

Bitterroot AUDUBON



NOVEMBER 2022

NEWSLETTER

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The Secret Lives of Common Poorwills in Montana

By Kate Stone



Courtesy Mary Scofield

Baby Common Poorwills look like teeny balls of orange fluff.

You may have heard of the dawn chorus, but have you heard of the midnight choir? Have you ever wondered what these nocturnal singers get up to during the day? Join Kate Stone and Mary Scofield for a presentation about a lesser-known species of nocturnal bird, the Common Poorwill! Come learn about the interesting natural history of one of Montana's nightjar representatives and some of our fascinating research on MPG Ranch in the Bitterroot Valley. Together we will explore breeding behaviors, diet studies, and migratory movements of Common Poorwills in western Montana. And don't worry, we'll be sure to bring lots of pictures of adorable poorwill chicks and their stoic parents!



Kate and Mary have been studying poorwills in the Bitterroot Valley in 2015. In that time, they've banded 178 individuals and monitored 38 nests. They are the only people IN THE WORLD dedicating research to this amazing species. They uncover new aspects of their life history every year.

Kate Stone is a research ecologist at the MPG Ranch, a conservation property in Florence, MT. She got her B.A. in Environmental Studies and Conservation Biology at Middlebury College, and M.S. in Forestry from the University of Montana. Kate's research focuses on a variety of topics that range from scavenger ecology to nocturnal insectivores to migratory songbirds. She is on the boards of both Bitterroot Audubon and Wild Skies Raptor Center, and also serves on the Montana Bird Records Committee.



Courtesy Mary Scofield

Adult male Common Poorwill brooding two chicks while keeping a skeptical eye on the biologist photographing his family.

Mary Scofield is a field biologist at the MPG Ranch, a conservation property in Florence, MT. She got her B.S. in Biology at Pacific Lutheran University. She works on the avian science team on the

nocturnal insectivore project, the Lewis's Woodpecker project, and the migratory owl project. She has also worked with Golden Eagles overwintering in Montana, and with the California Condor Recovery Program in southern California.

Join us for this program at 7 p.m. on November 21, in person at the Victor Fire Department (2383 Meridian Rd., Victor) or via Zoom. Apologies for again changing the venue for the in-person part of our meetings—we are looking for the right fit!

You are invited to a Zoom meeting:

When: Nov 21, 2022 07:00 PM Mountain Time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvduMrqz4vGNThxd-yFI-An8y3B48gIKs2>

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



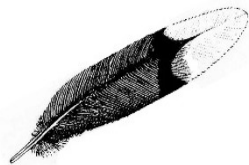
Courtesy Mary Scofield

Typical Common Poorwill habitat in the Bitterroot Valley.

Letter from the President

By Micki Long, BAS President

What a beautiful autumn we've had. Fall has always been my favorite season. Election years sometimes dampen my enthusiasm for autumn, but by the time you read this, the election will be in the past, and we'll get a break from political ads, at least for a while. We may or may not end up with politicians who want to protect birds and their habitats, but we can all still have a voice by commenting on Forest Service and other projects that impact public lands. Making calls, writing letters to the editor or to elected officials, and/or volunteering through conservation-minded organizations (like Bitterroot Audubon) are other ways we can fight for what we value.



Recent sobering news about the health of bird populations emphasizes how much birds need us to be actively involved in efforts to protect them. You may have received an email from national Audubon about the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's 2022 U.S. State of the Birds report. While decades of wetland conservation have led to increases in the populations of waterfowl and riparian species, "more than half of all U.S. bird species are dwindling."

https://www.audubon.org/news/more-half-us-birds-are-decline-warns-new-report?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20221026_wingspan_&utm_source=ea_&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20221026_wingspan&utm_content=

To find out more about which species are suffering the worst declines, see Cornell Lab's article on the State of the Birds report:

<https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2022/tipping-point-species/>. While the report is alarming, the Audubon article points out that researchers are aided by more information than ever, thanks, in part, to citizen scientists, like those of you who participate in a Christmas Bird Count or use eBird to report what you see while you're birding. I've been participating in Cornell Lab and Birds Canada's Project FeederWatch for years, counting birds who come to my feeders from November through April. I've really enjoyed participating, but if you decide to join FeederWatch, be sure to reacquaint yourself with how to create a safe feeding environment; the site includes plenty of good advice

<https://feederwatch.org>. Consider delaying your participation until bears have entered their dens for the winter.

I've just finished a MOLLI class called "Tenacious Beasts: Five Wildlife Recoveries, Five Emerging Philosophies," which focused on five species (one of which was the Spotted Owl; a recent Audubon magazine article certainly contradicts the idea that these owls are recovering). Dr. Christopher Preston, who teaches Environmental Philosophy at UM, presented not just the science but philosophies underpinning our relationships with animals, trees, and other living creatures. My background is in English and American Literature; much of what I learned in this class may be familiar to those of you who have degrees in Wildlife Biology, Forestry, Environmental Science, or other subjects related to the outdoors. What interested me the most were

Preston's definitions of and distinctions among three ethical orientations towards wildlife and the environment: anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism. I think my beliefs align most closely to biocentrism, and so I've already ordered *Respect for Nature*, by Paul W. Taylor, so that I can learn more about biocentric egalitarianism.

I hope to see you at our November meeting, either in person or via Zoom!



Courtesy Micki Long

Clark's Nutcracker and Evening Grosbeaks, and Mountain Chickadee at feeders during last winter's FeederWatch.

Calendar of Events

- Nov 19:** Bear Creek Restoration Planting Workday, contact Kyle.A@bitterrootlandtrust.org to RSVP, 1PM-5PM.
- Nov 21:** Audubon Meeting/Program: The Secret Lives of Common Poorwills in Montana, with Kate Stone and Mary Scofield, Audubon Meeting, Victor Fire Department (2383 Meridian Rd., Victor) or via Zoom; 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.
- Nov 30:** Wild Skies Raptors for Kids, Bitterroot Public Library meeting room, 4-5:30PM. See News and Notes article for registration details.
- Dec 17:** Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, Teller Wildlife Refuge, 7:30AM.
- Monthly:** Beginner Bird Walk at Lee Metcalf NWR, 3rd Saturday of each month, Stevensville, MT 10AM-12PM.

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 and shipping is \$45.95. Individual topic and homeschool kits are available for lesser cost. You can mail donations to the Bitterroot Audubon Society at PO Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840. Donations by December 12 would be most helpful. The link below has information about the printed and online Audubon Adventures materials that are available. Thank you in advance for your help! <http://audubonadventures.org/>

Hamilton Christmas Bird Count is 36!

By John Ormiston

It's getting time to be counting birds in the Hamilton Circle for the 36th time on December 17. 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 7:30am, form small groups and we'll do the best we can to

count all the birds in the six circle segments.

I hope the current weather isn't an indication of what's to come. I think mid-December will be nice, snow free and sunny. But just in case, come prepared to brave the storm.

Bear Creek Restoration Planting Workday

By Kyle Anderson, Stewardship Coordinator, Bitter Root Land Trust

Thanks to the generous support of the Bitterroot Audubon Society, we're moving forward with a creekside forest restoration project along the North Fork of Bear Creek this fall. We'll do a dormant-season planting to give the plants their best start for the 2023 growing season. We'll plant 160 native trees and shrubs from 10 species, which were selected to provide exceptional value to birds and other wildlife.

The planting day will be **at 1:00 on Saturday the 19th**, and we'll work until 5:00 (unless we finish beforehand). We'll also have a **prep work day on a weekday (TBD) on the week before**. For both days, we'll meet on Graze n' Roam Farm which is at the end of Eagle Feather Lane in Victor.

Before the planting day, I'll dig holes with a power auger, and drop off supplies for browse protectors. On Saturday, we'll:

1. Situate the plants in their holes.
2. Install coir (biodegradable coconut fiber) weed suppression rings around each plant.
3. Install rodent protection (hardware cloth rings).
4. Install ungulate browse protection (t-posts and welded wire cages).

Along with Bitterroot Audubon Volunteers, we'll have help from the Hamilton and Corvallis Boy Scout troop. It's ok if we don't get everything finished on Saturday. Getting the plants in the ground with some rudimentary browse protection will be the main thing. I will follow up to ensure the browse protectors are all secured for the winter.

Volunteers should bring **warm clothes, work gloves, a shovel or trowel, something to drink, and snacks**. If you have a **weeding claw** (or other tool) for pulling out grass, that would be useful too.

PLEASE RSVP ME IF YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE, even if you are just a maybe.

This helps immensely with our planning, and enables me to update you if the plan changes due to bad weather. Please shoot me a quick note at Kyle.A@bitterrootlandtrust.org and let me know if you'd join us on Saturday or the weekday prior (or both). Thank you so much if you are interested in participating!

News and Notes

Wild Skies Raptors for Kids: Join Wild Skies Raptor Center (WSRC) at the Bitterroot Public Library in Hamilton, MT on November 30 from 4-5:30PM and learn how they care, rehabilitate, and eventually release injured wild birds back into their natural habitats. Meet their Ambassador Birds up close and personal! These regal and intense diplomats help reach and teach people about their respective species and their importance to this place we all call home. WSRC's mission is to protect and conserve our wildlife and natural resources for future generations through rehabilitation, education, and outreach programs. Register for the event at: <https://bitterroot.librarycalendar.com/event/wild-skies-raptors-kids>

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
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