

NO LAST CHANCE AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN MARCH

The LCAS lecture series takes place in March, and there will be no membership meeting for the month. There will be a lecture every Tuesday night in March, plus the first two Tuesdays in April. The series began on Tuesday, March 4, with a lecture by Richard Manning entitled *The Montana Prairie: Its History, Biology, and Promise*.

The lecture on Tuesday, March 18, is FREE to Audubon members

All talks begin at 7 pm and will be held at the FWP Commission Room at FWP Headquarters, 1420 E. 6th Ave. Access the building through the west side door. Cost is \$5 per talk or \$25 for all six; pay admission at the door. A schedule follows.

2008 NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES ON MONTANA PRAIRIES

March 11. David Ausband—Swift Fox on the Northern Plains: A Success Story. Dave is a Research Associate at the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Montana currently working with wolves in Idaho. He will talk about his studies of Swift foxes on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation.

March 18. Jack Taylor – Plants of the Montana Prairies. As range science researcher and teacher at Montana State University, Jack Taylor spent over thirty years studying grassland ecosystems. Taylor will discuss what he learned and its significance to birdwatchers.

March 25. Bob Bramblett—There's Fish in Them Thar Cricks: Prairie Stream Research at Montana State University. Bob is an Assistant Research Professor at Montana State University and has worked for 21 years on prairie fishes in eastern Montana and Colorado, as well as some misspent time in Alaska and the Grand Canyon. He will talk about fish, herptiles and even bird life in and along Montana's prairie riparian corridors.

April 1. Coburn Currier – Grassland Birds of Northeastern Montana. As Project Biologist for the Montana Natural Heritage Program, Coburn has been studying the grassland birds of north-central and eastern Montana for the Program since 2003. He will provide an overview of grassland birds and their habits and habitat needs. Photos and sounds of these birds will be included in his talk.

April 8. Mike Madel –The Prairie Grizzly Bear. Mike has been involved with research and management of grizzly bears since 1978. He has been in Choteau since 1983 as Grizzly Bear Management Specialist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He will talk about grizzly use of the prairies and riparian areas along the Rocky Mountain Front.

PLANTING AT SPRING MEADOW LAKE – APRIL 26TH

Each year LCAS devotes monies raised through Birdathon to the Habitat Protection Fund, and this year a \$2,000 grant was presented to the Lewis & Clark Water Quality Protection District for re-vegetation projects. The chapter chose to earmark those funds to aid Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in planting native trees and shrubs lost in the devastating arson fire at Spring Meadow Lake in September 2007. Spring Meadow Lake has been home to a host of songbirds and the park plays a key role in LCAS Beginning Birding classes held each spring.

We need volunteers for the April 26th planting; if you want to take part in helping to restore Spring Meadow to its former glory call Brian Shovers at 443-6640.

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♪ BIRDNOTE: A HELENA BIRDATHON

May 17 & 18, 2007

By Sara Toubman & Cedron Jones

Despair hung in the air –
A birdathon with no flair?
We were leaving early to travel –
That stuck in our throats like gravel.
Many birds would not yet be back –
What a lack!
AND there was lots to do before we left –
Not enough energy to jet around
Covering so much ground.
We'll make the best of it, we said,
Pondering our options as we lay in bed.
Our haunts with flair are too far away,
So close to home we'll have to stay.

Thus began a new birdathon route for us,
One with a great deal less fuss.
And with less ground to cover,
We had more time to hover.
Lollygagging, fun and beauty did abound,
And we actually had time to look around.
What to our surprise do we see,
But lots of beautiful scenery.
The creeks west of town were especially nice,
Though to find birds in willows and shrubs
you had to look twice.
Spring is delicious and delectable,
Fresh sparkling leaves a glorious shiny
spectacle.

As for birds ... on the Grady Ranch a rarity
was found:
A Northern Mockingbird flying around!
Has global warming brought it here,
As northern climes get warmer each year?

What else was special you may ask?
Of all the things that filled our task
The greatest joy and incredible delight
Is seeing these critters up close in perfect light.
Which ones you wonder were we able to ponder?
Why, Downy Woodpeckers and Bobolinks were
two,
And a Lincoln's Sparrow and Tree Swallows so
intensely blue,
And exotic Wood Ducks and Sandhill Cranes
were more.
And to end the day, a Red-naped Sapsucker and
Bonaparte's Gull, before it started to pour.

Another fun spectacle from the wind with the storm
Was dozens of ravens above a gray cliff in
great form.
Twisting and turning and riding high,
They were having great fun up in the sky.
Cedron's comment upon seeing this lark
Was to dub it a Raven skateboard park.

With the wind and the heat, it felt good to get home.
And we were amazed when we discovered
Over a hundred birds we'd uncovered.

Many thanks to you all who so kindly pledged
your dollars to support the call
To enhance and provide bird habitat in the midst
of the sprawl.

Total species: 102



UP FROM THE EGG The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avider By Ogden Nash

*Bird watchers top my honors list.
I aimed to be one, but I missed.
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,
My aim turned out to be erratic,
And I, bespectacled and binocular,
Exposed myself to comment jocular.
We don't need too much birdlore, do we,
To tell a flamingo from a towhee?
Yet I cannot, and never will,
Unless the silly birds stand still.
And there's no enlightenment so obscure
As ornithological literature.
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,
Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?
You rush to consult your Nature guide
And inspect the gallery inside,
But a bird in the open never looks
Like its picture in the birdie books—
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage.
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,
Watching the clock instead of finches,
But I sometimes visualize in my gin
The Audubon that I audibin.*

LCAS 2008 FIELD TRIPS

By Jim Greene

Happy New Year, Last Chance Auduboners! Well, at least Happy New Birding Year. Although most of us look for birds year round, it is always exciting to hear and see the first birds each spring and anticipate seeing more as the season unfolds. Right now, in the South Hills the House Finch Chorale Annual Spring Concert is in full swing, with frequent recitals by spontaneous Chickadee groups, as well as solo appearances by local Townsend Solitaires. Last week a Mountain Bluebird was seen near Gold Greek.

You'll enhance your chances to see more birds by attending some of the field trips our chapter sponsors each spring. On April 12th, Cedron Jones will lead another trip to a newer local area, BLM's McMaster Hills in the Spokane Creek drainage, and on April 26th, Sara Toubman will lead a trip below Hauser Dam. Look for details on these two and other trips in the April newsletter.

If you'd like to schedule a trip to one of your favorite areas or an area you're just curious about, give me a call at 495-9270, or email me at greenevogt@imt.net. There are several openings in May and June.

Additionally, there will be bird walks led by a Birds & Beasleys staff person every Saturday, April 5 - November 1. Meet at 7:30 am in front of Birds & Beasleys, 70 S. Park, at 7:30 am and enjoy two hours of local bird fun. Locations will rotate throughout the summer, but will include Spring Meadow, Fairgrounds Pond, the Cement Plant, Jane Beasley's backyard, and anywhere else the group decides to go. Reservations are not necessary but would be appreciated. 449-0904.

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SATURDAY MORNING BIRD WALK

LEADERS NEEDED: Birds & Beasleys is looking for someone to lead bird walks on Saturday mornings from April-November. We are hoping to share the Saturday walks with 1-3 leaders, so one doesn't need to work every Saturday. The person needs to know their birds and be willing to work with a variety of people including kids. The plan is for the field trips to last about 2 hours and be to accessible areas like the Fairgrounds, Spring Meadow, the Regulating Reservoir and other local sites. This is a paid position. Please call Sandy at Birds & Beasleys for more information. 449-0904.

MORE COMING EVENTS: ► Tuesday, March 11, 7:00 pm at the large meeting room at the Lewis and Clark Library. Jack Taylor, MSU professor emeritus, will present "My Life on the Range," a summary history of range Management in Montana. Sponsored by the Kelsey Chapter of the Montana Native Plant Society. Free to the public. ► Wednesday, March 26. National Wildflower Week art contest. Help judge art work by local students in honor of Wildflower Week. All day at the Helena National Forest Service Supervisor's office, across from the airport.

MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL: Montana Audubon and the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Chapter will host the 2008 Montana Bird Festival at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, June 6-8. A festival brochure with full details will be sent to all Montana Audubon members in early April.

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APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: Please submit April newsletter items by Tuesday, April 1. Thanks!

Membership from Sara Toubman. Welcome and thanks to the following new and renewing members. NAS New: Beda Lovitt, Jeremy Terry, Clair Swain, M. Household, Diane Smith, Elaine Johnson, Molly Herrin, James Shaver, Dona Kingsbury. NAS Renewals: Marsha/Bill Davis, Tamara Blank, Kenneth High, Roy Hockett, Paul Kent, Marjorie Levine. LCAS New/Renewals: Cheryl Cope, Judy/Steve Bayless, Betty Gutman, Howard Johnson, Bill Hubber, Curt/Alice Lund, John Moore, Dan Sidor, Lowell Anderson, Carolyn/Bob Adams, Dave Nardinger.



**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.

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LCAS Website: www.lastchanceaudubon.org . Contacts: Birdseed – Birds & Beasleys, 449-0904; Shade Grown Coffee – Joyce Beckes, 458-8170; Montana Audubon – 443-3949 / www.mtaudubon.org . Newsletter available to non-members for \$5.50 per year. Send check to LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena 59624.		

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PO BOX 924
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