



# Last Chance Chat

Last Chance Audubon Society promotes understanding, respect, and enjoyment of birds and the natural world through education, habitat protection, and environmental advocacy.

*Published September to May*

*Helena, MT*

*May 2017*

## *Patagonia Traverse*

*LCAS Program, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

*7 PM: Social Hour 6:30PM-7PM*

*Montana WILD, 2668 Broadwater Ave.*



*"Crested Caracara" by Joel Maes*



*"Torres del Paine" by Joel Maes*

A trek that covered the length of Patagonia from Coyaique in the North to Punto Arenas in the South during November - December, 2016 will be presented by Joel Maes. After a brief review of the history of the region, he will describe the highlights of his 15-day journey, including the Marble Chapel on Lake General Carrara, Cerro Torres and the Fitzroy in Los Glaciares National Park. The Perito Moreno Glacier and, of course, Torres del Paine National Park were also visited. Joel's photos of the stunning landscapes, glaciers and wildlife, including infrequent but interesting birds, are a highlight of this program.

Joel Maes is a native of Anaconda born to a simple family of hunters/gatherers. He is a fancier of gourmet Spam dishes and is an enthusiastic photographer, especially known for his sports and wildlife photography. He and his two friends, "The Three Amigos," enjoy hiking and backpacking in the wilderness regions of the West. Joel is a graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry and has practiced dentistry in Helena since 1981.

## *LCAS Fieldtrip Report: Freezeout WMA April 1 & 2, 2017*

Sunday's sunrise didn't disappoint. The sky to the east was shades of pink, orange and yellow, and the thousands of Snow Geese flew right over our heads, catching the sunlight as they honked and went on their way. Mike Schwitters later said he estimated over 2400 white geese flew over that morning.

After answering our questions, Mike led us to various vantage points to watch incoming geese land on the lakes as only they can – by soaring and circling, lowering their altitude, until splash-down.

Other bird species encountered over the weekend included Cormorants, Pelicans, Great Blue Heron, Canada Geese, Trumpeter Swans, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles on nest, Golden Eagles, Sandhill Cranes, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gulls by the hundreds, Western Meadowlarks, and, after dark, a Great Horned Owl on nest as well as another owl species – possibly a Short-Eared Owl.

We had a total of five participants in our LCAS field trip group, and we look forward to offering it again next year. ---Janice Miller, Trip Leader

### *President's Perch: Science*

It appears we are a group of scientists.

We at Last Chance Audubon stepped up in strong numbers to participate in the Long-billed Curlew Survey (LBCU) going on this spring. Organized by Montana Audubon's Amy Seaman, this is the fourth year for the survey in the Helena Valley and other nearby areas of LBCU habitat. This project provides valuable data on how the Curlews are faring in our region of the world. So a big, "THANK YOU," to all who are identifying Curlews for the sake of science.

World Shorebirds Day in September is another data-collecting opportunity in which LCAS has been participating at the south end of Canyon Ferry. The Golden Eagle Migration Survey (GEMS) in the Big Belt Mountains each fall is another science-based survey, giving us a picture as to the health of our raptor species, specifically the Golden Eagle, and is strongly supported by the members of Last Chance Audubon.

Several LCAS members regularly use eBird to document the birds they see whilst out and about. This is a worldwide database documenting bird sightings and their trends, around the globe. You can check their findings on the LCAS website under "BirdTrax" at <http://lastchanceaudubon.org/html/BirdTrax.html>.

International Migratory Bird Day is happening NOW at the Helena Regulating Reservoir on York Road – Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be bird walks early and booths for school children to learn more about our birds. Kids, bring your parents! It's FUN!

And, David Ringer, from National Audubon, will be the keynote speaker at the MT Audubon's Wings across the Big Sky Bird Festival in Great Falls, June 9, 10, & 11<sup>th</sup>, connecting the National Audubon with the local chapters across the nation and making the data-collecting connection from local to national. You don't want to miss it!

Through scientific data-collecting programs and projects, we are best able to chart our course towards "...education, habitat protection, and environmental advocacy" as our LCAS mission statement affirms. THANK YOU for taking the time to document birds in our geographic area. It gives credence to our work here at LCAS. ---Janice Miller, Last Chance Audubon Society President

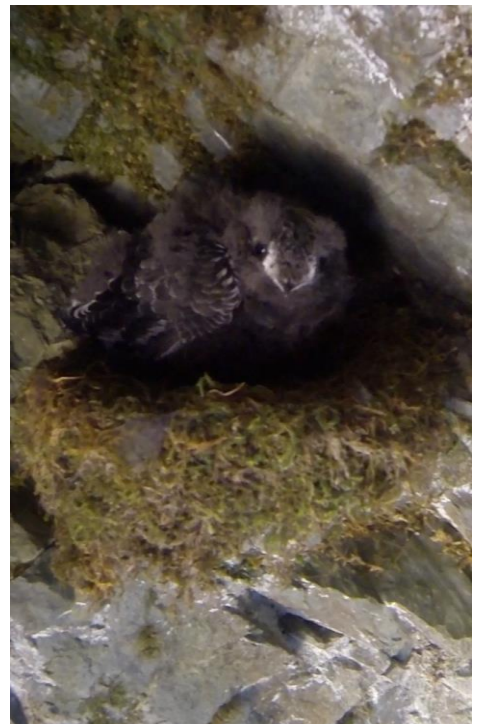
### *Blackswift Volunteers Needed!*

Do you enjoy bird adventures? Willing to hike and gaze at waterfalls? Enjoy scrutinizing wet cliff faces for obscure moss nests? Enjoy birding at dawn and dusk? If you're like the majority of birders in Montana, you've never seen a black swift. This summer could change that!

Montana Audubon has funding this year to expand on our citizen science effort to look for additional swift nests in Montana, including potential sites in the Bitterroot. Amy Seaman will be putting on two training sessions this summer: one in Glacier National Park and one outside the park. Both will be held in mid-July and will be limited to 12 people. She even has a little bit of funding for mileage and stipend for those of you who are able to complete a training, and then commit to doing one survey.

If you'd like to participate in this project, please contact Amy at [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org). Join the echelon of cool birders out there who tell others that they are "going swifting," and remember that "swifting" is not for the faint of heart. Surveying for this bird requires long hikes, tremendous patience, and difficult terrain navigation, including at night. But it sure is fun!

For a taste of what "swifting" can be like, check out our website and blogposts from the last few years' surveys! Find them at <http://mtaudubon.org/?s=black+swift>



*"Blackswift Nestling" by Kate Stone*

## *Who Are You?*

The familiarity of visiting birds within our backyards makes them feel like old friends. Finches, Flickers, Chickadees, Robins - they are easy, and even fun to name! But stepping beyond the backyard presents a whole new set of challenges. What is that silhouette that is sitting on the wire, hunching over ever so slightly? What about that high-pitched song that is able to penetrate a car traveling at 70 mph - with the windows up?! Feeling a little sheepish when the kids say, "Dad, what kind of bird is that?" Time for a little Birding 101!

In June, Last Chance Audubon, in cooperation with Montana WILD, will be hosting two introductory birding classes. One class will be geared toward adults and the other toward middle school age students. The classes are intended as an entry level course for learning to identify the birds around us. All who have an interest in birds and want to explore the world of the winged are welcome to attend this free class. Class size is limited to 12 and registration is required, so don't wait. Binoculars will be provided by Montana WILD. Register now by emailing Stephen Turner at [stepturner@yahoo.com](mailto:stepturner@yahoo.com) or Ryan Schmaltz at [rschmaltz@mt.gov](mailto:rschmaltz@mt.gov). Details regarding the two classes can be found below or by visiting [www.lastchanceaudubon.org/html/field-trips.html](http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/html/field-trips.html).

### **BIRDING 101 for Adults**

June 17, 2017, Saturday, 8 AM to 11 AM

Location: Montana WILD - 2668 Broadwater

### **BIRDING 101 for Kids (Students entering grades 5-8 in the 2017-2018 school year)**

June 20, 2017, Tuesday, 6 PM to 9 PM

Location: Montana WILD - 2668 Broadwater



**June 9-11, 2017      Great Falls, Montana**

Montana Audubon will conclude the marking of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year with a "birthday celebration" at the June Bird Festival. Join us and learn how Montana Audubon began as a fledgling organization and hear highlights from four decades of conservation successes! David Ringer, Chief Network Officer with National Audubon, will share insights on bird protection and how he engages people with practical conservation solutions in his keynote address, "Protecting Birds and the Places they Need: Today and Tomorrow."

Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon (UMBA) has worked steadfastly to bring extra fun to this year's festival with a Bird Calling contest, local vendors and great custom field trips. There will be many beautiful and creative desserts to choose from for our Dessert Auction, so come prepared to bid on one to enjoy at the banquet.

UMBA has also put together a diverse roster of field trips – but they are filling up fast, so please register as soon as possible. You can do so by mail, or online at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). Also—if staying overnight, be sure to reserve your rooms at the Best Western Plus Heritage Inn by calling 1-406-761-1900 or 1-800-548-8256. (Please mention that you are part of the Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the group rate.)

Contact Montana Audubon at (406) 443-3949 if you have any questions about the festival or registration.

## *Recognize Your Peers!*

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife by presenting **Awards** at the Saturday evening Bird Festival banquet. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories: Lifetime Achievement Award, Educator of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Special Achievement Award. To make a nomination, download a nomination form from [www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards/](http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards/). Nominations are due by May 19, 2017. Mail completed forms to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena MT 59624.





Photo: "Great Horned Owl" by Bob Martinka

*The chapter sent this letter to Zinke, Tester, and Daines after hearing the final talk at this year's Natural History Lecture Series by Tom McDonald of the Salish-Kootenai Wildlife Division. As a Congressman, Zinke supported transfer; he now has reversed himself and opposes it.*

April 12, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We are writing to you regarding the Confederated Salish-Kootenai proposal to assume complete management of the National Bison Range at Moiese. The current proposal would transfer the property to the Secretary of the Interior from the National Wildlife Refuge system. Those opposing the transfer are demanding that in order to prevent precedence that a new refuge of equal value would have to be added to the national system. This is highly unlikely under the Trump Administration which has proposed a cut of \$120 million (75%) for new land acquisition for the Dept. of the Interior. Our organization believes that this is a special circumstance since without the commitment of land and management of the bison by the Salish-Kootenai Tribes, the species would probably be extinct. We also believe that the tribes would be effective in educating the general public about the historical importance of bison to Native Americans and their effective management of the animal over thousands of years. In addition, the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes would manage the refuge at no cost to the American taxpayer.

We ask that Congress act immediately to restore federal trust ownership of the National Bison Range to the tribes.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Conservation Chair, Brian Shovers  
Last Chance Audubon  
P.O. Box 924  
Helena, MT. 59624

## *Membership Report*

Please welcome to **Last Chance Audubon Society new chapter members** Aaron Millis & Ann Reber and Rich Wirak.

Many thanks to **Last Chance Audubon Society renewing chapter members** Mary Beaudette, Alan Davis, Jane Beasley, Carolyn Clemens, David & Deborah Cooper, Roni Eisenmenger, Pam Harris, Connie Herzig, Susan Jackson, Ann Lauer, Michael & Deborah Lee, Michele Marsh, Beverly Pickett, Neal & Mary Ruedisili, Sandy Shull, Jim & Leslie Smith, Betsie Walton, Carla Wambach and Jerry Wozniak.

Please also welcome **National Audubon Society new members** Tammy Filliater, Laurie Gaffney, Deborah Jones, Jacob Jost, Helen Lefferdink, Earl McCurley, Mark Murphy, Patricia Peterson and Jean Smith.

Sincere thanks to **National Audubon Society renewing members** Bob Adams, Susan Anderson, Don Bishop, Kizzie Brown, Loretta Carter, Eva Clark, Bruce Desonia, Lu Driessen, Susan Epstein, Irene Erdie, Gary Grzebielski, John Hoffland, Candy Kohlstaedt, L&C Library, Harrie Sherwood, Carol Shope, Sharon Speck, Judy Watkins and Knight & Weglarz.

**ERRORS & OMISSIONS:** Our apologies to LCAS members Leonard John & Jane Phillips who recently received a “reminder” postcard for 2017 dues. Both renewed last December for 2017. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

**LCAS MEMBERSHIP:** A new membership or renewal is \$15 per household and is current for one year, January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. Please be sure we receive all your correct contact information by filling out a registration form located either in this newsletter or printed from [www.lastchanceaudubon.org/html/membership.html](http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/html/membership.html). Please send completed registration form and your \$15 check to: LCAS, PO Box 924, Helena, MT 59624.

**PRINTED and ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS:** We want all our members to stay informed about chapter news and happenings. If you do not have access to email, staying current with your chapter membership to Last Chance Audubon Society guarantees that you will continue to receive a printed version of our newsletter. If you do have email access, please help us keep printing costs to a minimum and opt to receive our newsletter electronically. Those dollars we save will be spent for important bird habitat, education and outreach. Thank you.

**NAS MEMBERSHIP:** If you would like National Audubon Society membership information or to renew with them, please direct an email to [customerservice@audubon.org](mailto:customerservice@audubon.org) or contact them directly by phone at 1-844-428-3828. We are unable to forward memberships to National Audubon.

*\*\*\* Because this is the last newsletter of the season, if we receive your membership payment after April 15<sup>th</sup> your name will be listed in our next newsletter, September 2017. Happy birding and have a wonderful summer.*

Sharon Miller, Membership Chair, [12sharmil95@gmail.com](mailto:12sharmil95@gmail.com) or 513-1152



*“Freezeout Sunset 2017” by Janice Miller*

Last Chance Audubon Society  
PO Box 924  
Helena MT 59624



<https://www.facebook.com/lastchanceaudubon>

Website:

[www.lastchanceaudubon.org](http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org)

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Clip and mail to: PO Box 924,  
Helena MT 59624 with check  
for \$15. All contributions are  
tax deductible.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### LCAS BOARD

#### LCAS BOARD PRESIDENT:

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### LCAS COMMITTEE CHAIRS/CONTACTS

**Birdathon:** Jo Lace 443-6640,  
[sholace1049@gmail.com](mailto:sholace1049@gmail.com)

**Birdseed Sale:** Sue Jackson &  
Sandy Shull, 443-4486 or 449-0904

**Christmas Bird Count:** Cedron  
Jones, 442-1271

**Conservation:** Brian Shovers, 443-  
6640

**Membership:** Sharon Miller, 513-  
1152, [12sharmil95@gmail.com](mailto:12sharmil95@gmail.com)

**Monthly Program:** Sandy Shull &  
Liz Hiltunen, 449-0904 or 227-  
5492

**Newsletter:** Meta Downhour,  
[meta.downhour@live.com](mailto:meta.downhour@live.com)

**Publicity:** Liz Hiltunen, 227-5492,  
[lhiltunen@q.com](mailto:lhiltunen@q.com)

**Silent Auction:** Sandy Shull & Jo  
Lace, 449-0904 or 443-6640

**Field Trips:** open

**Habitat Protection:** open

**MT Audubon State Office:** 443-  
3949