

Last  
Chance  
Audubon  
Society



# *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.*

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*Published September to May*

*Helena MT*

*November 2016*

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## *An Eagle Spectacle in the Big Belts*

*Tuesday, November 8, 7:00PM*

*Plymouth Congregational Church  
400 S Oakes St, off Winnie Ave*

*Free, Family Friendly, All are  
Welcome*

Imagine seeing 23 Golden Eagles all at once, stretched across the sky, wings set in migration formation, soaring southeast at 40-mph. Chills run down your spine. But, then you realize there are also five Broad-winged Hawks zipping by, much lower and closer, and you can't believe your eyes! Ronan Dugan and Jeff Grayum, our primary Golden Eagle Migration Survey (GEMS) observers, will tell



tales of adventure, wind, snow, camp life at 7,477 feet, misfortune, science, and eagles, illustrating their experience atop the Big Belt Mountains in the Helena- Lewis & Clark National Forest with outstanding photography.

Ronan Dugan, returning for his second year as an observer, was brought up on a Nature Reserve in the Scottish Highlands and educated in Scotland. From a young age he had extensive experience in wildlife conservation and research, including study of various bird species in Europe, Russia and Alaska. Dugan is also a landscape and wildlife photographer who has won various competitions and is published internationally. Jeff Grayum, joining the team this fall, was born in San Jose, Costa Rica and raised in St Louis, MO. He attended Humboldt State University in northern California, where he earned his BS in biology. A passionate birder for over a decade, he has finally decided to try to make a career out of it. His interests include backpacking, surfing and birding.

*Photos by Ronan Dugan*



## *President's Perch*

*"Walk away quietly in any direction and taste the freedom of the mountains.*

*Camp out among the grasses and gentians of glacial meadows,*

*in craggy garden nooks full of nature's darlings.*

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings,*

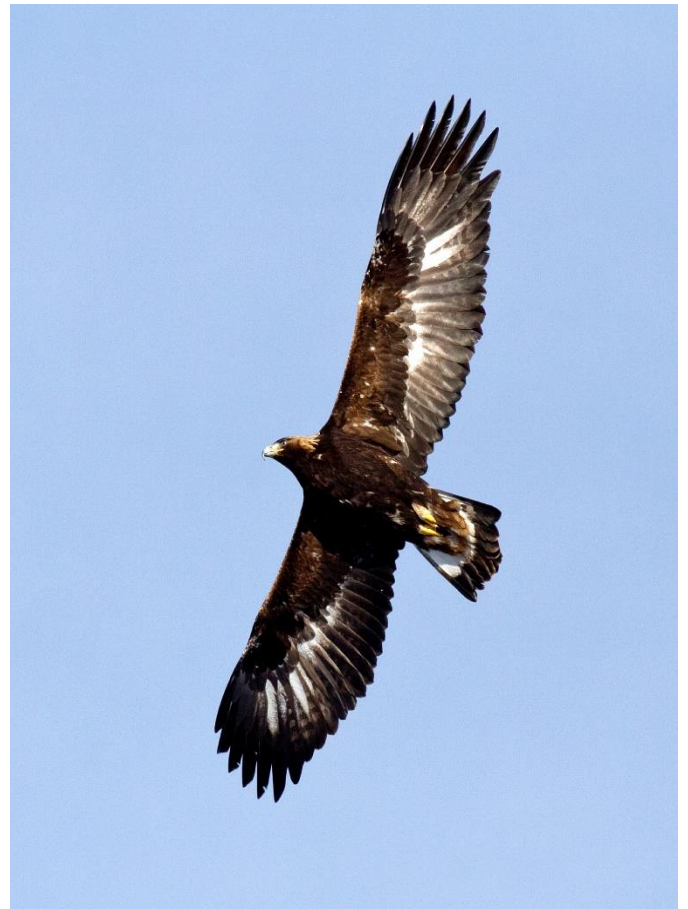
*Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.*

*The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy,*

*while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.*

*As age comes on, one source of enjoyment after another is closed,*

*but nature's sources never fail." ~ John Muir*



John Muir, 1838-1914, captured the experience our two Golden Eagle Migration Survey (GEMS) observers experience each day from September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup>, sometimes to the extreme. Spending time on the side of a mountain, receiving their “good tidings,” reminds me of the way “Nature” is and always has been – peaceful, windy and stormy! Although Muir was a “preservationist” and we are “conservationists,” our goals are similar in that we respect and enjoy the out-of-doors and are doing what we can to preserve it “through education, habitat protection and environmental advocacy.” I urge you to “walk away quietly in any direction and taste the freedom of the mountains.”

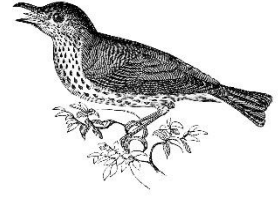
Janice Miller, President  
Last Chance Audubon Society

*Hanging Valley photo by Meta Downhour; eagle by Bob Martinka*



# *The Legislature Migrates Back to Helena*

Amy Seaman



## *Why help?*

Here we are again! The 2017 Montana Legislature will convene January 2<sup>nd</sup> in Helena. As we have since 1981, Montana Audubon will lobby on the front line at the Capitol in our efforts to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. This year, Amy Seaman, our Associate Director of Bird Conservation, will step up as the lead lobbyist with the help of a new legislative intern.

During the last (2015) Legislative session Montana Audubon testified on 68 bills, opposing 24 and supporting 44. Our efforts helped defeat 10 anti-environmental/anti-wildlife bills, and helped pass 20 bills aimed at strengthening our environmental and wildlife laws. We anticipate 2017 to be just as much work, and with so much on the table, we are going to need your help.

You can support our legislative work!

- **Donate** to Montana Audubon to support face-to-face contact with legislators and our action alert network.
- **Sign up for our action alert network** by visiting [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org)\*
- **Join us** for a Montana Audubon Lobby Day –free of charge, for any and all Audubon members. Come to the Capitol and participate directly in democracy. Learn about the legislative process, important Audubon issues, and help influence those making critical decisions about wildlife and the environment. Dates are set in early January.



**Sage-Grouse.** Fully funding Montana’s Sage-grouse conservation program staff is a major issue in addition to securing specific authorization to spend the remainder of a \$10M Sage-grouse stewardship fund.

**Habitat Montana.** In 2015, Montana legislators put restrictions on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks’ (FWP) main habitat program, largely preventing them from purchasing new parcels. We want to remove this restriction that negatively affects wildlife.

**Renewable Energy.** We will be supporting at least one bill on the topic of Montanan’s generating their own electricity with alternative technologies like solar panels. It allows government buildings (including county courthouses and schools) to invest in solar systems large enough to save on future utility bills.

**Colstrip.** Global warming is the biggest environmental we face, threatening to greatly disrupt birds, other wildlife and human communities. Numerous pieces of legislation will be introduced on coal and Colstrip. Montana Audubon will help ensure solutions address climate change, and preserve our constitutional right to a “clean and healthful environment.”

**Clean Water.** Most of the controversy surrounding water rights focus on ‘exempt wells’ in residential housing developments. Montana’s Supreme Court recently ruled that future large subdivisions need to change the way they acquire water. Since subdivisions impact a variety of wildlife, we will focus on the numerous bills anticipated on this issue.

**Wetlands.** Montana legislators will be exploring whether to take over the federal program that allows wetlands to be filled for development (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). State management of this permit program does not make sense for many reasons, so we will lobby to maintain federal control.

Find out more at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org) or by emailing Amy at [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org)!

*Photo by Bob Martinka*

## *Last Chance Chat Update – A Huge Thank You!*

We are almost there! It is all thanks to you, our membership, for making this happen. We have come together and made the effort to do our part in promoting conservation by declaring 2017 the year of the electronic newsletter (eNewsletter) for Last Chance Audubon. *Last Chance Chat* is going cyber! Many of you have emailed us and said, “No need for the hard copy, sign me up for the eNewsletter!” Thank you! This is great! We are moving forward! Beginning with the Jan/Feb 2017 issue (this will be a combined newsletter), we will be sending out the *Last Chance Chat* in electronic format only. So if you’re one of those folks that haven’t quite managed to get us your contact information, today is the day. Send your email address to [lastchanceaudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:lastchanceaudubonsociety@gmail.com) and don’t miss an issue. Your email information stays with us and will not be shared with anyone else. We look forward to hearing from you!

### **Birding Down Under with Bob Martinka**

December 13, 7:00PM

Montana WILD Building at 2668 Broadwater Ave.

Just returned from a trip to Australia, Bob Martinka will share his adventure covering the east coast from Cairnes in the north to Tasmania in the south. Birding is the primary target of this trip, but there is ample opportunity to view some of the many marsupial mammals of Australia. From the tropical Great Barrier Reef region to the wilds of Tasmania, scenery is an added bonus. Photography by Bob will highlight this presentation.



**Our website:**

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

### **GEMS program in Great Falls**

In case you have to miss the November 8 program, ‘An Eagle Spectacle in the Big Belts’, Ronan Dugan, our lead GEMS observer, and photographer, will be presenting the program for the Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Society at the Great Falls FWP Headquarters at Giant Springs State Park, Monday, Nov 14, 7:00PM.

## *Christmas Bird Count – 2016*

*Saturday, December 17*

*Meet at Jorgenson's Restaurant at 6:30AM*

Last Chance Audubon is excited to announce that plans are underway for the 2016 Christmas Bird Count (CBC). On Saturday, December 17, 2016, we will gather at Jorgenson's Restaurant (1720 11th Ave.) before heading into the field to count birds. All birds are counted and recorded by species *and* total number found. *Not sure whether that was a Bohemian Waxwing or a Cedar Waxwing you just saw?* No worries! We've got you covered. Lorna Milne, CBC chair, is organizing leaders for the nine sections that represent the Helena count area. These experts are ready and willing to share their love of birds and their ID secrets with anyone willing to spend an hour, a half day or a full day in the field. Everyone is welcome to this family friendly event! So bundle up and bring a pair of binoculars to the 2016 Christmas Bird Count! And please plan to join us afterwards for a potluck get together!

- **When:** Saturday, December 17, 2016
- **Where (AM):** Meet at Jorgenson's Restaurant at 6:30 am (if you're having breakfast), and 7:15 am if you're just going right out to the field. Section leaders will leave around 7:30-7:45.
- **Where (PM):** At 5:30 PM. We will regroup for an evening potluck and to share details of the count. Please bring a dish to share, and utensils and drinks for yourself. Location - TBA. Check the December newsletter or our website [lastchanceaudubon.org/CBC](http://lastchanceaudubon.org/CBC) for last minute details.



## *Birds, Beer, and a Band!*

*Come Out and Support the Golden Eagle Migration Survey (GEMS)!*

*Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> from 5-8PM at Ten Mile Creek Brewery*

Get this one on the calendar today! GEMS committee member and Fish, Wildlife, and Park's Avian conservation biologist Allison Begley has organized an evening of music, fellowship and beer to benefit the Golden Eagle Migration Survey (GEMS). Members and friends are invited to raise a glass in support of migrating raptors. The generous folks at Ten Mile Creek Brewery reach out to the Helena community each Sunday in support of local non-profits through their "Brewing a Better Community" program. They have offered to donate \$1 for each pint sold on November 13th to the GEMS project! Music will be provided by *The Helena Irish Session*. Please plan to join us at Ten Mile Creek Brewery in support of eagles and falcons and hawks...Oh my!

Ten Mile Creek Brewery ([tenmilecreekbrewing.com](http://tenmilecreekbrewing.com)) is located at 48 N Last Chance Gulch in downtown Helena.



## *Membership Report*

Please welcome to *Last Chance Audubon Society* **new** chapter members Kathy Bramer, Marjean Heisler and Evelyn Norton.

Many thanks to *Last Chance Audubon Society* **renewing** chapter members Van (Sonny) Bass, Cliff & Catherine Sheets and Carla Wambach.

Please also welcome *National Audubon Society* **new** members Donald Babcock, Jeffry Georgia, Joy Holloway, Diana Koch, Gus Schippers and Copi Trudeau.

Sincere thanks to *National Audubon Society* **renewing** members Marcalee Carroll, Eliza Frazer & Barry Hood, William Gallea, Gary Gingery, Jeffry & Libby Goldes, Jeanne Perkins and Beatrice Vogel.

And, please also welcome *National Audubon Society* **transfer** members Tracy Cook and Jeff Savage.

**LCAS MEMBERSHIPS DUE JANUARY 1st:** For anyone interested in early renewal or joining our local Audubon chapter, you can find a registration form in this newsletter or online at [www.lastchanceaudubon.org](http://www.lastchanceaudubon.org). Membership is \$15 per household and runs January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**SNOWBIRD MIGRATION:** If you are heading south with our avian friends – you can renew your membership now for 2017. See the above paragraph.

**NAS MEMBERSHIP:** If you would like membership information about National Audubon Society please direct an email to them at [customerservice@audubon.org](mailto:customerservice@audubon.org) or you may contact them directly by phone at 1-844-428-3826.

Sharon Miller, Membership Chair, [12sharmil95@gmail.com](mailto:12sharmil95@gmail.com) or 406-513-1152



*Photo by Bob Martinka*

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

Website:

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

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Clip and mail to: PO Box  
Helena MT 59624 with c  
for \$15. All contribution  
tax deductible.

Name

Address

City/State

Zip

Phone

### LCAS BOARD

**PRESIDENT:** Janice Miller, 439-5762, [jan2854@gmail.com](mailto:jan2854@gmail.com)

**SECRETARY:** Brian Shovers, 443-6640, [sholace1049@gmail.com](mailto:sholace1049@gmail.com)

**TREASURER:** Chris Hunter, 461-7038, [chbabahunter00@gmail.com](mailto:chbabahunter00@gmail.com)

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**BOARD AT LARGE:** Jo Lace, 443-6640

**BOARD AT LARGE:** Don Skaar, 442-3254, [tedradon@gmail.com](mailto:tedradon@gmail.com)

### 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 & Lorna Milne, 443-7162, [lornajmilne@gmail.com](mailto:lornajmilne@gmail.com)

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

**Membership:** Sharon Miller, 442-7533

**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