

MAY 31 – JUNE 2, 2024  
CARROLL COLLEGE  
HELENA, MONTANA

23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

*wings*   
**MONTANA  
AUDUBON**

# *across the big sky*

*Montana's Premier Birding Festival*



**Registration  
Now Open!**

Lazuli Bunting Bob Martinka

The Sleeping Giant John Lambing

# welcome friends

Montana Audubon is pleased to present the 23rd annual *Wings Across the Big Sky*, Montana's premier birding festival, May 31–June 2. This year's event is based in beautiful Helena, Montana's state capital, and is co-hosted by the local Last Chance Audubon chapter.

Festival headquarters are located at Carroll College. Registration starts at 3:00 pm on Friday, followed by dinner and a keynote address you won't want to miss!

This year's field trips will explore all the local area has to offer, from cottonwood-lined creeks to conifer-forest mountain slopes to limestone cliffs. Don't miss your chance to sign up for a paddling trip, a visit to a local bird banding station, a special trip focused on local birds & botany, visits to conservation areas not open to the public, and more.

Read on for more information, including festival highlights, field trip schedule, and lodging information. We hope you have a great time birding with us!

Yours in Conservation,



Larry Berrin, Executive Director

# schedule

## FRIDAY, MAY 31

- 3:00 pm** Registration Opens
- 4:00 pm** Social with Cash Bar
- 6:00 pm** Welcome; Buffet Dinner  
Keynote presentation by Tiffany Kersten

## SATURDAY, JUNE 1

- 5:45–7:00 am** Buffet Breakfast
- 6:15 am** A Field Trips Depart
- 6:45 am** B Field Trips Depart
- 7:00 am** C Field Trips Depart
- 2:00 pm** Field Trips Return (approximate)
- 3:00–5:00 pm** Snacks and refreshments  
Bird Science Lectures  
(times and presenters TBD)
- 4:00 pm** Social with Cash Bar
- 5:00 pm** Buffet Dinner  
State of the Birds Address by Larry Berrin  
Conservationist of the Year Award  
Live Auction

## SUNDAY, JUNE 2

- 5:45–7:00 am** Buffet Breakfast
- 6:15 am** A Field Trips Depart
- 6:45 am** B Field Trips Depart
- 7:00 am** C Field Trips Depart  
Sunday field trips do NOT return to Carroll College

# presentations

## FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 31

### KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: BIRDIE BIG YEAR – ELEVATING WOMEN BIRDERS



*Tiffany Kersten* is a Wisconsin native who now resides in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Hooked on birds since age 12, she graduated from Northland College with a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology. She has spent fifteen years of working in conservation and environmental education with organizations including the US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Cape May Bird Observatory. After completing a Lower 48 States Big Year in 2021, she founded her own company, Nature Ninja Birding Tours.

### About her presentation

Tiffany Kersten didn't set out to do a Big Year, but after a series of unanticipated and serendipitous events, she suddenly found herself amidst one. As a sexual assault survivor, she spent 2021 traveling to all corners of the Lower 48 States, tallying birds and gifting personal safety alarms to women she met along the way. Her goal was to see 700 species, and to raise awareness of women's safety in the outdoors. She ended up surpassing her goal and setting a new record, of 726 species. In her presentation, Tiffany will lead us through the fear, empowerment, struggles, and healing that all played vital roles in the personal growth she experienced on this wild adventure.

Learn more about Tiffany and Nature Ninja Birding Tours on her website: [tiffanykersten.blogspot.com](http://tiffanykersten.blogspot.com).

## CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

If you have registered for the festival and need to cancel, please notify Montana Audubon as soon as possible.

Refunds of 50% will be issued if notice of cancellation is received a minimum of 14 days in advance, by May 17. Refunds will not be issued after May 17. Contact us if you'd like to discuss the option of converting your registration fee to a donation toward our mission.

Montana Audubon reserves the right to cancel the festival or individual field trips. If Montana Audubon cancels the festival, you will be notified and a full refund will be issued within two (2) weeks of the cancellation date.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 1

STATE OF THE BIRDS

Larry Berrin, Montana Audubon Executive Director

Founded in 1976, Montana Audubon works to promote appreciation, knowledge, and conservation of Montana's native birds, other wildlife, and natural ecosystems and to safeguard biological diversity for current and future generations. We work to meet our mission through our core areas of science, conservation, policy, and education. Join our Executive Director as he shares the state of our critical work to protect bird populations and conserve native wildlife habitat in Montana.



SATURDAY EVENING, FOLLOWING PRESENTATION

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE... DON'T MISS THIS 'LAST CHANCE' TO SUPPORT MONTANA'S WILDLIFE

The closing Festival banquet celebrations on Saturday evening will feature a live auction featuring specially curated baskets and some fabulous trips, including a 3-day personalized birding tour in Maine!

Proceeds will be split between Montana Audubon and local host chapter Last Chance Audubon. Thank you to the local business, partners, landowners, and individuals who generously donated these trips and auction items!

Last Chance Audubon

Formed in 1971, Last Chance Audubon is the local National Audubon Society chapter in Helena. Their nearly 400 members work to promote understanding, respect, and enjoyment of birds and the natural world through education, habitat protection, and environmental advocacy.

Last Chance Audubon Society



FESTIVAL HEADQUARTERS

Carroll College
1601 N Benton Ave. Helena, MT 59625

Please note: All breakfasts and box lunch pick ups are at the Delta Hotel.

LODGING OPTIONS

On Campus

Stay on the Carroll College campus in Trinity Hall for \$43.95 per person per dorm, plus \$17 for bedding and linens. Email khogan@carroll.edu for more information and to make a reservation.

Hotels

Montana Audubon has reserved a room block with special Festival rates. Refer to Montana Audubon Bird Festival when making the reservation.

Delta Hotels Helena Colonial

2301 Colonial Dr.
406-443-2100
Rate: \$159/night (plus tax)
Room rate and block expire on April 30



Visit the Festival website for additional location and travel information. mtaudubon.org/events/wings

# field trips

Please review each description and choose your trip preferences, using the codes provided, on the registration form, marking your first, second and third choices for both Saturday and Sunday.

The majority of trips are offered on both days, however, some may only be offered on Saturday or Sunday. See the Field Trip Key below for the schedule.

Sack lunches are provided for each trip. Saturday trips will return to Helena around 2:00 pm, while Sunday trips will not return as a group.

## What to Bring

Good walking/hiking shoes, water bottle, sun protection, raingear, binoculars, bird guide, camera, and other personal items.

## FIELD TRIP KEY

### Departure Times

**A trips depart at 6:15 am**

**B trips depart at 6:45 am**

**C trips depart at 7:00 am**

### SATURDAY 6:15 am

Black Sandy State Park & Hauser Dam	SatA1
Elkhorn Mountains/ McClellan Creek Rd. 2	SatA2
Hilger Hereford Ranch/ Gates of the Mountains	SatA3
Phantom Springs Ranch/ Little Prickly Pear Creek	SatA4
Sieben Ranch	SatA5
Stemple Pass Rd. to Lincoln	SatA6
Vigilante CG/Trout Creek	SatA7
Warm Springs Ponds Complex	SatA8
Birds & Botany	SatA9

### SATURDAY 6:45 am

Austin Rd./Skelly Gulch	SatB1
Helena Regulating Reservoir	SatB2
Lake Helena WMA Paddle	SatB3
Lewis & Clark Co. Fairgrounds & Spring Meadow State Park	SatB4
Sevenmile Creek	SatB5
Tenmile Creek/ Moose Creek/ Lazyman Gulch	SatB6

### SATURDAY 7:00 am

K-Mart Wetlands & Nature Park	SatC1
Upper Prickly Pear FAS & Stansfield Lake	SatC2
Spring Meadow Bird Banding & Lake Trail	SatC3

### SUNDAY 6:15 am

Black Sandy State Park & Hauser Dam	SunA1
Elkhorn Mountains/ McClellan Creek Rd.	SunA2
Hilger Hereford Ranch/ Gates of the Mountains	SunA3
Phantom Springs Ranch/ Little Prickly Pear Creek	SunA4
Sieben Ranch	SunA5
Stemple Pass Rd. to Lincoln	SunA6
Vigilante CG/Trout Creek	SunA7
Warm Springs Ponds Complex	SunA8
Beartooth WMA	SunA9
Blackfoot Valley-Cutoff Rd./ Brown's Lake	SunA10
Canyon Ferry WMA	SunA11
Chain of Lakes-Seeley/Swan	SunA12
Headwaters State Park/Old Town Rd./Central Park Pond	SunA13

### SUNDAY 6:45 am

Austin Rd./Skelly Gulch	SunB1
Helena Regulating Reservoir	SunB2
Lake Helena WMA-Paddle	SunB3
Lewis & Clark Co. Fairgrounds & Spring Meadow State Park	SunB4
Sevenmile Creek	SunB5
Tenmile Creek/ Moose Creek/ Lazyman Gulch	SunB6

### SUNDAY 7:00 am

K-Mart Wetlands & Nature Park	SunC1
Upper Prickly Pear FAS & Stansfield Lake	SunC2

## DIFFICULTY RATINGS

Easy	Easy+	Moderate	Mod/Difficult	Paddling
Driving with some walking – under one mile total.	Walking on mostly level terrain up to two miles.	Driving with longer walks possible – two miles+	Mostly walking. Uneven and off-trail terrain possible. Under three miles.	Flat water canoe/kayak paddling experience needed.



**NOTE:** Field trips with this symbol require each participant to have a Montana FWP Conservation License for entry. If you have a current Montana hunting or fishing license of any kind, you do not need to get an additional Conservation License.

[fwp.mt.gov/buyandapply/conservation-license](http://fwp.mt.gov/buyandapply/conservation-license)

## BLACK SANDY STATE PARK & HAUSER DAM

SatA1 • Sun A1

Moderate/Difficult

This trip explores Hauser Lake and Dam. Habitats include lake, river, scattered conifers, and rocky canyon slopes. Likely birds: three species of nuthatches, Canyon Wren (a specialty), White-throated Swift, American Dipper, Belted Kingfisher, Common Merganser, Clark's Nutcracker, other conifer-associated species. The trip will stop at Black Sandy State Park for a short walk around the campground. Participants then take a short drive to Hauser Dam. A short hike (~0.5 mi) across the dam and downriver is the best chance for Canyon Wren. The trail is a bit steep and rocky as it descends to the river, and there are some scree areas to cross along the river. This is very doable for most, but does require special attention to the trail.

## ELKHORN MOUNTAINS / MCCLELLAN CREEK RD.

SatA2 • SunA2

Easy

This trip explores McClelland Creek and the northern portion of the Elkhorn Mountains. It is a combination of driving and short walks along roads and trails. A visit to the Strawberry Fire Lookout is a treat where Yellow-rumped Warblers and Mountain Chickadees can be found. Initially habitat will be mostly coniferous through the Elkhorns. Grassland and agriculture dominate the lower end of the tour. Birds likely to be encountered include three species of nuthatch, several flycatcher species (including Olive-sided Flycatcher), Red Crossbill, Clark's Nutcracker, and five or six woodpecker/sapsucker species. If we're lucky a Northern Pygmy-Owl will give us a "toot"!

Bob Martinka



Northern Pygmy Owl

## HILGER HEREFORD RANCH / GATES OF THE MOUNTAINS

SatA3 • SunA3

Easy+

Locally-owned Hilger Ranch abuts the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness Area along Holter Lake and the Missouri River. The ranch is under conservation easement, accessible by permission only. The trip accesses the ranch near the marina and heads along a grassland/sage/ Ponderosa bench overlooking the lake. Along with grassland regulars, we may find Pinyon Jay, Brewer's Sparrow and Lewis's Woodpecker. The dirt road continues to a lakeside riparian area, where Nashville Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler and American Redstart have been seen. The group will survey some of this riparian area on foot, and then continue upriver where limestone cliffs overlook the river. White-throated Swift and Canyon Wren are possible here. Watch for raptors overhead! Waterfowl is likely all along the river. The tour is combination driving and walking, but carpooling in 4WD vehicles is required. Hiking under 2 miles.

## PHANTOM SPRINGS RANCH / LITTLE PRICKLY PEAR CREEK

SatA4 • SunA4

Moderate

This trip will follow Little Prickly Pear Creek from Phantom Springs downstream to the Sieben exit on I-15. Willows dominate the canyon, giving way to cottonwood gallery near the end. The trip will begin at Phantom Springs, a private ranch. The ranch includes a spectacular wetland, a riparian area that follows Little Prickly Pear Creek, and excellent grassland slopes with rock outcroppings. Veery, Rock Wren, Sora, Sandhill Crane and a variety of warblers are possible. The trip extends into Prickly Pear Creek Canyon which includes shrubby and coniferous uplands and limestone cliffs where one can expect Dusky Flycatcher, Spotted and Green-tailed Towhee, Lazuli Bunting and Lark Sparrow. The trip is a mix of driving and walking.

## SIEBEN RANCH

SatA5 • SunA5

Moderate

The Sieben Ranch is one of the largest ranches (115,000+ acres) in Montana. The working sheep ranch is owned by the Sieben-Baucus family. The trip begins along Little Prickly Pear Creek near the Sieben exit on I-15, surveying hayfields for sparrows and Bobolink before a short hike on inactive railroad tracks along the creek. Watch for Calliope Hummingbird near the bridge! Violet-green Swallow and White-throated

Swift may be found near the canyon cliffs. The trip will then access the ranch and habitat is dominated by grassland, sage, and Ponderosa pine. Raptors, Green-tailed Towhee, and Long-billed Curlew are likely. The road meanders down into the Big Sheep Creek drainage where north-facing slopes yield to Douglas fir stands favored by Cassin's Vireo. The creek bottom is filled with warblers, thrushes, catbirds and flycatchers. Participants will walk ~2 miles roundtrip in hopes of "drumming" up Ruffed Grouse.

## STEMPLE PASS RD. TO LINCOLN

SatA6 • SunA6

Easy+

This trip birds along Stemple Pass Rd, up Virginia Creek and over the Continental Divide, and into Lincoln. Willows along Canyon Creek give way to cottonwoods and aspens along Virginia Creek, and eventually conifer forests near the Continental Divide. After crossing the pass, we follow Poorman Creek, passing through cottonwood and Ponderosa pine forests into grasslands. Expect Willow, Dusky and Hammond's Flycatcher, as well as Yellow, Yellow-rumped, and MacGillivray's Warbler. In the grassy areas, Northern Harrier and Long-billed Curlew, along with Song and Lincoln's Sparrow. In the conifers watch for Western Tanager, Warbling Vireo, Cassin's Finch, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, and Swainson's and Hermit Thrush. Brushy hillsides may offer Lazuli Bunting, Spotted Towhee and Vesper Sparrow. With luck we may spot a Pileated Woodpecker or Cassin's Vireo!

## VIGILANTE CAMPGROUND / TROUT CREEK



SatA7 • SunA7

Moderate

The trip begins in the Vigilante Campground area, the go-to spot for breeding Ovenbird. The habitat is primarily Douglas fir with shrubby understory. Trout Creek offers prime riparian birding, and the trail follows the stream through towering limestone cliff faces. White-throated Swift and Violet-green Swallow nest in the cliffs. Bird species include Hammond's and Western Flycatcher, Ruffed Grouse, MacGillivray's Warbler, Veery and possibly Golden-crowned Kinglet. The hike is relatively easy with minimal elevation gain, round trip less than 2 miles. The trip ends with a visit to Vista Da Serra Ranch (a Prickly Pear Land Trust conservation easement) where hosts Tia and Derek Nelson will share views of their feeders. Expect to find several hummingbird species (Calliope, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned) as well as other mountain feeder specialties.



Wilson's Snipe

Bob Martinka

## WARM SPRINGS PONDS COMPLEX

SatA8 • SunA8

Easy

Typically difficult to access, this trip will welcome participants to areas not generally open to the public. This trip will traverse areas of riparian, wetland, and lake/stream habitats in the Deer Lodge Valley. Bird species include a dozen or more waterfowl species, three or more grebe species, Black-crowned Night-heron, Great Blue Heron, Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Osprey, Bald Eagle (nesting), Marsh Wren, Willow Flycatcher, and numerous sparrows. The trip will be mostly driving interspersed with short walks on mostly level ground.

## BIRDS & BOTANY

SatA9

Easy+

This trip visits riparian zones and open sagebrush hills, focusing on resident birds and related botany. Stops include Prickly Pear Creek east of Montana City, Buffalo Creek northwest of Clancy, and nearby Sheep Mountain hillsides. Lazuli Bunting, MacGillivray's Warbler and Veery are common in the riparian areas. In 2022, the first Ovenbird recorded in Jefferson County was seen and photographed in this Lump Gulch location. We'll also identify native plants and discuss relationships between birds and plant communities. Early possible wildflowers may include – Fairy Slipper Orchid, Chocolate Lily and Purple Clematis. The field trip will end with stops at nesting boxes near Clancy. These boxes, placed by the trip leaders, have hosted Mountain & Western Bluebird, Tree Swallow and House Wren. Walking is on mostly level ground with some exploring among streamside vegetation. At Sunderland Park there is a serviceable port-a-potty, but there are no facilities at other locations. Parking is limited, carpooling strongly encouraged.

More trips next page

## BEARTOOTH WMA



SunA9

Easy+

This trip explores one of the more scenic areas in the foothills of the Big Belt Mountains. It is an elk winter range with open, grassy hillsides, scattered conifers, heavy north-slope conifer cover, and cottonwood and willow riparian areas. The trip begins at Departure Point Campground overlooking Holter Lake. Lark Sparrow and Spotted Towhee easily found here. The trip will move into the Beartooth WMA to the Montana FWP inholding, walking trails in search of American Redstart, House Wren and Yellow-breasted Chat. Nearby cottonwoods hold Bullock's Oriole and Least Flycatcher, while grasslands should yield Lazuli Bunting, Mountain Bluebird, and several sparrow species. Watch for soaring raptors- Golden Eagle and Red-tailed Hawk likely. This trip will be a mix of driving and walking. The relatively short walking portions will be primarily on two-track roads that follow creek bottoms.

## BLACKFOOT VALLEY - CUTOFF RD./ BROWN'S LAKE



SunA10

Easy

This tour will be one of several that will travel west of the Continental Divide. It will traverse a variety of habitats, but will focus on riparian forest along the Blackfoot River, wetland/water habitats at Brown's Lake, and shrub/grasslands in the Blackfoot Valley. Species likely to be encountered include: Western, Red-necked, and possibly Clark's Grebes, many waterfowl species, several flycatchers, many sparrow species, including Clay-colored and Brewer's, Bullock's Oriole, Bald Eagle and other raptors, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Kingbird, and if the weather is cloudy and cool, Vaux's Swift. Driving between several short walks, mostly on level terrain.

Bullock's Oriole



Bob Martinka

## CANYON FERRY WMA



SunA11

Easy+

This trip will explore mostly riparian and pond habitats adjacent to the Missouri River, along with the impoundments within Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area. The area includes grassland, shrublands, agriculture, and cottonwood bottoms. Ponds harbor large breeding colonies of American White Pelicans and several gull species. Caspian Terns may also be present in one area, and Sandhill Cranes are common throughout. Many waterfowl species can be observed, along with grassland sparrows, swallows, orioles, and many marsh and riparian species. This route is primarily driving interspersed with short walks.

## CHAIN OF LAKES - SEELEY/SWAN



SunA12

Easy

This trip begins at the Clearwater Junction (MT 200 and US 83) Rest Area, heading to Salmon Lake for a discussion about human-related impacts to nesting loons. Next stop is the Seeley Lake Ranger Station and a walk along the Clearwater Canoe Trail to the viewing blind. In early June loons may be visible if still nesting. Then the trip travels north to Summit Lake, followed by stops at various lakes on the return to the ranger station. Aside from guaranteed views of loon families, another highlight is a heron rookery at Lake Inez. Expect many other birds of the mature coniferous forests, including Pileated Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, Townsend's and Yellow-rumped warblers, Fox and Song sparrows, Northern Waterthrush, and Willow and Hammond's flycatchers.

## HEADWATERS STATE PARK / OLD TOWN RD. / CENTRAL PARK POND

SunA13

Easy

The state park at the confluence of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin rivers, an hour drive south of Helena. The riparian forests are rich with mature cottonwood galleries, surrounded by sagebrush, buffaloberry, and grasslands. We will look for Least Flycatcher, Eastern and Western Kingbird, Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak and Red-tailed Hawk. Along the scenic cliffs that line the Missouri River expect to find White-throated Swift, Rock and Canyon Wren, Turkey Vulture, Osprey and possibly nesting Peregrine and/or Prairie Falcon. River species may include American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant and Common Merganser. Along Old Town Rd. we will search for Sage Thrasher, Western Wood-Pewee and Brewer's Sparrow.

## AUSTIN ROAD / SKELLY GULCH

SatB1 • SunB1

Easy

This trip follows the willow-choked valley bottom of Sevenmile Creek which is bordered by grassland. Aspen groves and coniferous forest become dominant elevationally. Riparian habitat could yield Willow Flycatcher and Northern Waterthrush, along with Veery, American Redstart, Lazuli Bunting, and Western Tanager. Driving up the east slope of the Continental Divide, we may find Swainson's and Hermit Thrush, Cassin's Vireo and Red Crossbill. Route is mostly driving with strategic stops for birding.

## HELENA REGULATING RESERVOIR



SatB2 • SunB2

Moderate

This trip visits the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir Fishing Access Site where participants will hike along the shore through meadows and dry uplands, interspersed with mature cottonwoods along the shoreline. Expect to find Western and Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Spotted Sandpiper, American White Pelican and a variety of waterfowl. We will scope an established Great-blue Heron rookery which, year-to-year, hosts a Great-horned Owl nest. Least Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, House Wren, and Western Wood-pewee can be expected in the cottonwoods, while Savannah and Vesper Sparrow, along with Western Meadowlark, should dominate the grassland area.

## LAKE HELENA WMA- CANOE/KAYAK



SatB3 • SunB3

Padding

Limited to 10 participants. The trip will start with a short walk that will encounter shrub type passerines, including Savannah Sparrow. We will then embark in canoes/kayaks for several hours enjoying marshland, cattail, and sandbar/mudflat habitats. Expect a wide variety of waterfowl, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Sora, Virginia Rail, White-faced Ibis, gulls and terns, possibly Black Terns and Bonaparte's Gull. Pelicans, swallows, Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, and phalaropes also likely. During the first week of June (2022 & 2023), White-rumped Sandpiper; commonly a late migrant, was documented here. Please bring your own canoe/kayak and PFDs. We will try to help with these if needed.

## LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS & SPRING MEADOW STATE PARK

SatB4 • SunB4

Easy+

This family-friendly trip on the outskirts of Helena will appeal to children and adults alike. At Spring Meadow State Park a ~0.9 mile graveled trail circles the lake, passing through cottonwoods, grassy areas and brushy thickets. At the Fairground Ponds (5-minute drive from Spring Meadow), shrubby and marshy areas surround cottonwood stands. Wood Duck is a regular here along with Bullock's Oriole, Western Wood-Pewee and Warbling Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, and Eastern Kingbird. This is a great trip to see a variety of common (and a few not so common) birds up close.

## SEVENMILE CREEK

SatB5 • SunB5

Moderate

Sevenmile Creek is a private property owned by Prickly Pear Land Trust. The area is not open to the public, but LCAS has been conducting bird surveys since 2017. The property has undergone major restoration after decades of severe overgrazing. A wildfire burned much of the property in 2020, sparing some of the riparian area which is showing amazing signs of recovery. This area should produce Lazuli Bunting, Gray Catbird, Willow Flycatcher, among many others. The grasslands are the only reliable place to find Grasshopper Sparrow in the Helena Valley. Several small ponds host waterfowl, shorebirds, and a variety of swallows! Mostly level hike ~3 miles round trip, moderate due to areas of high grass (variable by year; likely not an issue).

## TENMILE CREEK / MOOSE CREEK / LAZYMAN GULCH



SatB6 • SunB6

Moderate

The short hike along the Environmental Trail is through mature Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine forests, with small aspen groves mixed in. We may see Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, Common Raven, Red-naped Sapsucker, Cassin's Finch, and Hammond's Flycatcher. Other possibilities include Cassin's Vireo and Pileated Woodpecker. The second hike is along the old railroad grade at the nearby Forest Service Campground through aspens and willows; we will look for MacGillivray's Warbler, Willow and Dusky Flycatcher, and Northern Waterthrush. The area is host to Tenmile Creek which runs along the Rimini Road. There are a couple of bridges along the creek where American Dipper may be found.

## K-MART WETLANDS & NATURE PARK

SatC1 • SunC1

Easy

A trip for those who would like limited walking with good bird diversity close to town. K-Mart Wetlands is a birding gem within city limits. The dirt trail is mostly level, easily navigated, ~one mile total. The retention ponds host several species of waterfowl including Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal and possibly Red-necked Grebe. The surrounding area is filled with Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Song Sparrow. Nature Park, also within city limits, is another local hotspot and excellent spring migrant trap. There is a short paved trail. Eighteen warbler species have been identified here! Other species include Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo and Lazuli Bunting. Watch for late spring warblers moving through!

## UPPER PRICKLY PEAR FAS & STANSFIELD LAKE



SatC2 • SunC2

Moderate

This Fishing Access Site is minutes from town, with riparian area that borders grassland and grazing land. Swallows dart along the stream while Spotted Sandpipers forage the shoreline. Excellent views of Sandhill Crane, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, and Willow and Least Flycatcher. A variety of sparrows in the adjacent grassland. The trip also visits adjoining private property (formerly Stansfield Lake). Bullock's Oriole and Black-headed Grosbeak are common in the cottonwood-lined lane. The lane turns into a path around a wetland and pond. Yellow-headed Blackbird, Sora, Common Yellowthroat and a variety of waterfowl likely. For those looking for diversity, this field trip can produce a wide variety of birds. Plan on ~3 mile walk at both the FAS and Stansfield Lake. The ground should be mostly level, but some areas may have tall grass that could be wet with dew.

## SPRING MEADOW BIRD BANDING & LAKE TRAIL

SatC3

Easy

Hosted by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Montana WILD. The trip includes a visit to the Spring Meadow Lake MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) banding station and a guided trip around Spring Meadow Lake State Park. At the banding station, we will break into two groups, visiting the mist nets and observing the banding process. A short presentation will explain MAPS protocol and mission. Each group will also bird around the park. American Goldfinch, Gray Catbird, Black-headed Grosbeak and Yellow Warbler are regulars. The opportunity to catch a late migrant is possible. Look for Wilson's Warbler and Swainson's Thrush! Note: If the weather is uncooperative (rain, wind, cold temperatures), the session will be postponed to ensure the safety of the birds. An alternate field trip plan will be provided.



American Dipper

Bob Martinka

23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL  
**WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY  
BIRD FESTIVAL**

MAY 31 – JUNE 2, 2024  
CARROLL COLLEGE  
HELENA, MONTANA

Field trips  
are filled on a  
first-come, first-  
served basis.  
Please register  
early!



Lesser Scaup

Bob Martinka

## BECOME A MEMBER OF MONTANA AUDUBON

Join Montana Audubon today for a members-only discount on your Festival registration fee!

Help support one of the most effective conservation organizations in Montana.

Other benefits include timely conservation updates, invites to special events, discounts to programs and special events, a print copy of 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.

Add a membership to your Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival Registration to immediately start benefiting!

For more information email us at [info@mtaudubon.org](mailto:info@mtaudubon.org) or call 406-443-3949.



# registration



Register online at [mtaudubon.org/outreach/wings](http://mtaudubon.org/outreach/wings)

Or send completed form and check to:

Montana Audubon  
PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624

**Questions?** Call (406) 443-3949 or email [info@mtaudubon.org](mailto:info@mtaudubon.org)

Please print clearly

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## field trips

Choose your top three field trips for each day and include the number of people on each trip.

**Trips are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please register early!** Montana Audubon reserves the right to assign, modify or cancel field trips.

**Saturday** First choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_  
 Second choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_  
 Third choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_

**Sunday** First choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_  
 Second choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_  
 Third choice: Trip # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people \_\_\_\_\_

## meals

Festival registration includes: Friday evening buffet; Saturday breakfast, snack, lunch, and evening buffet; Sunday breakfast and lunch **(Please indicate number for each lunch choice)**

### Saturday lunch in the field

Vegetarian Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Beef & Cheddar Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Turkey & Pepper Jack Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_

### Sunday lunch in the field

Vegetarian Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Beef & Cheddar Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Turkey & Pepper Jack Sandwich # \_\_\_\_\_

## payments

Please indicate your registration selections, specifying how many people you are registering in each category. Calculate the total for all items selected and the total amount due.

Item	Cost	# of people	Subtotal
Student	\$150	x _____	= \$ _____
Member	\$225	x _____	= \$ _____
Non-Member <b>OR</b>	\$245	x _____	= \$ _____

Join Montana Audubon and register above at the \$225 member rate. Add \$ 50

OPTIONS	Additional Banquet Guest(s)		
	Cost	# of people	Subtotal
• Friday Night	\$30	x _____	Add \$ _____
• Saturday Night	\$30	x _____	Add \$ _____

Yes, I/we would like to donate to Montana Audubon Add \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### REFUND POLICY

50% refund for cancellations through May 17.

**NO refunds after May 17.**

**Total Due/Enclosed** \$

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Bob Martinka



Visit Helena

