

MONTANA'S
PREMIER BIRDING
FESTIVAL

25TH ANNUAL

wings
across the big sky

MONTANA
AUDUBON



presented by



JUNE 12-14, 2026
RED LION INN
KALISPELL, MONTANA

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Elliott Ress

WELCOME

Montana Audubon, in partnership with the Flathead Audubon Society, welcomes you to the 25th annual Wings Across the Big Sky birding festival!

From June 12 – June 14, we invite you to join us in Kalispell, Montana for a weekend filled with birds, nature, and community. We have been hard at work putting together a birding festival to commemorate the 50th anniversaries of both organizations – you won't want to miss this year's festival!

Registration opens at 3 p.m. on Friday, followed by a buffet dinner and what's sure to be a fantastic keynote presentation by former Montana Audubon Executive Director Steve Hoffman. For those that arrive early, this year we have two pre-festival field trips on Friday, including one to the Flathead Lake Biological Station. There are also tours of favorite local hotspots around Flathead Lake, and multiple trips into Glacier National Park – including, for the more adventurous, the opportunity to bike and bird a portion of Going to the Sun Road!

Whether you're a seasoned birder or just starting your birding journey, *Wings Across the Big Sky* is about celebrating the joy of birds, the wonder of Montana's landscapes, and the connections we share through nature.

So grab your binoculars, explore the schedule, and get ready for an incredible weekend. We can't wait to see you in Kalispell!

Yours in Conservation,



Larry Berrin, Executive Director



FESTIVAL HEADQUARTERS

Last date to receive special festival rate of \$199/night is May 13, 2026

Red Lion Inn

20 N Main St.
Kalispell MT 59901
406-751-5050

Lodging Information

Book using our direct link to have the special festival rate automatically applied. Or, use code: MONTA260612-181934



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

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

10 am–2 pm Pre-festival field trips
3:00 pm Registration opens
Social with cash bar
6:00 pm Welcome, Buffet Dinner
Keynote presentation by Steve Hoffman

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

5:30–6:45 am Buffet Breakfast
6:15 am A Field Trips depart
6:45 am B Field Trips depart
1:30 pm Field trips return (approximate)
2:00–4:00 pm Afternoon sessions
4:00 pm Social with cash bar
5:30 pm Buffet dinner
State of the Birds Address
Award Ceremony
Live Auction

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

5:30–6:45 am Buffet Breakfast
6:15 am A Field Trips depart
6:45 am B Field Trips depart



Western Kingbird

Bob Martinka

CANCELLATION & 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 29. Refunds will not be issued after May 29. 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.

PRESENTATIONS

FRIDAY EVENING, JUNE 12 • KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

45 YEARS OF COUNTING MIGRATING RAPTORS IN THE WEST: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Steve Hoffman has devoted his entire 45-year career to wildlife conservation. Steve grew up in suburban Philadelphia and received his Master's Degree in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University (1979). In 1986 he founded HawkWatch International; he has authored more than 50 publications and reports on raptor migration, ecology and conservation. In 2017, after 10 years as Executive Director of Montana Audubon, Steve started his own birding tour company, Merlin Birding & Nature Tours LLC. He has led or co- led many Merlin Birding, National Audubon & Montana Audubon birding tours to Ecuador, Costa Rica, Newfoundland/Nova Scotia, Panama, Mexico's Copper Canyon, Veracruz, Oaxaca & Baja California regions, and throughout Montana. He resides in Bozeman, where he also coordinates the local Bridger Raptor Migration Project.



About Steve's presentation:

HawkWatch International founder Steve Hoffman will chronicle efforts over the past 49 years to develop an expansive raptor migration monitoring network in the western U.S. These studies have yielded important scientific information about the health and population trends of more than a dozen raptor species that migrate through western North America. Enroute from northern breeding grounds (many originate in Alaska and northern Canada) to spend the non-breeding period in more southern climes (as far as south as Argentina!), these apex aerial predators serve as valuable indicators of large-scale ecosystem health and change. Steve will summarize key findings from these raptor migration monitoring efforts, emphasizing the value of these long-term data sets for evaluating future climate change impacts on not only these majestic raptors, but also on overall ecosystem health and biodiversity.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 13

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 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.

LOCAL CHAPTER

Flathead Audubon Society (FAS) is the local Audubon chapter serving the Kalispell/ Flathead area. Since 1977, FAS has worked to conserve birds, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem diversity through education and conservation programs, in Northwest Montana.

Learn more at flatheadaudubon.org.



Pileated Woodpecker

Bob Martinka

SCHOLARSHIPS

Evan Clark Gift of Living Scholarships

This year, Flathead Audubon Society is generously sponsoring scholarships for the 2026 Wings Across the Big Sky birding Festival. These scholarships are open to students of all ages.

Apply online: mtaudubon.org/events/wings-across-the-big-sky

Contact Jess Garby for more information: jess@flatheadaudubon.org • 732-330-1367

Five Valleys Audubon is also offering scholarships to help cover festival costs. Priority will be given to FVAS members and Missoula-area residents. Please email info@fvaudubon.org for more information on how to apply.

FIELD TRIPS

Please review each description. Using the codes, mark your choices for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on the registration form.

Some trips are offered on multiple days, however, most are only offered on Saturday or Sunday. See the Field Trip Key below for the schedule. Sack lunches are provided Saturday and Sunday. Saturday trips will return to Kalispell around 1:30 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: A trips depart at 6:15 am • B trips depart at 6:45 am

FRIDAY

Fri 1 Lone Pine State Park
Fri 2 Flathead Lake Bio Station

SATURDAY 6:15 am • A trips

Sat A 1 Tally Lake
Sat A 2 West Glacier
Sat A 3 Camas Creek
Sat A 4 Bike & Bird Going to the Sun Road
Sat A 5 Finger and Lagoni Lakes
Sat A 6 Niarada and Cromwell Creek

SATURDAY 6:45 am • B trips

Sat B 1 Owen Sowerwine
Sat B 2 Breeding Birds of Smith Lake
Sat B 3 Loons
Sat B 4 Spring Brook Ranch
Sat B 5 Somers Area Hotspots
Sat B 6 McVenneger Slough
Sat B 7 East Flathead Valley Conservation Lands
Sat B 8 West Valley Conservation Lands
Sat B 9 Creston Fish Hatchery
Sat B 10 Live Raptors at Wild Wings

SUNDAY 6:15 am • A trips

Sun A 1 Tally Lake
Sun A 2 East Glacier
Sun A 3 Swan River & Lake
Sun A 4 Firebrand Pass Trail
Sun A 5 Mission Valley
Sun A 6 Photography and Birds at Creston Fish Hatchery
Sun A 7 Harrell Forest
Sun A 8 CSKT Bison Range
Sun A 9 Badrock Canyon

SUNDAY 6:45 am • B trips

Sun B 1 Owen Sowerwine
Sun B 2 Breeding Birds of Smith Lake
Sun B 3 Loons
Sun B 4 East Side/Riverside Conservation Easements
Sun B 5 Birding the Top of Big Mountain
Sun B 6 Birds and Native Plants at Wayfarer State Park
Sun B 7 Lawrence Park

DIFFICULTY RATINGS

Easy

Driving with some walking – under one mile total.

Easy+

Walking on mostly level terrain up to two miles.

Moderate

Driving with longer walks possible – two miles+

Difficult

Mostly walking. Uneven and off-trail terrain possible.

Bike

Bike and bike transportation required. Option to rent.



Accessible for wheelchairs or other mobility aids



Public Restrooms Available



NO Public Restrooms Available



Extra fees required



National Park • State Park

FRI 1

LONE PINE STATE PARK

Moderate



10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

We will meet at the Visitor Center at 10 a.m. to watch feeder birds before walking dirt trails with some uphill for a walk of about a half mile looking for Townsend's Solitaires, woodpeckers, vireos, grosbeaks, and warblers. A short walk to an overlook reveals Flathead Lake to the south and the Swan Mountains to the east with a peekaboo look into the peaks of Glacier National Park. On the drive back we'll look for Red-necked, Eared and Horned Grebes and other waterfowl including Common and Barrow's Goldeneye at Foy's Lake.

FRI 2

FLATHEAD LAKE BIOLOGICAL STATION

Easy



12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS) is situated at Yellow Bay on Flathead Lake. The station, part of University of Montana, does research in the limnology and ecology of lakes and rivers, environmental monitoring of Flathead Lake and its watershed, and education. Tom Banzak will lead a classroom presentation about the work done by FLBS followed by a Q&A session and tour of the facility. Come early with a picnic lunch to enjoy by the lake. After the tour participants can continue to Kalispell to prepare for the festival or bird the property.

SAT A 1 & SUN A 1

TALLY LAKE

Easy



This trip winds through a wide variety of habitats. It is possible to see every warbler species found in NW Montana as we explore Forest Service lands on the way to Tally Lake. Neotropical migrants such as American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler and Northern Waterthrush, as well as Fox Sparrow, can be found in streamside thickets. Townsend's Warblers and Western Tanager are often observed in conifer stands, and Common Loons and Bald Eagles breed along the lake shores. This trip will focus on bird identification by both sight and by ear. Mostly driving with some optional short walking (<1/4 mile) on flat ground. **Fee: \$5 per vehicle.**

Hooded Merganser



SAT A 2

WEST GLACIER

Easy



We'll drive to Glacier National Park's west entrance to Fish Creek Picnic and Campground for a creekside walk. Harlequin Ducks, American Dippers and thrushes are possible as well as other coniferous old-growth species. Then we will drive up the gravel Inside North Fork Road, with stops at creek crossings, backsides of large sedge fens, burns of different ages and a hike to a large meadow at Camas Creek. Time permitting, we will visit a spot for Lewis' Woodpeckers on the way back. Note: This is a narrow back road, car pooling required to have minimal vehicles.

SAT A 3

CAMAS CREEK

Easy+



We'll carpool to Glacier National Park's Camas Creek trailhead, backtracking to Apgar along Inside North Fork Rd, stop at the Howe Lake trail, and on to Oxbow Trail on lower McDonald Creek. Each area has 100+ documented species in June. In the Camas Creek area, expect Sandhill Crane, grouse, Fox & Lincoln Sparrows. Rarities include Alder Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, and LeConte's Sparrow. We'll look for Pacific Wren and Olive-sided Flycatcher at the Howe Lake trailhead. Oxbow Trail highlights: hummingbirds, warblers, vireos, flycatchers, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker; rarities include Vaux's Swift, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Varied Thrush, Veery, Pine Grosbeak. Total walking distance less than 5 miles on level trails.

SAT A 4

BIKE AND BIRD GOING TO THE SUN ROAD

Bike



Bike up the Going-to-the-Sun Road, stopping frequently to listen and look for birds. Target species include Harlequin Ducks, Varied Thrushes, Pacific Wrens, Fox Sparrows, and many more! We'll leave at 6 a.m. to get parking spots at Avalanche Campground. From there, we'll pedal ~ 4.5 miles to Logan Creek (or as far as we can go) and turn around.

For the sake of time, it's encouraged to have a park entrance pass, bicycle, and a way to get yourself and the bicycle to Avalanche CG. On the morning of the field trip, bicycles and carriers can be rented in Apgar at a discount from Glacier Outfitters. **Group size: 10.**

SAT A 5

FINGER AND LAGONI LAKES

Difficult



Join us on the Finger Lake trail near Olney. The trail winds through marshy areas, over rocky ridges with patches of dead timber, cedar and larch old growth forest. 2.8-mile roundtrip with a 377 ft. elevation gain to Finger Lake with a few short steep portions. Option to hike to Lagoni Lake – a 3.3-mile, 223 ft. elevation gain – through similar habitat from the same trailhead. Expect a variety of forest and wetland species including American Three-toed and Pileated Woodpeckers, Hammond's and Western Flycatchers, wren, vireos, MacGillvray's and Townsend's Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Fox Sparrows, Swainson's Thrush, and Common Loon.

SAT A 6

NIARADA AND CROMWELL CREEK

Easy



Birding around Niarada brings us to a sparsely populated area west of Flathead Lake with a rich diversity of habitats. We'll visit Cromwell Creek and nearby marshy zones that provide essential habitat for species including Rock Wrens that nest in the rocky crevices. The open fields support ground-nesting birds and raptors. Browns Meadow Road is graced with forested slopes where woodpeckers, thrushes and warblers thrive. We will look for Lazuli Bunting, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, raptors, Sandhill Cranes, Lewis's Woodpeckers and more. Possible Yellow-breasted Chat, Spotted Towhee, Clark's Nutcracker, Common Nighthawk, Gray Catbird and Bullock's Oriole. Mostly car birding with short walks along the road.

SAT B 1 & SUN B 1

OWEN SOWERWINE

Moderate



A unique 2024 Conservation Easement on this land protects 405 acres of riparian and river bottom along the Stillwater and Flathead Rivers. Mainland trails offer possible sightings of Belted Kingfisher; swallows, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, and many duck species. Common birds: woodpeckers, Ruffed Grouse, Cedar Waxwing, chickadees, nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Red-eyed Vireo, Gray Catbird, and Black-headed Grosbeak. The trails are mostly level with a few short ups/downs, but are primitive with uneven surfaces. At a leisurely pace, we will go ~2.5 miles, and take a mid-point break at the Stillwater River.

SAT B 2 & SUN B 2

BREEDING BIRDS OF SMITH LAKE

Easy



The Smith Lake area is a very popular birding location in the Flathead Valley. We will drive Smith Lake Road looking for sparrows, orioles, warblers, and other breeding migrants and then make our way to Smith Lake in search of waterfowl and wetland species. We will explore a diversity of habitats. Potential birds include Red-necked Grebe, Sora, Sandhill Crane, a variety of duck species, and Wilson's Snipe. This is primarily a driving trip with several stops to get out and bird. Easy; no walking needed.

SAT B 3 & SUN B 3

LOONS

Moderate



Explore a series of lakes near Kalispell, locations determined in early June after loon breeding status is known. The plan is to observe several successful nesting pairs of Common Loons with their young. Potential lakes: Thompson Chain of Lakes, Ashley Lake area, or lakes north and west of Kalispell and Whitefish. Other species: waterfowl, grebes, possibly Black Terns and other lakeshore bird species. We will discuss vocalizations, behavior; territories, habitat, population status, and management issues. Bring spotting scopes if you have them. Expect a few short steep walks down or along a lakeshore bank or out on docks.

SAT B 4

SPRING BROOK RANCH

Moderate



Explore the diverse bird and plant habitat of Spring Brook Ranch southwest of Kalispell. We will focus on birds as we wander near the Birch Creek riparian habitat rich with mature aspen, western larch and Engelmann spruce. We will also explore ponderosa pine and Douglas fir uplands and ranch land. The landowners manage their large ranch with a focus on birds and wildlife and

will talk about their conservation philosophy. We will be walking 3–4 miles mostly off-trail near wetlands and steep, rolling hills. **Group size: 8.**



Ruffed Grouse

SAT B 5**SOMERS AREA HOTSPOTS****Easy**

We will visit two excellent trails in riparian areas bordering Flathead Lake and Somers Slough (Burnell Avenue in Somers Beach State Park, and the Sonny Boon Memorial Trail). Expected birds include Nashville Warbler; Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Willow Flycatcher; Violet-green Swallows and more. Following two short, level hikes, we will visit several of the wetlands in the farmlands north of Somers (Wiley Dike, Reed's Slough, Farm Road). Expect a variety of waterfowl, including Ruddy Duck, Redhead, Canvasback, Gadwall, Trumpeter Swan and more, along with open country birds such as Clay-colored and Savannah Sparrows.

SAT B 6**MCWENNEGER SLOUGH****Easy**

Join Flathead Land Trust to visit the McWenninger Slough property east of Kalispell and a 682-acre river corridor conservation easement along the Flathead River. 100+ species of birds have been observed on McWenninger Slough. Highlights: nesting Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, Osprey. The river corridor property includes over 1.25 miles of backwater channels and ~400 acres of riparian, forest, and agricultural habitat. Wildlife observed on the property include grizzly bear, black bear, mountain lion, coyote, and elk. Be prepared to walk down a trail on a steep slope to the backwater channel of the Flathead River.

SAT B 7**EAST FLATHEAD VALLEY CONSERVATION LANDS****Easy+**

Join Flathead Land Trust to visit two conservation easements east of Kalispell. Both are used by over 150 species of birds and wildlife including grizzly bear, black bear, and river otter. Mill Creek is a warm spring creek. Likely species: Wood Duck, Willow Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrush, Red-naped Sapsucker, and other songbirds and waterfowl. The Egan Slough property includes agricultural land and a 60+ acre forested island with a pair of nesting Bald Eagles. Other likely birds: Sora, snipe, Pileated Woodpecker, and a plethora of songbirds and waterfowl. Be prepared to walk down a two-track road on a steep slope and on game trails.

SAT B 8**WEST VALLEY CONSERVATION LANDS****Easy**

This trip visits conservation easements NW of Kalispell, including two farms totalling over 1,000 acres. The West Valley farm and wetland support a major fall staging area for 500+ Greater Sandhill Cranes. 200+ species of birds have been observed here, including Eared Grebes, Northern Shoveler; Ruddy Ducks, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. The farm closer to Whitefish includes agricultural and riparian habitat along 1.7 miles of the Stillwater River; adjacent to the Kuhns Wildlife Management Area. 100+ bird species have been observed, and wildlife including grizzly bear, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, wolf, coyote, fox, and elk. Highlights include Willow & Hammond's Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Cassin's Vireo.

SAT B 9**CRESTON FISH HATCHERY****Easy+**

Join us at the Jessup pond pavilion for a morning walk at the Creston Fish Hatchery and Jessup Pond exploring resident ducks, geese & swans. Other birds that may be seen are raptors, Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, American Dippers, woodpeckers, owls & song birds. The hatchery grounds and Jessup pond will involve easy walking.

SAT B 10**LIVE RAPTORS AT WILD WINGS****Easy**

Visit Wild Wings Raptor Recovery Center, a local raptor rehabilitation facility, and see some of their resident education raptors up close! Wild Wings has a variety of raptors in their care, ranging in size from American Kestrels to Cooper's Hawk to Bald Eagle. On this visit, we'll learn about raptor identification and important conservation actions that can help support and protect wild birds. After the formal presentation, you are welcome to stay and meet other owls and hawks.

*Bob Martinka***Bald Eagles****SUN A 2****EAST GLACIER****Moderate**

This trip is perfect for anyone heading east from Kalispell after the festival. First, we'll make quick stops at Tunnel Creek and Marias Pass on the south side of Glacier National Park. Then on to Looking Glass Rd., with short stops at overlooks, a pond near Kiowa, and the Beaver Pond Trail in East Glacier. With time, we'll take a short walk on the Visitor Center trail to the St. Mary River footbridge. From there (or anywhere along the way) participants heading east can return home.

SUN A 3**SWAN RIVER & LAKE****Easy**

We'll begin with a short hike at the Swan Lake Boat Access, expect Red-necked Grebe, Least Flycatcher, and other riparian birds. Then on to the Swan River Wildlife Refuge. Birds may include American Bitterns, Black Terns, Wilson's Snipes, Virginia Rails, Sandhill Cranes, American Redstarts, Willow Flycatchers. Next we'll drive south to The Nature Conservancy's Swan River Oxbow Preserve and take a short hike (1/2 mile). Potential species include Lincoln's Sparrow, MacGillivray's and Townsend's Warblers, and Hammond's Flycatcher. Lastly, we'll drive down the Porcupine Cr. Road to the Swan River for American Dipper; Northern Waterthrush, and Red-eyed Vireo. Two hikes are short and flat.

SUN A 4**FIREBRAND PASS TRAIL****Moderate**

Spend the day on the east side of Glacier National Park, exploring wetland, aspen and mixed conifer habitats, and diverse wildflowers. We will head east on Highway 2 ~80 miles from Kalispell to the Firebrand Pass/Lubec trailhead. Plan on walking less than 4 miles on mostly level ground, including a short bushwack on an elk trail. Expect a variety of waterfowl in and around Coonsa Creek and nearby Lubec Lake, where Red-necked Grebes nest, numerous sparrows, Willow, Least and Alder Flycatchers, several warbler species, including possible Tennessee Warbler; plus Veery.



Bonaparte's Gull

SUN A 5

MISSION VALLEY

Easy



The Mission Valley is a special birding area, where riparian woodlands, open grasslands, and river corridors create prime habitat for late-spring and early-summer bird activity. With the breeding season in full swing and migratory species still moving through, June offers an excellent opportunity to observe a wide variety of resident and visiting birds.

SUN A 6

PHOTOGRAPHY AND BIRDS AT CRESTON FISH HATCHERY

Easy+



Join us for a hands-on bird photography field trip at Creston Fish Hatchery with Will Laurie, a Florida native and accomplished bird photographer. Creston's ponds and surrounding habitat attract a wide variety of resident and migratory birds, making it an ideal outdoor classroom for photographers of all levels.

SUN A 7

HARRELL FOREST

Moderate



The Harrell Forest trail in Bigfork offers a chance to find many of the valley's most prominent songbirds! Common birds include Townsend's Warblers, Orange-Crowned Warblers, vireos, chickadees, nuthatches, kinglets, thrushes, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, flycatchers, and many different types of woodpeckers. The trail has a gradual incline and lots of shade – we will likely hike ~3 miles but possibly less depending on how much we stop. We will aim to get to the viewing point to admire Flathead Lake before heading back.

SUN A 8

CSKT BISON RANGE

Easy



Birding at the CSKT Bison Range is, simply put, wonderful. Clay-colored and Grasshopper Sparrows in the native prairie, Lazuli Buntings and Bullock's Oriole in shrubby thickets, Red Crossbills, Dusky Flycatchers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, and Dusky Grouse in the forest, and Golden Eagles and Lewis' Woodpeckers at High Point. Wildflowers are especially abundant this time of year. Whitetail and mule deer, elk, pronghorn coyote and bear make their home on the range. And then there are the bison! Along with the magnificent view of the Mission Mountains to the east, the Mission Valley to the north, and a long view of the Flathead River valley to the west from High Point this will be a memorable day. **\$20 entrance fee per car.**

SUN A 9

BADROCK CANYON

Moderate



Join Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks staff for a 4-mile out and back hike through a recently acquired 772-acre Wildlife Management Area just east of Columbia Falls. The property is one of the largest remaining intact parcels along the Flathead River. This hike is flat (less than 20 ft of elevation gain) and will take you along the river bottom, past a backwater slough, spring creeks, and through riparian and conifer forests. Over 120 bird species have been documented here. Possible birds include Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, and many warblers including Orange-crowned Warbler, American Redstart, and Common Yellowthroat.

SUN B 4

EAST SIDE/RIVERSIDE CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Easy



Visit several conserved extraordinary private farms and wetlands in the East Flathead Valley. (Note: These are similar but different properties than the Sat B 7 trip). Visit lands along Brenneman's Slough, a unique warm spring; several productive ponds; Flathead River backwater sloughs and shorelines; open and forested lands along Riverside Road, ending at a large farm surrounding Mill Pond. Likely species are Bald Eagle, Osprey, Trumpeter Swan, Great Blue Heron, a variety of waterfowl, Sandhill Crane, Sora, Wilson's Snipe, and a variety of woodpeckers, swallows and sparrows.



Red-eyed Vireo

SUN B 5

BIRDING THE TOP OF BIG MOUNTAIN

Moderate



Bird the top of Big Mountain in Whitefish along the Danny On and East Rim Loop trails. We'll look for Canada and Steller's Jays, Boreal and Mountain Chickadees, Common Raven, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Mountain Bluebird, Fox and White-crowned Sparrows, Pacific Wren, Cassin's Finch, Pine Grosbeak, and Swainson's, Varied, and Hermit Thrushes. Dusky Grouse, Vaux's and Black Swifts have been observed. The trip begins and ends at the Summit House on the top of Big Mountain. Then we will bird the upper portion of the Danny On trail to the East Rim Loop. We'll bird the mostly level East Rim Loop and head back up to the summit. Total distance: ~ 2 miles; elevation gain ~300 feet. **Participants buy own chair lift ticket.**

SUN B 6

BIRDS AND NATIVE PLANTS AT WAYFARER STATE PARK

Easy+



Join a local naturalist to explore the rich biodiversity at Wayfarer State Park. Enjoy a leisurely late spring walk through Lupine/ Ninebark understory with Spotted Towhee foraging in the leaf litter and Lazuli Buntings calling from Chokeycherry branches. Experience the native plants, birds, butterflies and other pollinators that thrive in this native habitat on the east shore of Flathead Lake. Easy to moderate walking.

SUN B 7

LAWRENCE PARK

Easy



Explore an easy two mile walk at Lawrence Park in Kalispell. This city park includes a developed park, wetlands, mature trees, a walking trail through mixed riparian habitats along the Stillwater River. The park has birch, large cottonwoods, and dense dogwood understory. A variety of woodpeckers nest here. Wood ducks are possible. A natural area of swampy tangle support Red-eyed Vireo and Black-Headed Grosbeak in the overstory and Northern Waterthrush and Yellow Warbler in the understory. Spotted Sandpiper, Common Merganser, Belted Kingfisher, and Tree Swallows have all been observed in the park.



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25TH ANNUAL
**WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY
BIRD FESTIVAL**

JUNE 12-14, 2026
RED LION INN
KALISPELL, MONTANA

**JOIN MONTANA
AUDUBON TODAY
for a members-only
discount on your
Festival registration fee!**



Annual membership benefits include: mailed copies of our print newsletter, 2x/year; timely conservation updates; invitations to special events; discounts to classes, programs, and our annual birding festival!

For more information, visit our website or email harrison@mtaudubon.org, or call 406-443-3949

CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION
with limited-edition
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Mark this milestone with a striking Golden Eagle shirt featuring original artwork by our Avian Specialist, Bo Crees – available in both unisex and women’s fits.

Top it off with our commemorative 50th anniversary logo hat, beautifully embroidered and ready for the field.

Commemorate this milestone and carry Montana Audubon’s conservation legacy with you wherever you go!

Preorder for pick up at the Festival – see registration form for pricing.



Front



Back