; and Uschi's site: <https://www.uschiphotography.com>.

Look for a link to register for this program below and in Bitterroot Audubon's newsletter, website, and Facebook page.

Dulcie Belanger is a clay sculptor and educator in the Bitterroot Valley. She studied ceramic arts at the University of Montana and founded the Choteau Community Art Studio in Choteau, Montana.

The first home Dulcie remembers was next to a wooded area along the river. To her very young self, all the trees in these woods seemed to stretch above forever and left her in awe. Dulcie's memories, perhaps intermingled with fairytales, are of an enchanted wood that she believed was alive with spirits, and she felt protected.

Dulcie's love of the woods and the feeling of a presence within them has stayed with her all of her life. As she has journeyed through life's stages, her human experience has continued to intermingle with a strong sense that the natural world is a healthy refuge, particularly at times when she seeks clarity and solace.

She carries this experience into her sculptural work by weaving images of living creatures, both animal and plant, with human forms. Dulcie's work expresses how we navigate the journey of our lives not only through our relationship with the natural world and humankind but also through the power of myth, fairytale, and the stories that came before us.

Karen Savory grew up along the Niagara River in Western New York, camping and fishing with her dad and sewing and painting with her mom. A career as a traveling physical therapist brought her west, and she finally settled outside of Hamilton. She is now a professional artist. Karen's own description of her art is far better than any I can write:

My art feeds my soul and expresses the utter joy I feel when wandering the mountainsides surrounding my Montana log cabin. The ever-changing colors of a granite wall on a crisp fall morning exhilarate me; the mysteries found in the soil and water fascinates me; and the grandness of the highest peaks and oldest forests humbles me. My bright and playful watercolor paintings celebrate nature as the aspen trees dance before me, the coyotes sing, and the wind whispers secrets in my ears.

Uschi Carpenter is a nature, wildlife, and fine arts photographer living in Missoula. After careers in teaching and international relations, she found her true calling as a photographer capturing the beauty of the wild. Her educational path spanned three countries (Germany, Great Britain, and the United States), but it was the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains that turned Uschi into "a shadow catcher and light chaser." Trained by some of Montana's finest master photography teachers, Uschi has emerged as a photographer in her own right, working with color, shadow, and light to present the familiar world in unfamiliar ways. Uschi is also an artist of words, a poet. The interplay of her poems and photographs enriches each and gives her viewers and readers glimpses of intriguing

landscapes, both interior and external.

Micki Long, BAS President, has created this program and will moderate the panel discussion.

Join Bitterroot Audubon for what promises to be an enlightening, fascinating, and maybe even somewhat "amusing" evening! Register below:

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

Register in advance for this meeting:

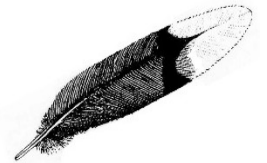
https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZEvcO2urjwsHtYaInPt1Yv46ZlshQ-maZw_

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

Letter from the President

By Micki Long, BAS President

Last year's March Bitterroot Audubon meeting was the first one we cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. It's been a long year! But I'm looking forward to two BAS events this month. Of course, we have our monthly program on March 15th, entitled "Nature as Muse....and so much more." Three area artists, Karen Savory, Uschi Carpenter, and Dulcie Belanger, will discuss the use of nature in their art. We are lucky enough to have a painter (Karen), a photographer and poet (Uschi), and a sculptor (Dulcie). We will have an informal discussion—so bring your questions! Bitterroot Audubon is joining with the Bitterroot Public Library to present our second event this month—a discussion with Jim Robbins about his excellent book *The Wonder of Birds*. You will find registration info elsewhere in this newsletter.



As usual, I looked over the national Audubon site before I wrote this letter and found some articles of interest. One is about John James Audubon, slavery, and race. It's a long and interesting piece that raises tough issues.

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2021/what-do-we-do-about-john-james-audubon>.

The article reminded me of a famous short story called "The White Heron," by Sarah Orne Jewett, published in 1886. It does not deal with the same issues as the Audubon article, but I certainly thought of Audubon the first time I read the story, many decades ago, and every time I've read it since. I am

sure the male protagonist is based on Audubon and other early ornithologists. It's a great story even apart from any ethical issues it raises (<http://www.public.coe.edu/~theller/soj/awh/heron.htm>).

I also discovered a delightful section of Audubon.org that I have somehow missed. It's called "The Illustrated Aviary." For every issue, an

artist is asked to reimagine one of John James Audubon's illustrations. The reimagined works are wonderful! I think my favorite is Lauren Tamaki's acrylic ink version of Black-billed Magpies, but the reimagining of Pileated Woodpeckers is a close second. When you need a little lift, check it out: <https://www.audubon.org/illustrated-aviary>

The days are getting longer, Red-winged Blackbirds are back in my yard, and some of this snow will melt this week, all of which means that Spring is coming soon, and Spring migration can't be far behind. Looking at my photos from last March, I see I can look forward to Mountain Bluebirds, like this pretty female, in my neighborhood this month. I can't wait!



Courtesy Micki Long

Mountain Bluebird.

Save the Date—and Start Reading!

Join Bitterroot Audubon and the Bitterroot Public Library 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. This event is in addition to, not in place of, our regular meeting and program on March 15th. Registration available through the library at <https://bitterroot.librarycalendar.com> For assistance, email community@bitterrootpubliclibrary.com or call the library at 406-363-1670.

Peregrine Watchers Wanted!

By Dave Lockman

2021 will be the third year of Bitterroot Audubon's Bitterroot Peregrine Watch/Raptor Guardian efforts. We help the Montana Peregrine Institute (www.montanaperegrine.org) to document occupancy and/or productivity of Peregrine Falcons (and sometimes Golden Eagles) nesting in the Bitterroot drainage. Peregrines are very active and visible in the lower canyons in April during courtship, and again in July when the juveniles are fledging. Most Bitterroot canyons support a peregrine territory, usually on one of the taller cliff faces within a mile or two of the canyon mouth. Finding them is a challenge, but can be very rewarding. We need help in this endeavor because there are so many canyons to monitor in a relatively short time. Peregrine watchers should be able to hike a mile or two up the canyon trails and often need to climb a short distance into talus slopes to get

a good view of the cliffs. Patience and concentration are definitely virtues. I often find peregrines within 5 minutes of setting up, but other times it takes several hours. Sometimes I get skunked, but I still hear and see lots of other birds, Pikas and sometimes goats or even bears. Good optics, especially a spotting scope with a tripod, are very helpful.

In 2020 I was able to confirm active peregrine territories in 7 Bitterroot canyons during the spring, and other Peregrine Watchers found birds in 4 additional canyons. But many canyons never get looked at. If you'd like a good excuse to get out on the trails in the spring and want to help find these magnificent birds, please contact Dave Lockman (406-381-7679; stevicbc@gmail.com) or Micki Long (440-221-5256; mickilong@gmail.com). The snow is still deep on the trails, but April will be here before we know it, and the birds won't wait!



Kudos to Kate Stone!

By Micki Long

Late afternoon on March 24th, Bitterroot Audubon Board member Kate Stone had enjoyed a brisk walk; she wondered if she should take a shower to clean up and take care of that hat hair before attending a Zoom event. The Montana chapter of The Wildlife Society was holding its annual awards banquet and meeting. Figuring that no one would be looking at her, she opted to give her cats, Walnut and Minnow, some extra love and attention instead

of showering. But much to her surprise, she was one of the centers of attention at the banquet, for she had won TWS's Wildlife Biologist of the Year award! Awards are given to wildlife professionals who "have made remarkable professional contributions to wildlife science and/or conservation...." Supporters of Kate's nomination all believed there could be no more deserving candidate. As the banquet and program were on Zoom, we knew where to find her—and so Susan Nelson and I knocked on Kate's door after the award had been presented. We delivered all the letters written in support of her nomination, plus a box of chocolates. And did we find the Biologist of the Year resting on her laurels and basking in glory? No, she told us she could not come outside and chat for minute because she was talking to a group of young scientists, offering guidance and advice, contributing even more to the field of wildlife biology. In the words of many offering congratulations online, "Kate, you rock!"



Calling all Bitterroot Photographers! The Beautiful Bitterroot Audubon Calendar Is back for 2022 !!!

By Becky Peters

We are proud to announce that Bitterroot Audubon is organizing another calendar, a 2022 calendar! We are delighted to be doing this again as people have been requesting our one-of-a-kind calendar. The generosity of our local photographers has helped increase our education, scholarship and conservation funds with the sales of our phenomenally successful BAS Calendars. If you would like to be part of this wonderful project, please contribute any photo(s) you have taken in the Bitterroot of our migrating and resident birds by this April 15th. Go to bitterrootaudubon.org for more information. The website has a list of birds BAS would like to have in next year's calendar, but you are not limited to that list. You can submit the photographs from now

Calendar of Events

- Nov-Apr:** Project Feeder Watch, see Micki Long's [November](#) "Letter from the President" for more details.
- Mar 15:** **ZOOM** Audubon Meeting/Program, Nature as a Muse...and so much more, 7PM, Zoom Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Mar 25:** **ZOOM** meeting for *The Wonder of Birds* with author Jim Robbins
- Apr 15:** Deadline for photo submission for Bitterroot Audubon Calendar
- 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.

through April 15th. They need to be extremely sharp photos, a minimum of 300-600 dpi, in an **uncropped** format. Please note however, that our monthly calendar photos are printed in the portrait format. We are looking for photos that help families identify and learn about the birds, so for example, branches over a bird or a bird photographed in the shade do not help with showing perhaps the main identification details of the bird.

Send your photos and any questions to bitterrootcalendar@gmail.com, please use **2022 Calendar** as your subject line. As before, this calendar is only for Bitterroot residents, showing our Bitterroot birds and is made in the Bitterroot by Bitterroot Audubon!! Our Bitterroot birds thank you!

A Word from the Board

By John Ormiston, Secretary

We've had a few comments from members of Bitterroot Audubon Society they would like to have more information about the business end of our group. Our bylaws state: "The Executive Board shall conduct the business of the Chapter." Our Board consists of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and no fewer than 6 Board members (we now have 12 members). Officers and members are elected at the annual meeting in May, the Officers for 2-year terms and the members for one year. All are eligible for reelection. We regularly look for new members of the Board. The Board actively works to find meaningful and education programs for our regular monthly meetings.

We have built a solid Byron Weber Memorial Scholarship Fund, primarily from proceeds of Calendar Sales. The Scholarship Committee solicits applications from Montana College Students twice annually and we award two \$500 scholarships each semester to Sophomore+ students in a Natural Resource curriculum in a Montana college or university. The current balance of the Fund amounts to about \$22,000.

We support the efforts of Wild Skies Raptors for educational programs to schools in Ravalli County, and we annually make a donation to Montana Audubon Society, the umbrella organization for 9 chapters like ours in Montana. We supported the purchase of the C. Ben White Memorial Fishing Access Site and the Skalkaho Bend Park. Work parties helped plant native plants in the City Park.

The Montana Natural History Center also received a donation to cover educational classroom and field trip activities in Ravalli County Schools.

We work hard to find K-8 classrooms whose teachers will use the resources available from Audubon Adventures, a National Audubon Society effort to get nature into classrooms. The materials supplied are appropriate to use in most any curriculum. This year, four classrooms and nine home school families received the available materials.

We purchased equipment for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks wardens to use for raptor or other wildlife rescue efforts and Kate Stone provided the training for them.

Our Calendar sales have resulted in our ability to help support worthy bird/wildlife projects in the valley and contributions to environmental education opportunities in our schools. The Calendar Committee is currently working hard to publish another outstanding Bitterroot Birds 2022 Calendar.

If anyone has questions about what we do or has a suggestion about a worthy project to support, please talk with a member of the board. And incidentally, we're always looking for new, active board members.

What's the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: *Why do the young of some bird species exist in groups?*

Answer: The young of some birds such as Greater Flamingoes, eiders, ostriches, some terns, and some penguins form juvenile groups or “creches.” Creche formation is generally associated with birds that nest in large, loose colonies, and whose chicks all hatch at about the same time. Evolutionary theory suggests that creche formation has proven to be the most successful method of chick rearing for those bird species. By being part of a large group, the risk of predation to any one chick is greatly reduced. Also, the method allows the parents to spend more time foraging for food. Which adults guard the creches depends on the species: In some species the guardians are non-breeding adults. In other species, like ostriches, guarding is done by a dominant adult pair. The guarding of unrelated chicks by adults seems altruistic, but whether it is remains unknown.

Bird Shots

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!



Bald Eagle breeding pair.

Courtesy Carol Babel

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At large	Becky Peters*	

* Board Member

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WEBSITE: www.BitterrootAudubon.org

INSTAGRAM: @bitterroot_audubon

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
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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



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