

2019 CITIZEN SCIENCE/RESEARCH REPORT

Montana Audubon continues to be a leader in using citizen science to advance conservation in Montana. By leveraging funds from entities like the Glacier National Park Conservancy, the Sargent Endowment, LEAW Family Foundation, the Cadeau Foundation, and generous donors, we have built durable conservation partnerships centered around a dynamic and growing volunteer network. Specifically, in fiscal year 2018-2019 we leveraged support to:

- ✪ Train 11 volunteers, five GNP biological technicians, and a lead biologist from Parks Canada in Waterton (where surveys will begin in 2020) to survey for Black Swifts in their unique waterfall habitat. Over three years we have trained 72 individuals.
- ✪ Monitor Black Swifts for seven weeks in GNP, helping support the first year of a nest phenology survey, and helping to discover 3 previously unrecorded occupied falls.
- ✪ Expand Black Swift research outside of GNP, fielding a team of two full-time technicians. This team surveyed twenty-one waterfalls throughout the Bitterroot, Cabinet-Yaak, and Beartooth Plateau, finding one previously unrecorded occupied waterfall.
- ✪ Collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to develop a citizen-based wetland bird/waterfowl survey, planned for spring 2020, in the lower Ruby River Watershed, to support permanent land preservation.
- ✪ Collaborate with the University of Montana Bird Ecology Lab to train technicians, and survey over a dozen Madison and Missouri River cottonwood sites for song-birds, species of concern, vegetation, and invasive plants.
- ✪ Collaborate with National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) and biologists to survey colonial waterbirds at four priority sites. This effort discovered Montana's fifth known nesting colony of American White Pelicans at Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge.
- ✪ Collaborate with MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks to survey for Chimney Swifts throughout eastern Montana. We trained volunteers in Glasgow, Billings, and Forsyth, leading to the discovery of eight new occupied chimneys and involving twenty-two volunteers and biological technicians.
- ✪ Continue Long-billed Curlew surveys in the Mission and Helena Valleys. In 2019, we continued with just the second year of Blackfoot Valley surveys, and scouted new survey areas in valleys to the south.
- ✪ Fill 3 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in eastern MT grasslands.



11 volunteers attended training near Seeley MT, July 2019. Technician Jack Toriello leads the crew in assessing habitat – Photo by Jeff Van Tine



Biologist Helena Mahoney, from Parks' Canada, conducts her second training survey (left), and our team of technicians, Danny Stark and Caroline Provost, strike out across western Montana (right).



A University of Montana Bird Ecology Lab staffer surveying vegetation along the Madison River.



An image capturing first time evidence of American White Pelicans nesting (the arrow points at the chick) at Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge, captured by Caroline Provost during surveys.