

spring 2019

MONTANA
AUDUBON

A PLAY OF LIGHT

**TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS
CAPTURE THE SOUL
OF MONTANA**

page 4

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our mission is to promote appreciation, knowledge and conservation of Montana's native birds, other wildlife, and natural ecosystems to safeguard biological diversity for current and future generations.

Founded in 1976, Montana Audubon has built effective programs in public policy, education, and bird conservation to serve its members and Montana's nine community-based Audubon Chapters.

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Montana Audubon is a proud member organization of Montana Shares, a partnership of Montana-based nonprofits devoted to improving the quality of life in the Big Sky state.

On the cover: Little Blackfoot River and Flint Creek Range, John Lambing photo.
Canyon Wren, Bob Martinka photo.

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Like a Rare Bird

It was a cold and windy Saturday morning as I headed out to East Helena in search of my *white whale* after noting Bob Martinka's recorded sighting on Montana eBird. The Lapland Longspur is a common songbird of the Arctic tundra that winters in open fields across much of northern United States but has always eluded me, though I've lived for the last 20+ years mostly in northern states – from Maine to Oregon. I spent the day scanning fields and observed flocks of Horned Larks (which Lapland Longspurs often accompany) but unfortunately the day ended with another miss – *call me Ishmael!* Though I headed home disappointed, my mood quickly improved after hearing on the radio that an important piece of legislation had passed the U.S. Senate and was on its way to the U.S. House.



The passage of a historic public lands package included one of Montana Audubon's key pieces of policy work over the last year.

In an era when bipartisanship remains elusive, like a rare bird, it seems that conservation victories are still possible. The passage of a historic public lands package included one of Montana Audubon's key pieces of policy work over the last year: Senate Bill 47 permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since its inception, the program has provided more than \$18 billion to projects in every county in the nation but Congressional inaction last fall meant the fund expired, depriving conservation projects of more than \$350 million.

In a rare victory for conservation and our wildlife heritage, this bipartisan public lands package passed through congress by votes of 92-8 in the Senate and 363-62 in the House, and was finally signed into law when it hit the President's desk. Permanent reauthorization of LWCF was a big win for public lands, our outdoor heritage and conservation here in Montana and across the country. It was the largest bill of its kind in more than a decade. We commend our congressional delegation, who all voted yes, for convincing their colleagues on both sides of the aisle to overwhelmingly pass this public lands package and invest in our vibrant outdoor recreation economy. Now it is critical to gain full funding for the LWCF.

Beyond LWCF reauthorization, this public lands package also designates more than 1.3 million acres of Wilderness, protects nearly 400 miles of rivers and creates four new national monuments. In addition, 30,370 acres of public land on the doorstep of Yellowstone National Park here in Montana, will be protected from destructive and toxic gold mining. In a time when it is hard to find good news, like finding that rare bird in the field, it's encouraging to know that we can still be pleasantly surprised from time to time.

Yours in Conservation,

Larry Berrin
Executive Director



Lapland Longspur

Bob Martinka

spring 2019

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A PLAY OF LIGHT

Using their cameras, John Lambing and Bob Martinka help Montana Audubon accomplish on-the-ground conservation which ultimately benefits the Montana we all cherish.

Conservation is a passion rooted in the personal, individual experience of nature. For organizations whose task it is to protect the natural world, the ability to tap into the aesthetic and emotional power of wildlife and landscapes is critical, because it is what moves people to action. Often the best way to accomplish this is via the written word and of course, photographs. A camera in the hands of a master photographer can generate immediate emotional impact to the viewer. When combined with powerful language, the effect is doubly compelling.

Montana Audubon is a statewide conservation organization with a mission specific to wildlife protection and has a hand in other types of environmental protection and education.

We have been extremely fortunate in recent years to have nearly unfettered access to the remarkable work of two very gifted and generous photographers: Bob Martinka and John Lambing. Their images grace most of the outreach materials published by Montana Audubon and to that degree, help convey our important conservation mission to the world.

Both men have lived in Montana for decades, but grew up elsewhere (Lambing in the Midwest and Martinka in the Northeast), and describe their respective love affairs for their adopted state in similar terms of awe and affection. “I was absolutely blown away with the country when I transferred to Montana as a young USGS scientist,” Lambing recounts. “Growing up exploring the Ozarks was great, but it didn’t prepare me for the vast scale or wildness that I encountered when coming to Montana.” Martinka echoed this sentiment saying, “This place changed my life; after moving

here full time in 1967, I knew I’d made a permanent transition to a better world.”

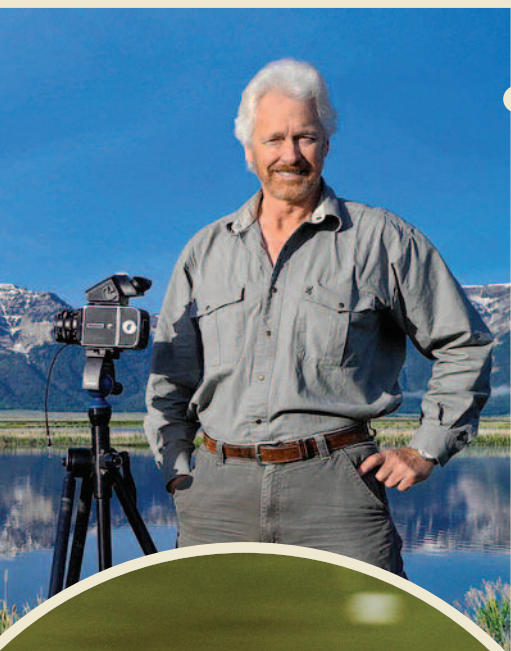
Like many pursuits, nature photography bears a similarity to hunting and this is partly how our photographers describe it. Though Lambing specializes in landscapes and Bob Martinka birds and other wildlife, the search for the “right shot”, while considering many environmental variables, requires a level of discipline, self-mastery and persistence

continued...

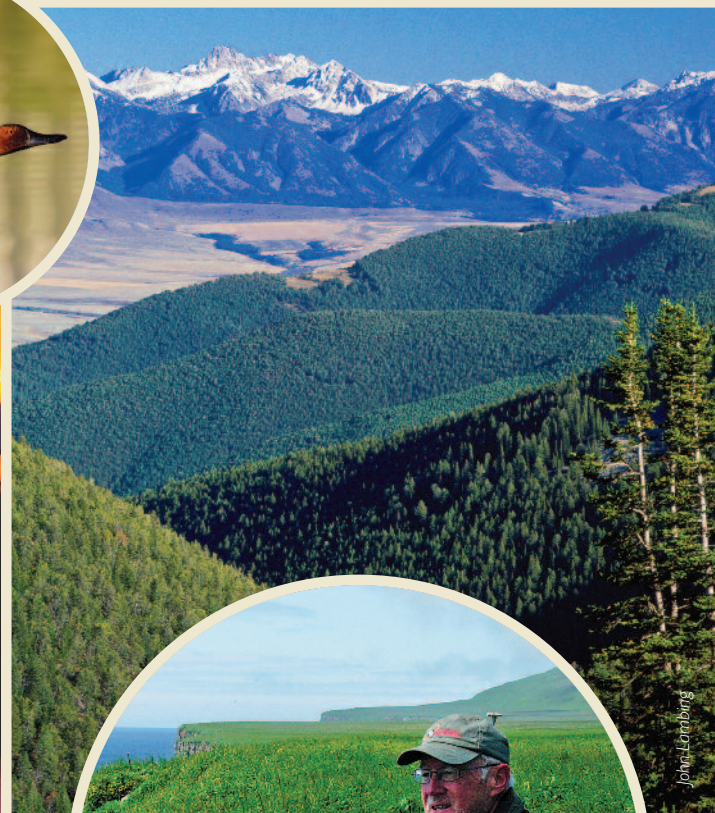


John Lambing

Bob Martinka

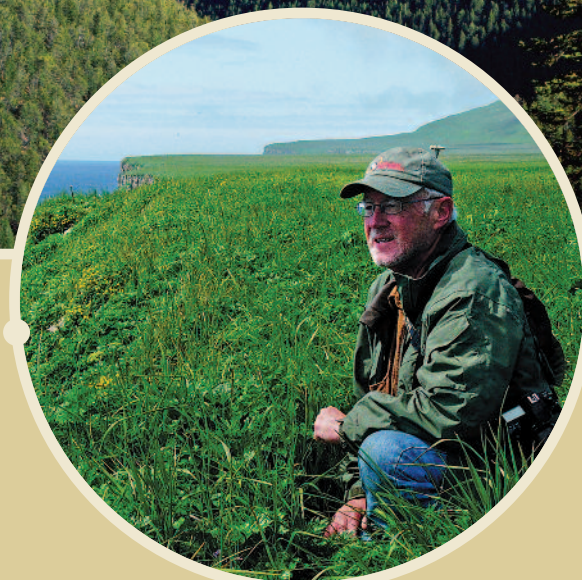


"It is critical to make people aware of the need for study, appreciation and protection of our irreplaceable natural ecosystems and the life they support." —John Lambing



a host of other factors, especially the type of natural lighting encountered. Pursuing wildlife adds another level of complexity and randomness: "All I can do is put myself into the right habitat which may hold the bird species I want to photograph," Martinka recounts. "If I find them, I will try to maneuver for composition. When everything cooperates, the experience and final product can be quite magical."

"The experience of interacting with nature is more important than the photos, yet I find great meaning in sharing my travels with others." —Bob Martinka



that many hunters would relate to. Martinka describes it: "Like hunting, nature photography requires a lot of patience but broadens the view of a place; it requires one to fully-inhabit the landscape, using all of the senses, regardless of season, weather or other challenging conditions."

What ultimately appears on the page is not the result of a random or simple point-and-click event: the stunning photos that Lambing and Martinka create are the product of careful preparation and decades of experience. Locations are determined by habitat, time of year, weather, topography and

It is the overall process of photography in the landscape, and the multi-layered experience of it that motivates Lambing and Martinka: their enthusiasm for the craft is infectious. According to John, "It's addictive, the research, preparation and exploring. My photo trips are typically two days to two weeks in duration, and I am nearly always alone. I'll sometimes cover 10–20 miles on foot per day, hiking trails or cross country to find what I'm looking for." The ability to vividly share the experience with others, as well as reinvigorating memories of trips and places is a big motivator for Bob Martinka: "Learning new things is

primary to me, whether it be natural history, human culture or other elements. Generally speaking, the experience of interacting with nature is more important than the photos, yet the pictures are really useful for sharing experiences. I find great meaning in sharing my Montana and international travels with others."

This sharing of course, extends beyond merely recounting photographic journeys; it also is driven by a profound if subtle, advocacy for conservation. The images of Lambing and Martinka can be found in the pages of publications for many organizations which promote the conservation of wildlife and wildlands, particularly in Montana. "I see fewer young people in the backcountry than I did a decade or so ago, which might

represent a troubling trend," notes Lambing. "It is critical to make people aware of the need for study, appreciation and protection of our irreplaceable natural ecosystems and the life they support. I try to accomplish this with my images, letting nature do the work."

The two self-taught photographers have done much to bring attention to Montana's wildlife and diverse habitats. Using their cameras to capture the natural drama of birds, landscapes and light, John Lambing and Bob Martinka help Montana Audubon and others accomplish on-the-ground conservation which ultimately benefits the Montana we all cherish.



Smith River

Malcolm Gilbert

“Replacement Rule” Proposed to Clarify Jurisdiction Under Federal Clean Water Act

On December 11, 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency was ordered to roll-back critical federal protections for most of our nation’s wetlands, and thousands of miles of rivers and streams. This gutting of the Clean Water Act (CWA) targets many seasonal, intermittent, or ephemeral wetlands and streams, allowing them to be destroyed simply because they lack surface water connectivity or flow throughout the year. Montana is a headwater state, and many headwater streams are seasonal. Still, headwaters provide one of life’s most critical resources for downstream communities of birds, other wildlife, and people. Wetlands provide continual pollution control and flood-mitigation services free-of-charge, while supporting productive waterfowl and shorebird habitat.

Other types of wetlands such as marshes, prairie potholes, wet-meadows and stream-side areas provide critical habitat for over 225 species of nesting birds and many more throughout the non-breeding

season. Beyond birds, Montana’s unparalleled natural landscapes and wildlife habitat, support our hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation economy.

The administration’s new action follows a February 2017 Executive Order to begin re-defining federal authority under the CWA. The Trump administration’s “Replacement Rule” intends to replace an Obama-era Rule, currently the law in 22 states, D.C. and U.S. territories. This excludes Montana however, whose jurisdiction is defined by the pre-2015 rule.

The Clean Water Act should help prevent pollution, and not promote the destruction of our public, economically beneficial clean water and water-based habitats.

Luckily, there is still time to take conservation action. Please join us in asking the EPA to reject the proposed Replacement Rule: visit our website mtaudubon.org and stay tuned for an action alert specific to this issue.



What the Lek is Going On?

While male Greater Sage-Grouse perform their spring mating dance on leks across our majestic state, Montana Audubon is in federal court fighting for their protection. We view this as an opportunity to demonstrate our support for upholding the Bureau of Land Management’s 2015 Greater Sage-Grouse conservation plans, which are intended to keep the Greater Sage-Grouse off the endangered species list. Unfortunately, recently proposed changes to the plans represent a major step backward. We are proud of the leadership that our state has consistently shown in managing sage-grouse: the ground-breaking research and policy decisions that took place in Montana are featured prominently in the BLM’s 2015 grouse plans. Discarding these accomplishments undermines years of work and collaboration and creates a great deal of uncertainty regarding public land management in our state and beyond. We believe that abandoning science in this short-sighted approach is bad for the bird and bad for Montana.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages most of the habitat where sage-grouse are found range-wide, so these management plans play an important role in determining the future for grouse. The

2015 plans capped years of negotiations involving government, industry and conservation groups like Montana Audubon. They carried a lot of weight in preventing grouse from being listed as a threatened or endangered species. Such a designation could have brought severe limitations on grazing, energy development and other activities across the bird’s range. Now the Trump administration is finalizing plans to ease restrictions on oil and gas drilling and other industries that were meant to protect an imperiled bird species. We believe the changes will lead to more industrial disturbance of grouse habitat, undermining conservation efforts to stabilize the bird’s population.

Now more than ever, the public should insist that the BLM follow its own mission of managing the nation’s public lands for multiple uses, which must include respect for important wildlife habitat. The best chance to conserve sage-grouse and more than 350 other species that depend on healthy sagebrush habitat is through a large-scale and collaborative strategy, which we achieved in 2015. In response, Montana Audubon is joining together with other conservation groups this spring to challenge these changes in federal court.



Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is Gaining Momentum

Last year, Montana Audubon joined with other conservation organizations to lead a statewide effort in support of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA). Showing bipartisan cooperation, the U.S. Congress advanced this landmark legislation that would rescue vulnerable wildlife species across the United States. The law, if passed, would direct funding each year to state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve at-risk species and habitats in addition to managing human-wildlife conflicts, increasing conservation education, and boosting public outdoor recreation opportunities. Using a formula based on population and size, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) would stand to receive nearly \$30 million a year to manage and conserve species at high risk of disappearing.

Montanans have long recognized the need to manage more than just game animals but the issue has always been how best to fund these efforts. RAWA represents a way to address this issue by increasing funding for FWP to implement actions aimed at conserving the full array of Montana’s wildlife. Although Congress is now redrafting the bill, we know it already has support from more than 100 members in the U.S. House, of nearly equal representation from both parties, and that a similar effort is underway in the U.S. Senate. We will continue to make this a priority issue as we understand that the Montana landscape, while magnificent to behold, would be impoverished without the wildlife that animates it.

Fighting for Wildlife at the 66th Montana Legislature

Montana Audubon's policy team is busy working hard at the Montana Capitol, to make sure bills that would negatively impact wildlife, wildlife habitat, terrestrial vegetation, water quality, and our climate are stopped. We are also playing offense by supporting bills we know will have positive outcomes for our state — especially bills to reauthorize funding for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), Habitat Montana, and a bill to increase funding for Fishing Access Site management. Unfortunately, the majority of proactive legislation we've worked on, like board-scale energy and climate legislation, did not make it through transmittal break in March. This session, the tone of wildlife conservation unfortunately turned political.

Montana's longstanding habitat and wildlife conservation program, Habitat Montana, found itself pinched between authority of the Land Board and that of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Fish & Game Commission. Following an Attorney General opinion, the issue was quickly taken up by the Montana Supreme Court, with a December court order favoring the Fish & Game Commission. The conservation community views this as a huge win for this critical program that protects hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat like intact prairies and sagebrush lands our birds depend on. The Habitat Montana program does all of this while protecting private property rights and preserving farming and ranching communities. Unfortunately, HB 265, a bill to require Land Board approval of Habitat Montana conservation easements despite the recent ruling, continues to progress through the legislature.

Greater Sage-Grouse

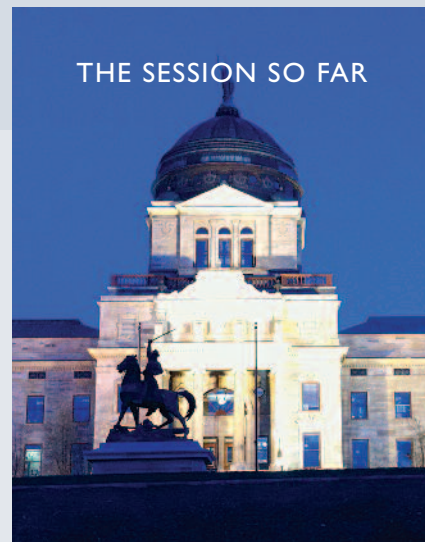
Bob Martinka



Bills more directly impacting wildlife have been predator-heavy, with a negative focus on wolves. Many of the bills this year have attempted to liberalize wolf harvest in the state via increased access to, or reduced cost of hunting licenses, removal of trapping set-backs, or through unethical means like a bill that would allow trappers to be reimbursed for expenses using private money. Fortunately, we were able to kill three bad wolf bills: one that would have allowed night hunting, one that would have removed trapping set-backs, and one that would have unethically allowed trappers to be reimbursed for expenses using private money. We have also been working on two pieces of legislation directly impacting birds. The first is an Environmental Quality Council attempt to improve Montana's "bird-dog" hunting laws. HB 29 improves existing statute greatly, but will require more work as the state tries to understand potential pressures from large outfits that train hunting dogs in eastern Montana. Much more of our attention is focused on SB 299, revisions to the Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Act. We are working to include provisions for conservation of the iconic sagebrush species, and to ensure continuation of the collaborative nature of the Montana Sage-grouse conservation efforts put forth since the 2013 Governor's Sage-grouse Advisory Council. Many of the bad provisions within SB 299 were removed after the first hearing, however there is still work to do.

As we move forward and continue to defend our state from attacks on our wildlife, we will continue to work for positive outcomes. There is just under one month left, and we look forward to making as much of a difference as we can. Thank you for your support in this effort!

THE SESSION SO FAR



We have testified on 58 bills

26 good bills

15 have been tabled, nine are still alive and two have been signed.

32 bad bills

15 have been tabled, 15 are still alive, one resolution has been filed. We are in the process of writing one veto letter.

Cumulatively

23 have been tabled, 19 have moved chambers, one has been signed by the Governor, and the rest are still being debated.

Wolf Regulations Also Undergoing Federal Changes

As part of our mission, Montana Audubon supports all of Montana's native wildlife from diverse bird species, to top predators and big-game animals, to insect pollinators. Few wildlife species in Montana strike up much controversy. When it comes to predators, this can change. However, the subject of wolves is another matter entirely.

Montana's most recent population estimates put the state as having at least 125 packs and 63 breeding pairs of wolves, totaling between 633 – 1,000 individuals. It's difficult to believe that in 1980, there were only 10 individuals, but recovery efforts begun in the mid-nineties have produced exceptional results. Under state management the regulated harvest of wolves is permitted, and now eight years after federal delisting, Montana's wolf population appears to be stabilizing; with a concomitant and welcome reduction in livestock loss.

This year Montana's state legislators were busy with nearly a dozen proposals regarding wolf management, and especially the hunting and trapping of the species. In many ways, this is due to the success of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in bringing wolves back to the state. On March 14, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service made a proposal to remove ESA protections for all gray wolves, ~6,000 in number in the U.S, returning them to state management. While Northern Rocky Mountain wolves, including those in Montana, are currently under state management, wolves in the Western Great Lakes and Southwest regions are not. Although the Mexican Gray wolf is not included in this proposal, many view gray wolf populations in the Southern Rockies, Pacific Northwest, and some portions of California as not adequately recovered to sustain a change in management. While we want to see wolves recovered nationwide, we realize progress may be slow for certain population segments, where adequate habitat and human tolerance may be in short supply. When gray wolves are delisted across the country, they will still be actively managed. Like the Peregrine Falcon or Bald Eagle, recovered species that are removed from the ESA are monitored by the USFWS for five years following the decision. As we try to understand the details of this proposal you can follow along, and comment too!

The proposal is open for comments in the Federal Register until May 14, 2019. Information and how to comment may be found at: www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery.



Adult Programs at the Center

If you're familiar with the Montana Audubon Center, you probably think that all of our students are young people attending school-sponsored field trips. But did you know that we also have a growing series of education programs for adults? Outreach to adults has always been a part of our mix at the Center. Over the last year, though, we've developed a more consistent schedule of recurring programs and a number of well-received special events – several of them selling out with a waiting list. These programs have allowed us to reach an audience of younger adults and retirees without children at home, and the growth in number of participants has also tracked with an increase in social media followers, newsletter subscribers, and annual memberships to the Center. Here is a quick overview:

Recurring, consistent programs

As one would expect with an Audubon organization, the anchor of our adult program schedule is a regular monthly Morning Bird Stroll. Attendance to these events averages 8–12 participants, which are designed for beginning-level birders. The strolls are a great opportunity to partner with the local Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, and to keep regular track through Montana eBird of what we're observing at the Center. Among the sparrows, finches, and waterfowl, it seems that every month there is at least one surprise species (e.g. Indigo Bunting and Bonaparte's Gull).

We also have a monthly "Coffee Walk with a Naturalist" on varied natural history themes: participants

drink complimentary bird-friendly coffee and join in a casual walkabout to learn more about insects, flowers, edible plants, or other subjects.

Special events with targeted appeal

Who could say no to walking around at night to look for bugs while drinking local craft beer? The "Bugs and Brews" program last summer was one of our most popular. Similarly, the night hikes, owl prowls, and bat walks have been consistently at capacity, with 40-50 participants per event. Sipping on locally crafted wine while learning journal sketching techniques from a pro, attending an author event or learning how to include native plants in your backyard landscaping: each program allows us to attract new faces and broaden our engagement with the community. Heather Bilden, our Community Programs Lead, is especially excited about our program diversity. "We are finding new ways to engage people with learning about nature – combining science, art, research, and exercise."

Immersive-level programs to go deeper

The Montana Audubon Center is proud to be the Billings-area home of the statewide Montana Master Naturalist program – a 40-hour, college-level survey of area natural landscapes and naturalist skill development. We work with the Montana Natural History Center in Missoula to provide formal certification and collaborate with organizations in other communities to build a statewide network of providers.

Surveying moth and other nocturnal insect species at the Center.



Montana Audubon File Photo



Birding along the Yellowstone River near the Montana Audubon Center.

Participants in the class are also encouraged to put their new knowledge to use as volunteers for the Center. A participant in last year's Spring class recently told us, "The Master Naturalist program has truly enriched my life. I am more observant now than I ever was. It is so rewarding to know even more about the living things I share the environment with." Our spring 2019 class is now a few weeks in and is full, with twelve students.

Strong community partnerships

Our adult programs, as with everything we do at the Center, exists within a strong, interconnected community. In addition to those already mentioned, we have partnered with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, MSU-Billings Outdoor Adventure Leadership program, the City of Billings Forestry Division, This House of Books, among others. Upcoming programs will involve the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation and the Owl Research Institute. Participants in the adult programs also bring their professional connections and experiences with them, which further expands our community.

Save the Dates!

The Norm Schoenthal Field Lab

at the Audubon Center was dedicated in 2009. Since that time, our programs to connect people with the natural world and further Montana Audubon's conservation mission have grown by leaps and bounds. Join us, along with our partner the Yellowstone River Parks Association to celebrate ten years of progress on **Saturday, July 20.**

Evening Under the Big Sky, our annual Center fundraiser, will be held this year on **Friday, September 13.**

Program success is a result of groundwork laid during the Fall of 2017, when former Education Director Heather Bilden transitioned into her current role. Since then, she has put her organizational skills and extensive natural history knowledge into building all of the Center's Community Programs. If you're interested in the Montana Audubon adult programs, read more below!

Upcoming events

If you are in Billings or visiting in the next few months, keep an eye out for these programs:

- **Earth Day Celebration**
April 27, 8:30am – 12:30pm
- **Rain Barrel Workshop with the Montana Wildlife Federation**
May 11, 9:00am – 12:00 noon:
- **"Saving Our Stars: An Evening with John Ashley"**
June 15, 7:00 – 8:30pm
- **Coffee Walk with a Naturalist**
First Saturdays, 9:30 – 11:00am
- **Morning Bird Stroll**
Second Saturdays, 8:30 – 10:00am

BECOME A MEMBER OF MONTANA AUDUBON THROUGH OUR ANNUAL CONSERVATION FUND

Your membership helps support one of the most effective conservation organizations in Montana.

Enjoy a year of benefits including timely conservation updates, invites to special events, our biannual print newsletter and the peace of mind knowing that you're actively contributing to the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitats across our vast state.

For more information
email info@mtaudubon.org
or call 406-443-3949.



White-breasted
Nuthatch



Amy Seaman

Montana Audubon Grants Support Montana's Birds

Each year Montana Audubon awards small grants from the Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana, a permanent endowment. For the last 24 years, these grants have supported research and education projects directed toward wildlife and/or wildlife habitat. The 2019 grant project awards are as follows:

Restoring Trumpeter Swans and Educating Kids in the Blackfoot Valley

The Blackfoot Challenge will create a community of young citizens engaged in restoration and conservation of Trumpeter Swans and their wetland habitats in the Blackfoot Watershed.

Impacts of Conifer Removal on the Reproductive Output of Sagebrush-Obligate Songbirds

The U of M (Missoula) Cooperative Wildlife Unit will establish study plots in southwest Montana to assess the impact of conifer removal on nesting success of species such as Brewer's Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee and Sage Thrasher. Quantifying this impact will help determine population trajectories and help guide conservation efforts.



Bob Martinka



Mike Chapman

Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir Wildlife Viewing Blind

Last Chance Audubon Society will create a public wildlife viewing/photography blind at the reservoir, which is a haven for many species of waterfowl and shorebirds, nesting Great Horned Owl, and Great Blue Herons in an established rookery.

Avian Profiles – Sevenmile Curriculum and Outreach Development

Prickly Pear Land Trust will develop an educational program to raise excitement about and inform student groups, volunteers and visitors about local bird life and the importance of riparian conservation in Helena's 'backyard'.



Join us on the adventure of a lifetime!

iBIRDING CUBA!

March 1–11, 2020



Merlin Birding & Nature Tours, LLC is partnering with Holbrook Travel to offer this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Cuba's protected natural areas, geographic isolation, and limited development create an ideal destination for birders. The country's diverse habitats support 360 avian species, with more than two dozen Cuban endemics.

This 11-day excursion will provide opportunities to observe Cuba's 27 specialties, including Cuban Trogon, Zapata Wren, Cuban Tody, Bee Hummingbird and Oriente Warbler while exploring dry scrub, mangrove, freshwater wetlands, upland forest and coastal ecosystems. We'll meet with Cuban conservationists to discuss various projects and government policies, and discover the rich history and culture for which the country is so well known.

For more information or to register visit: www.merlinbirding.com/cuba. You may also call trip leader Steve Eshbaugh (406-570-2428).

This high-demand tour is limited to 12 participants.

Star Volunteers

These Montana Audubon volunteers have offered time, expertise, passion, elbow grease, advice, and a sense of humor as they've helped with recent events, projects, programs, and more. Thank you!

Montana Audubon Center Volunteers

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MA Board
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Steve Regele
YVAS President
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Roger Williams
Sandra Abraham

Debbie Miller
Alex Garner
Mark Dunford
Morgan Sevier
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Groups

Yellowstone River
Parks Association
Leadership Billings
Riverside Builders Club
RMC Freshman
Day of Service
COR Enterprises
West High School
Life Skills Class
Skyview High School
Life Skills Class
Rimrock Foundation
Billings National
Honor Society
Fledglings Nature
Preschool Families

Nominate a Conservation Leader for a 2019 Montana Audubon Award



Nominations are now being accepted for Montana Audubon's 2019 awards. Consider nominating someone you know for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, or a Lifetime Achievement award! Nomination forms can be found on our website: mtaudubon.org/about/awards/.

The deadline for nominations is May 20, 2018. Please submit via email (preferred) to info@mtaudubon.org or by mail to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Award winners will be announced at our Bird Festival banquet in Glasgow on June 8.

Award Categories:

Conservationist of the Year. For an individual who has provided significant wildlife conservation achievement in Montana.

Environmental Educator of the Year. For a person who has shown outstanding achievement in educating others about birds, other wildlife, and conservation of habitat.

Citizen Scientist of the Year. For a person contributing significantly to our knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats through monitoring and observations.

Lifetime Achievement Award. For an Audubon volunteer who has dedicated extraordinary effort, time and energy to shape the activities and successes of a local Audubon Chapter and/or Montana Audubon.

2018

ANNUAL REPORT

Thanks to you and other generous supporters, Montana Audubon continues to positively impact the conservation of native birds, other wildlife and their habitats across Montana. Thank you for your exceptional level of support for our vital conservation work!

We are fortunate to have permanent endowments at both the Montana Community Foundation (MCF) and Billings Community Foundation (BCF). MCF manages three endowment accounts with one benefiting bird distribution information and special projects, one for general support of Montana Audubon's conservation programs, and the George and Laurene Engler Montana Audubon Conservation Fund, providing support for all Montana Audubon programs. BCF manages three separate endowment accounts—for the Montana Audubon Center, our Public Policy program, and for general support of Montana Audubon. We invite you to consider these options of giving to help ensure the bright future of Montana's native birds and wild places. For more information please contact Norane Freistadt, Development Director, at 406-443-3949.

Statement of Financial Position 12-month Fiscal Year Ending 9-30-18

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 548,867
Board Designated Endowment	\$ 969,142
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 22,132
Permanently Restricted Net Assets	\$ 51,744
Total Net Assets	\$ 1,591,885



Revenue

● Earned Income	\$ 349,140
○ Grants & Contracts	\$ 311,041
○ Contributions	\$ 216,828
○ Investment Income	\$ 46,738
Total	\$ 923,747



Expenses

○ Programs	\$ 654,719
● Administrative	\$ 151,806
● Fundraising	\$ 41,642
Total	\$ 848,167

Montana Audubon is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. This financial information is drawn from audited financial statements by the accounting firm Douglas Wilson & Company, PC.



Bob Martinika

Thank You for Supporting Montana Audubon

MONTANA AUDUBON DEPENDS ON the generous gifts of individual donors who support our mission to protect Montana's bird species, wildlife, and habitat. The following people contributed to a variety of projects from April 2018 through March 2019. Due to space constraints in this publication, we have listed donors with gifts totalling \$100 or more. We also express our sincere appreciation to the additional 500 supporters who gave gifts under \$100 this year.

\$2,500 & Up

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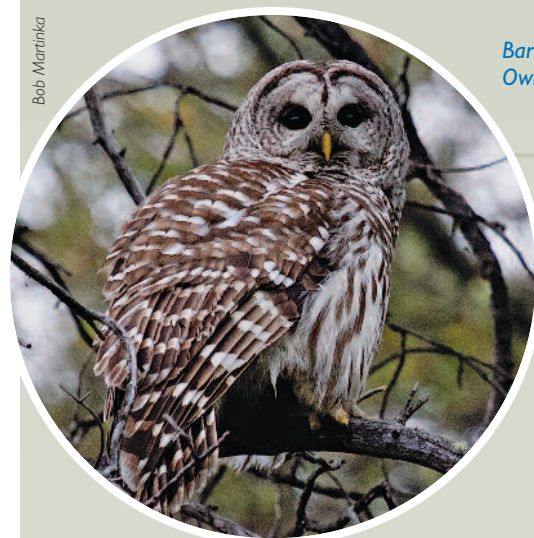
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[more...](#)



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Julie Flammang
Adrienne Fleckman
Mark & Ethel Fogelsong
Dick & Jan Franklin
William & Patty Fraser

MEMORIAL GIFTS

We are deeply grateful to
those who have made generous
gifts and lasting tributes in
memory of:

Natalie Dietrich
George & Laurene Engler
Lorraine Hummel
Pat Larmoyeux
Jim Manning
Mary Munsel
Robert & Rachel Senner
Dwayne Zimmerman



Snow Geese

Please consider
including Montana
Audubon in your estate
plans to ensure a
bright future for
Montana's birds and
other wildlife.

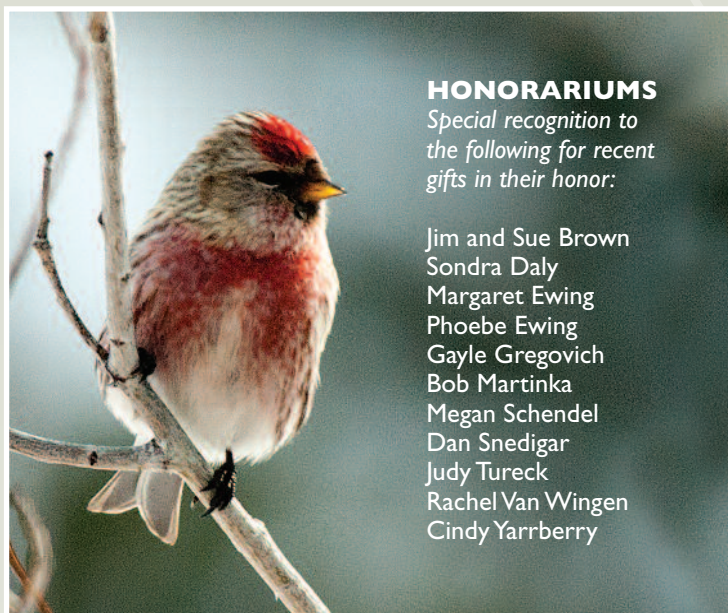
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Please note this list does
not include festival, tour,
or event registration fees,
nor does it include sales,
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endowment giving.



Common Redpoll

Special Thanks

With sincere gratitude, we thank the following Audubon chapters, foundations, corporations, businesses, agencies and organizations for their support and partnership over the past year. Their contributions make our work possible.

Montana-based Audubon Chapters

Bitterroot Audubon Society
Five Valleys Audubon Society
Flathead Audubon Society
Last Chance Audubon Society
Mission Mountain Audubon Society
Pintler Audubon Society
Sacajawea Audubon Society
Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Society
Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

Foundations

AGL Foundation
Billings Community Foundation
Bozeman Area Community Foundation
Cadeau Foundation
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
David F. and Sara K. Weston Fund
Don and Carol Roberts Foundation
Harry L. Willett Foundation
L.E.A.W. Family Foundation
Margaret V. Ping Foundation
Mary Alice Fortin Foundation
Mary Alice Fortin Foundation for Youth Enrichment
Montana Community Foundation
The Cinnabar Foundation
The Fanwood Foundation
Whitefish Community Foundation
Wolf Creek Charitable Foundation

Corporate/Business Donations & Grants

Abbott Valley Homestead
Allegra Print & Imaging
Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Billings Association of Realtors
Birds and Beasleys
Bison Engineering, Inc.
Buchanan Capital LLC
Children's Clinic, P.C.
Cladis Investment Advisory LLC
Crowley Fleck Attorneys
Cunningham Crop Insurance
Dovetail Designs & Millwork, Inc.
ExxonMobil Billings Refinery
Hanson Chemical, Inc.
J Bar L Ranches
McCall Development, Inc.
Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (MDU)
National Audubon Society
Nemont Telephone Cooperative
NorthWestern Energy
Paillao
Phillips66
Rimrock Foundation
River Crossing Real Estate
The Base Camp
Valley Bank of Helena
Wild Birds Unlimited of Billings
Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic, P.C.
Yellowstone Electric Co.

Agency Partners

City of Billings
MT Dept of Administration, Title and Registration Bureau
MT Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
MT Office of Outdoor Recreation
Pompeys Pillar National Monument
Smithsonian Institution
U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Montana-Dakotas
U.S. Forest Service, Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest
U.S. Forest Service, Custer Gallatin National Forest
Yellowstone Conservation District

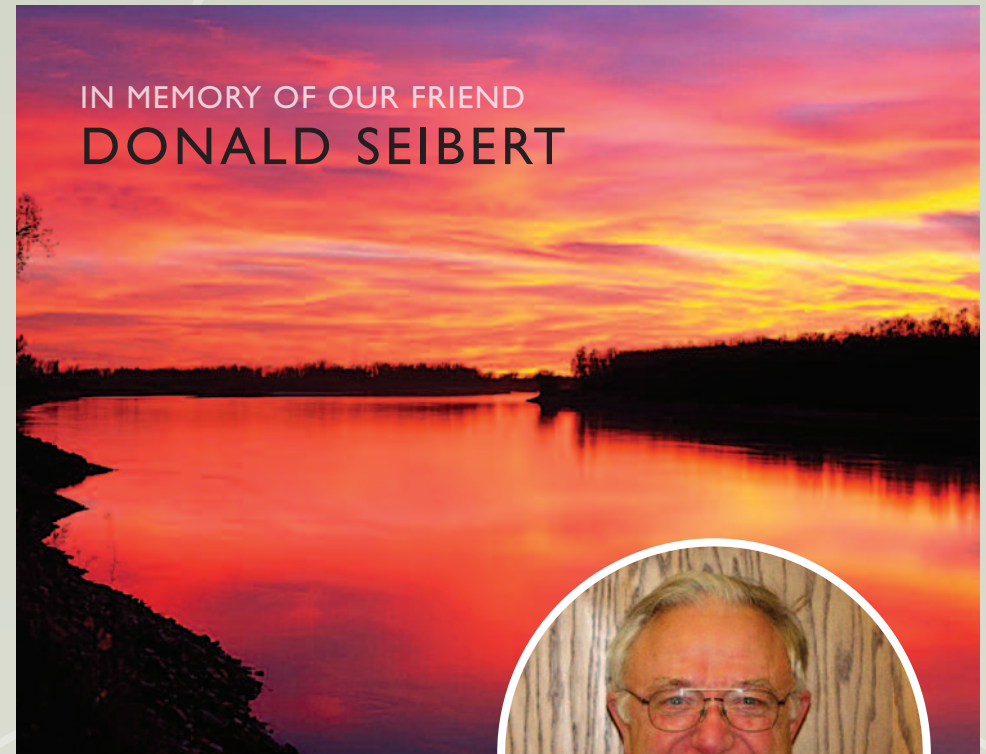
Organizations and Educational Institutions

American Prairie Reserve
Big Sky Economic Development Authority
Billings Catholic Schools
Billings Junior Woman's Club
Billings Public Schools
Billings Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Billings Yellowstone Kiwanis
Blue Creek Elementary School District #3
Canyon Creek School District #4
Eagle Mount Billings
Elder Grove School
Elysian School District #23
Friendship House of Christian Service
Glacier National Park Conservancy
Huntley Project Schools
Joliet Public Schools
Lockwood Schools
Meadowlark Audubon Society
Montana Conservation Corps
Montana Indian Education for All
Montana Land Reliance
Montana Pikemasters
Montana State University
Montana Wildlife Federation
Owl Research Institute
Raptor View Research Institute
RARE
Shepherd Public Schools
State Employees Combined Giving Campaign
The Wildlife Society, Montana Chapter
United Way of Yellowstone County
University of Montana
Yellowstone Academy, School District No. 58
Yellowstone River Parks Association

American Avocet



Bob Martinika



John Lambing

IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIEND DONALD SEIBERT



Montana Audubon lost a great friend with the passing of Donald Seibert in late February.

His distinguished 30-year career with the Bureau of Land Management and his extensive knowledge and interest in western wildlife conservation issues made him a perfect fit for Montana Audubon's Board of Directors, where he served for nine years. He also played a pivotal role in creating and leading an active Development Committee, successfully advocating for the expansion of our endowment funds and encouraging members to financially support our work.

Donald took his volunteer roles seriously and Montana Audubon was lucky to be the recipient of his enduring commitment.

He was a great personal friend to many of us—as well as an advocate for Montana Audubon, the greater world of conservation, and global perceptive thinking. Anyone who had the opportunity for an in-depth conversation with Donald knew that his calculated reasoning was a delightful journey that would always return you spot-on to the point.

We'll miss Donald's passion for wildlife and habitat conservation, as well as his invaluable wisdom, humor, gentle spirit, and insight.

A memorial service will be held in Billings, Montana, in the spring.

wings across the big sky

20TH ANNUAL MONTANA AUDUBON BIRD FESTIVAL

June 7–9, 2019

Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, Montana

We're delighted to bring Montana Audubon's 20th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival to the stunning glaciated plains region of northeastern Montana.

We are also pleased to welcome the American Prairie Reserve, our lead sponsor and festival partner!

Registration opens on Friday, June 7 at 3:00 p.m., so plan to sign in and enjoy Friday evening's dinner buffet and our keynote address by Sean Gerrity, American Prairie Reserve's Founder and Managing Director. Mr. Gerrity, a Great Falls native, is committed to wildlife conservation and hopes to inspire others to use creative solutions to our world's conservation challenges.

The featured events are the field trips, planned to a variety of locations that highlight native prairie habitats that support important and uncommon grassland bird species. And of course, fun festival events like our "Cakes for Conservation" dessert fundraiser, Nature Adventure Tour silent auction, and an on-site raffle drawing are lined up. There will be an informative Saturday afternoon presentation with three perspectives on conservation work currently being done in this important Montana region.

**REGISTER NOW—
the field trips fill fast!**
We make it easy: register
online at www.mtaudubon.org,
call the Montana Audubon
office in Helena 406-443-3949,
or e-mail info@mtaudubon.org
to request a registration
form.

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