

## FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

### ***PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF MEETING DATE AND LOCATION***

**Last Chance Audubon Society will meet Monday, February 16, at 7:00 pm at St. Paul's Methodist Church on Lawrence & Cruse Ave. Enter the church at the Cruse Ave. entrance. The meeting will take place in the Choir Room just inside the front door.**

**Bob Martinka will show a PowerPoint presentation on *Beginning Dragonfly Watching in Montana*.** In retirement, Bob has become an avid birder and wildlife photographer. On one of his birding daytrips last summer, he encountered a shallow mountain lake that was teeming with dragonflies. Stopping to watch them, he began taking close-up pictures, and almost immediately became "hooked" on the pursuit and enjoyment of these ancient insects. Learning how to pursue and identify these fascinating, helicopter-like speedsters will be the focus of this presentation. Close-up images of more than 20 species are included in the series.

Dragonflies, which predate the dinosaurs, are among the oldest living groups of insects, having first appeared over 250 million years ago. In Montana, about 55 species of dragonflies have been identified along with perhaps 25 species of closely related damselflies. They begin their life cycle as aquatic insects and are found in almost any place where there is a permanent or semi-permanent water source. Dragonfly watching has become a spin-off activity for birders in other parts of the country but is mostly in its infancy with only a few good field guides presently available. In Montana, interest in and the pursuit of these flying dynamos could be thought of as in the "egg stage" with only a handful of individuals actively pursuing them. Hopefully, more interest can be generated in the coming years. There are a numbers of locations within Helena and the Helena Valley where they are found in relative abundance.

## LCAS NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES POSTPONED by Brian Shovers

I'm sorry to report that this year's lecture series will be postponed till next year. Last fall Don Skaar and I agreed to organize a series this year focused on the timely topic of forest issues related to the mountain pine beetle. We've been scooped, but this is not a bad thing. Last week the Montana Native Plant Society sponsored an excellent presentation by local forester, Gary Ellingson. Ellingson packed the meeting room at the Lewis & Clark Public Library and provided an excellent overview of the problem and some possible remedies. Several other free public talks are in the works for February, so Don and I decided that our timing for a lecture series on beetles and burns was not good, and might actually be redundant. We promise to start our planning earlier next year, and are open to suggestions regarding the lecture series.

### Inside:

- **2008 Christmas Bird Count Results from Cedron Jones**
- **Remembering Nancy Tunnicliff ... p. 2**
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## LAST CALL FOR LCAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL by Sara Toubman

What follows is my list of Last Chance Audubon (LCAS) members who have renewed their LCAS membership for the 2009 year. Thank you all. Please call me at 442-1271 if you renewed and your name is not on this list.

If you would like to continue to support LCAS and you did not renew, please fill out the LCAS membership form on the last page of the newsletter and mail it in. Thanks.

Bob & Carolyn Adams, Julie Adams, Lowell C. Anderson, Charles & Sharon Avery, Loren Bahls, Steve & Judy Bayless, Sue Bennett, Joan & Don Bishop, Kirsten Bowers, Paul & Juanita Bray,

Garrett Carlson, Mary Alice Chester, Mark & Dee Dee Cress, Bobbi Dancer, Bruce L. Desonia, Chuck & Carolyn Doering, Mary Anne Guggenheim & Jan Donaldson, Eric Eggen, Eric & Ellen Feaver, Doug Finstad, Bill & Vicki Fitzgerald, James & Diann Fradette, Gary Gingery, Brad & Sheri Harlow, Liz Hiltunen, Bruce Hodess, George & Virginia Holton Bill Hubber, Leonard H. John, Marilyn B. Johnson, Mary & Steve Johnson, Bill & Joyce Kronholm, Gloria Lambertz, Drake Barton & Kathy Lloyd, Curt & Alice Lund, Bob Martinka, Marie McAlear, Carol & Larry McEvoy, Slim & Sharon Miller, Jon Motl & Lorna Milne, Teresa Murphy, Mike & Helen Murray, Sue & Bruce Newell, Les Pederson, Lisa Pena, Fran Penner-Ray, Barbara Pepper-Rotness, Amy Randall, Bob Reinke, Teresa Sampson, Berma Saxton, Leroy & Diana Schramm, Jo Lace & Brian Shovers, David Slaughter, Jean A. Smith, Joyce Beckes & Sam Sperry, Karen Walker, Cindy Ward, Donald E. Wheeler, Wendy L. Wheeler, Jean Willison, Jerry Wozniak, Hugh Zackheim.

### **NANCY TUNNICLIFF 1930-2009**

Nancy Tunnicliff, a long time member of Last Chance Audubon Society, died peacefully at her home on January 3, 2009. Her love of birds and bird watching touched my life in a very special way.

Nancy was aware that Trumpeter Swans were being reintroduced into the Blackfoot Valley near Ovando in 2006. She arranged for Greg Neudecker of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to present a program about the reintroduction to our chapter in 2007. She also made special arrangements for Helena residents to be allowed to attend the 2007 reintroduction. On June 16, 2007 I rode to Ovando with Nancy for this chance to be close to Trumpeter Swans. I was one of ten lucky winners of the raffle drawing for the chance to hold and release a swan. Holding one of these gentle, magnificent birds was one of the most moving and memorable experiences of my life. I will always be deeply grateful to Nancy for arranging this special opportunity.

Nancy and I had a very special birding day after the release. We drove home through the fields east of Ovando where there are several ponds. We saw tiny Pied-billed Grebe babies on a nest and one on its parent's back. And we saw many ducklings. In 2008 Nancy again arranged for Helenans to be able to attend this special event. She loved to relate her birding adventures. She will always have a special place in my heart.

--Sara Toubman

### **THE 2008 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

The CBC was canceled on Dec. 14 because of the cold weather, and then held on Jan. 3, another cold day, but a beautiful one. **Thanks** to the 40 hearty souls who turned out to count, and to CBC leader Sue Newell and compiler Cedron Jones.



### **WHY I NEED THE BIRDS by Lisel Mueller**

When I hear them call  
in the morning, before  
I am quite awake,  
my bed is already traveling  
the daily rainbow,  
the arc toward evening;  
and the birds, leading  
their own discreet lives  
of hunger and watchfulness,  
are with me all the way,  
always a little ahead of me  
in the long-practiced manner  
of unobtrusive guides.

By the time I arrive at evening,  
they have just settled down to rest;  
already invisible, they are turning  
into the dreamwork of trees;  
and all of us together —  
myself and the purple finches,  
the rusty blackbirds,  
the ruby cardinals,  
and the white-throated sparrows  
with their liquid voices —  
ride the dark curve of the earth  
toward daylight, which they announce  
from their high lookouts  
before dawn has quite broken for me.

## GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGH LCAS HABITAT PROTECTION FUND

Last Chance Audubon is pleased to announce a **\$2,000 grant** to individuals, conservation groups, public agencies, and schools in Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, and Meagher counties to promote the protection or enhancement of habitat that has or could have significant value for birds and other wildlife. For the past 12 years the chapter has been offering grants for habitat projects throughout the area, and has funded numerous successful grants, such as last year's funding of the replanting of fire-damaged Spring Meadow Lake State Park.

To apply for this year's \$2,000 grant please submit a statement of the work proposed; an explanation of how it will enhance the habitat; a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned work; a timeline; explain how the project will benefit more than one species; and a detailed budget (not to exceed three pages). The applications will be reviewed by the three members of the LCAS Habitat Protection committee. Applications should be sent to LCAS, Habitat Protection, P.O. Box 924, Helena, MT 59624, no later than **April 1, 2009**. The committee will make its decision by **April 15<sup>th</sup>**.

### WETLANDS UPDATE by Brian Shovers

During the month of January I contacted Lewis & Clark County planner Michael McHugh regarding our concerns about the private wetlands located just south of the Charles Van Hook Wetlands. McHugh suggested several other individuals to contact at the city/county government if we're interested in monitoring any filling of wetlands and subsequent development. I will continue to monitor the issue. At the same time, I attended a session at the Montana Wetlands Council regarding restoration of wetlands using native plants, presented by Tara Luna of the Montana Heritage Program. Her talk convinced me that we need to do a good deal of groundwork prior to submitting a grant for restoration work on the Van Hook Wetlands. I also have come to realize how little attention we have paid to the Van Hook Wetlands since our involvement in its preservation in 1996. If you have any interest in working on a wetlands restoration project this coming year, please contact me at [sholace@juno.com](mailto:sholace@juno.com) or at 443-6640.



## COMING EVENTS & REMINDERS

- **Great Backyard Bird Count:** This year's GBBC will be held on President's Day Weekend, Feb. 13-16. Birdwatchers outdid themselves during the 2008 GBBC and submitted more than 85,000 checklists during the 4-day event, surpassing the previous record by several thousand. Visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) to see how easy it is to be a citizen scientist. If you don't have a computer available, call Sandy at Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904, and she'll help you record your bird sightings.

This is an important program that gives Cornell Lab and Audubon a snapshot of the bird population in the US and Canada.

- **Montana Audubon's 2009 Bird Festival, Wings Across the Big Sky, will be held in Great Falls – June 5-7.** Check the Montana Audubon website for details, [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org).

- **LCAS Newsletter Deadline: Please submit March newsletter items by Monday, March 2. Thanks!**

*Last Chance Audubon Society promotes understanding, respect and enjoyment of birds and the natural world through education, habitat protection and environmental advocacy.*

**2008 Christmas Letter Excerpt:** A beautiful Christmas day! After the endless December cold spell, the temperature has risen to near 30 degrees today and with that there is a gorgeous snowfall of millions of gentle snowflakes filling the air. On the hillside behind the house a great wildlife spectacle filled the afternoon as ravens, magpies and two bald eagles vied with two golden eagles to feast on a dead creature. The golden eagles dominated and, hour after hour, were seen head bobbing as they feasted. There was an occasional short rising flight with the great sweep of their wings to scare the sidling-up would-be competitors away. The bald eagles poised for hours on nearby large boulders as the snow drifted down on them. With dusk they all parted. We will see what tomorrow brings.

--Cary Lund

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Helena, MT 59601  
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www.birdsandbeasleys.com

**Last Chance Audubon Society  
Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your \$15 check and form to Last Chance Audubon Society, PO Box 924, Helena, MT 59624.  
All contributions are tax deductible.

**LAST CHANCE AUDUBON SOCIETY**

<b>Officers:</b>	Christmas Count	Sue Newell-442-8142/Cedron Jones 442-1271
Secretary	Circulation	Sam Sperry/Joyce Beckes 458-8170
Treasurer	Conservation	Brian Shovers 443-6640
<b>Board of Directors:</b>	Education	vacant
Bob Martinka	Field Trip	Jim Greene 495-9270 - <a href="mailto:greenevogt@imt.net">greenevogt@imt.net</a>
Don Skaar	Habitat Protection	vacant
Coburn Currier	Membership	Sara Toubman 442-1271
Lorna Milne	Nat. Hist. Series	Don Skaar 442-3254
Martha Vogt	Newsletter	Joyce Beckes 458-8170 - <a href="mailto:samsper@mt.net">samsper@mt.net</a>
<b>Committee Chairs/Contacts:</b>	Program	Sara Toubman 442-1271
Birdathon	Publicity	Jim Greene 495-9270 - <a href="mailto:greenevogt@imt.net">greenevogt@imt.net</a>
Birdseed Sale	Silent Auction	Sandy Shull-449-0904/Jo Lace-443-6640
LCAS Website: <a href="http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org">www.lastchanceaudubon.org</a> . Contacts: Birdseed – Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904. Montana Audubon – 443-3949 / <a href="http://www.mtaudubon.org">www.mtaudubon.org</a> . Newsletter - 458-8170, 8982 Jackpine Dr, Helena 59602, <a href="mailto:samsper@mt.net">samsper@mt.net</a> . Non-members may receive the newsletter for \$5.50 per year. Send check to LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena 59624.	Website	Christian Frazza

**LAST CHANCE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO BOX 924  
HELENA MT 59624**

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photo by Bob Martinka

**2008 CHRISTMAS COUNT - Jan 3, 2009 - Summary of 54 counts, 1954-2008 (no count in 1958)**

<u>Species</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Times Seen</u>	<u>High Count</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Freq.</u>
Snow Goose		12	40	87	22%
Canada Goose	540	40	3656	07	74%
Trumpeter Swan	3	5	12	91	9%
Tundra Swan		19	35	88	35%
Wood Duck	12	21	36	04	39%
Gadwall	1	19	61	95	35%
American Wigeon		12	26	90	22%
Mallard	697	50	10216	80	93%
Blue-winged Teal		4	2	69	7%
Cinnamon Teal		3	7	93	6%
Northern Shoveler		5	13	03	9%
Northern Pintail		21	11	90	39%
Green-winged Teal		19	20	91	35%
Canvasback		4	10	06	7%
Redhead		6	5	95	11%
Ring-necked Duck		3	40	04	6%
Greater Scaup		2	4	01	4%
Lesser Scaup		9	5	95	17%
White-winged Scoter		1	1	87	2%
Long-tailed Duck		1	4	03	2%
<b>Bufflehead</b>	<b>20</b>	16	7	08	30%
Common Goldeneye	72	52	377	07	96%
Barrow's Goldeneye	120	35	185	00	65%
Hooded Merganser		14	9	91	26%
Common Merganser		42	214	73	78%
Red-breasted Merganser		4	12	99	7%
Ruddy Duck		5	3	01	9%
Chukar		1	1	98	2%
Gray Partridge	38	38	137	78	70%
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	30	60	62	56%
Ruffed Grouse		1	6	86	2%
Dusky Grouse		1	1	95	2%
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1	12	12	81	22%
Common Loon		6	7	91	11%
Pied-billed Grebe		5	4	92	9%
Horned Grebe		3	2	89	6%
Eared Grebe		1	1	88	2%
Western Grebe		8	3	03	15%
American White Pelican		7	6	04	13%
Double-crested Cormorant		1	1	04	2%
Great Blue Heron	1	19	5	88	35%
Turkey Vulture		1	1	66	2%
Bald Eagle	18	46	32	90	85%
Northern Harrier	1	46	16	81	85%
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	26	7	03	48%
Cooper's Hawk	1	22	3	77,03	41%
Northern Goshawk		13	4	83	24%
Red-tailed Hawk	7	13	7	07,08	24%
Ferruginous Hawk		1	1	76	2%
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>	<b>53</b>	45	43	08	83%
Golden Eagle	1	32	7	64	59%
American Kestrel		13	3	81,82,93	24%
Merlin	2	37	10	91	69%
Gyr Falcon		8	2	90,93	15%
Peregrine Falcon		7	2	70	13%
Prairie Falcon	3	28	4	87	52%
American Coot		26	192	6	48%
Killdeer		23	12	66	43%
Spotted Sandpiper		1	1	97	2%
Wilson's Snipe	3	43	11	78	80%
Ring-billed Gull		18	803	03	33%
California Gull		10	57	01	19%

<u>Species</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Times Seen</u>	<u>High Count</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Freq.</u>
Herring Gull		10	15	01	19%
Glaucous Gull		1	1	97	2%
Rock Pigeon	860	35	1306	05	65%
Eurasian Collared-Dove	5	2	16	7	4%
Mourning Dove		5	1	89,95,00,01,03	9%
Western Screech Owl		1	1	69	2%
Great Horned Owl	1	37	7	87	69%
Snowy Owl		3	1	80,84,96	6%
Northern Pygmy Owl		7	4	85	13%
Long Eared Owl		1	1	80	2%
Short-eared Owl		17	11	68	31%
Northern Saw-whet Owl		1	1	86	2%
Belted Kingfisher	1	27	6	88	50%
Downy Woodpecker	12	49	18	00	91%
Hairy Woodpecker	1	39	9	93	72%
Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)	72	51	105	07	94%
Yellow Shafted Flicker (race)		5	2	05	9%
Loggerhead Shrike		2	1	65,83	4%
Northern Shrike	5	45	15	96	83%
Gray Jay		4	24	90	7%
Steller's Jay		6	4	81,86	11%
Blue Jay	1	14	3	76,97,98,00	26%
Pinyon Jay		22	156	60	41%
Clark's Nutcracker	35	47	220	91	87%
Black-billed Magpie	275	54	453	77	100%
American Crow	54	22	120	06	41%
<b>Common Raven</b>	<b>437</b>	41	428	08	76%
Horned Lark	587	43	5329	72	80%
Black-capped Chickadee	36	52	156	00	96%
Mountain Chickadee	154	53	225	94	98%
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	49	273	74	91%
White-breasted Nuthatch	9	37	22	97	69%
Pygmy Nuthatch	6	19	23	07	35%
Brown Creeper		12	7	81,04	22%
Canyon Wren		3	1	95,01	6%
Winter Wren		1	1	97	2%
Marsh Wren		8	4	88	15%
American Dipper	4	48	9	87	89%
Golden-crowned Kinglet		5	6	85,01	9%
Mountain Bluebird		1	1	97	2%
Townsend's Solitaire	37	53	142	07	98%
American Robin	72	38	227	05	70%
Varied Thrush		1	1	81	2%
Northern Mockingbird		1	1	87	2%
European Starling	262	50	686	07	93%
Bohemian Waxwing	2901	47	16101	05	87%
<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>	<b>132</b>	22	96	08	41%
American Tree Sparrow	18	54	145	86	100%
Song Sparrow	9	48	44	66	89%
White-throated Sparrow		2	1	87,91	4%
Harris's Sparrow		6	2	63,90	11%
White-crowned Sparrow		5	2	63,90,97	9%
Dark-eyed Junco	5	38	59	95	70%
Lapland Longspur	5	7	40	70	13%
Snow Bunting	27	11	80	96	20%
Red-winged Blackbird		30	161	65	56%
Western Meadowlark		10	51	79	19%
Rusty Blackbird	6	3	7	93	6%
Brewer's Blackbird		11	17	67	20%
Brown-headed Cowbird		1	1	75	2%
Rosy Finch		14	75	77	26%
Pine Grosbeak		19	253	77	35%
Purple Finch		1	1	95	2%

<u>Species</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Times Seen</u>	<u>High Count</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Freq.</u>
Cassin's Finch		28	100	64	52%
House Finch	640	29	946	00	54%
Red Crossbill		30	351	95	56%
White-winged Crossbill		2	30	84	4%
Common Redpoll	20	41	979	01	76%
Hoary Redpoll		2	2	77,01	4%
Pine Siskin	34	28	388	95	52%
American Goldfinch		10	26	79	19%
Evening Grosbeak		28	141	84	52%
<b>House Sparrow</b>	<b>2826</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>2397</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>57</b>				
<b>TOTAL BIRDS</b>	<b>11,157</b>				