



Susannah and Dan Casey Recognized for Outstanding Conservation Achievements

By Gael Bissell

Below is a short version of the Recognition announcement. The full article is on the Flathead Audubon website homepage.

Susannah and Dan Casey will be recognized for their Outstanding Conservation Achievements at Flathead Audubon's General Meeting on May 9, 7 PM. See page 3 for more on the meeting.



The Caseys came to the Flathead in 1983 when Dan joined Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in Kalispell as a wildlife biologist to work on wildlife impacts of Hungry Horse dam. Strong believers in community, Dan and Susannah were soon participating in all types of Flathead activities including business, Flathead Audubon Society and other non-profits, schools, and the local arts.

Dan and Susannah have been stalwart supporters of Flathead Audubon. Dan led countless Flathead Audubon field trips to Owen Sowerwine, Freezout Lake, Tally Lake, and Flathead River (float trips). For many of the last 30 years he conducted the Cut Bank Breeding Bird Survey and continues the Kalispell BBS route. He coordinated the Bigfork Christmas Bird Counts since the mid-1980s and started the Kalispell CBC in 1998. Dan served as FAS Field Trip Chair, Program Chair, and long-time Board member and advisor. He led the effort to have Owen Sowerwine Natural Area designated an Important Bird Area, and served on the OSNA Committee since its beginning. He taught both Beginning and Advanced Birding classes at FVCC, and helped with FAS's Beauty of Birds class. During this time, Susannah served as Vice President of FAS, chaired the Hospitality Committee, and distributed tons of sunflower seeds. It was Susannah's idea to have a camping field trip at Tally Lake, which has now become Flathead Audubon's "Warbler Weekend." The stunning turquoise banner Susannah made for FAS has become an iconic hallmark of chapter meetings.

Dan was a charter member of the Montana Bird Records Committee, serving eight years as Chair. He was the Montana editor of Christmas Bird Counts for National Audubon from 1994 through 2013. In 2008 he established the annual fall Jewel Basin Hawk Watch.

Through his wildlife work at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Dan helped define Montana's nongame and bird conservation programs. He initiated a multi-year nongame bird-monitoring program along Hungry Horse and Libby dams and worked with the U.S. Forest Service's new landbird monitoring program. He served as Montana Partners in Flight Coordinator from 1993-2000 and wrote key parts of the first Montana Bird Conservation Plan, completed in 2000. Dan also helped establish the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society's first nongame symposia, and wrote the first "Nongame News" articles for Montana Outdoors.

The Caseys continued on page 7.

FOURTH ANNUAL FLATHEAD AUDUBON BIRDATHON—JUNE 18

This year's contest pits a new team, Jakes Jays, against last year's winning team, the Tannehill Tanagers.

Who will win? Who will have the most fun?

Who will you support with your Birdathon donation?

Learn more about this epic battle on page 3.



MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, May 9, 2016. 7 PM General Meeting; doors open 5 PM; potluck dinner 6 PM; Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street, Whitefish. See page 3.

Monday, May 2, 2016. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Tuesdays in May, 2016. 10 AM. Bigfork Wild Mile Corridor Walks. See page 6.

Saturday, May 14, 2016. 9 PM. Bike and Bird McWeneger Slough and Fairview Marsh. See page 6.

Summer Field Trips — June, July, and August, listed on pages 6 and 7.



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BIRD OF THE MONTH

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRDS

By Jeannie Marcure

watching. I especially enjoy the end of April and the first part of May as these weeks typically mark the return of our hummingbirds with their jewel-like colors and frantic display flights.

For most of the years that I've lived here, our feeders have welcomed only Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds. However, that all changed in 2012 with the arrival of a pair of Black-chinned Hummingbirds who quickly settled in and became residents of our area. Since that first summer, I've had many opportunities to enjoy, study and photograph these unique little birds.

Before they settled into our yard, I was under the impression that the Black-chinned were found mainly in riparian habitats because that was the only place that I'd seen them. After a little research, I discovered that although they like areas with water, they adapt to many different habitat types and are found throughout the west from British Columbia to Mexico. Their only requirements seem to be a rather open canopy containing a few tall trees, a deciduous component, and some flowering plants. Of course, feeders are welcomed as well! Most Black-chinned Hummingbirds winter in Mexico.

As is the case with most hummingbirds, the male Black-chinned is quite easy to identify. Of the three species that come to our feeders, he is the middle sized one at 3.5 inches. As the name suggests, he has a black chin, which is bordered by a narrow violet strip that often appears black unless the light is just right. He has a green back, sides and crown and a white spot behind the eye. I think he looks a little like he's wearing an executioner's hood! The female is best identified by the white spot behind her eye, her

upright sitting posture, the rather slender head and neck, and wingtips that are just slightly shorter than the tail. Another reliable identifier for both male and female is the very slight down curve of the bill and the almost constant tail pumping while they hover to feed. During courtship, the male displays by flying back and forth in a wide u-shaped arc in

front of a perched female. These flights often include 60 to 100 drops and are accompanied by a whirring sound on each dive. After copulation, the male basically disappears leaving all nest building, incubation and feeding of the chicks to the female.

The nest is typically built in a tree or shrub four to eight feet from the ground; it is a small lightly woven cup made of grasses and plant fibers. A camouflage of lichens and dead leaves covers the outside, and its unique construction allows the nest to expand as the chicks arrive and grow. Each female lays two white eggs approximately the size of a coffee bean and are incubated for 13 to 16 days. When hatched, the babies are about ½ inch long, have their eyes closed, and are almost completely naked except for two rows of downy feathers down their backs. Amazingly they fledge within 20 days! Juveniles are typically larger than the adults. Female juveniles look much like the adult female, while the males start to develop a dark throat patch by fall.

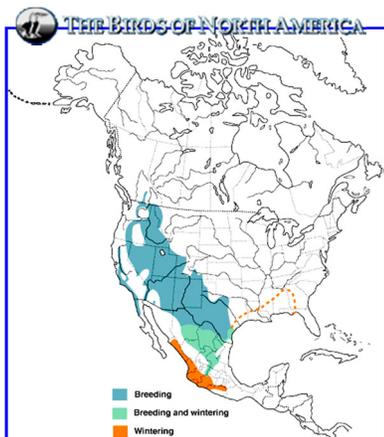
If you have not yet discovered the fun of watching hummingbirds in your own yard, perhaps this will be the year to start. All you need is a feeder for the sugar water, some sugar and water. Remember no red coloring is needed—just add ¼ cup of white sugar to each cup of boiling water, let it cool and place it in your feeder. It is important to keep your feeder clean and to change the solution if it becomes cloudy. During hot weather this will need to be done every day or so as the solution can ferment and become toxic during this time.

You can also make your yard more attractive to hummingbirds by planting flowering trees and shrubs and by providing a water source of some kind. Some of my favorite flowering plants are Bees Balm (*Monarda*), Coral Bells, Mountain Hollyhocks and our native Serviceberry bushes. If you don't want to bother with flowerbeds, a small hanging basket of colorful flowers on your deck will also attract hummingbirds. For water, we have a small recirculating fountain that all of our birds enjoy. Hummingbirds are also attracted to sprinklers and enjoy darting back and forth through the spray.

I hope that this summer brings many hummingbirds to your feeders and lots of time to enjoy them. Maybe you'll even be inspired to try for that perfect hummingbird photo that you can share in the Pileated Post next fall!



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Distribution of Black-chinned Hummingbird.



May Program

SWETS IN MY NETS

Migration of Northern Saw-whet Owls

Marco Restani of Montana Audubon will be featured speaker at our annual meeting on May 9. His presentation will focus on migration ecology of Northern Saw-whet Owls and the techniques used to run an owl banding station.

Twice a year millions of birds migrate north and south across the planet in search of food, mates, and a better climate. Migrations of some species are visible during the day, but many more migrate at night, under cover of darkness, safe from predators, and to exploit cooler and calmer air. A cadre of professional biologists and enthusiastic hobbyists work through the night to capture and band thousands of Northern Saw-whet Owls each autumn to learn about the haunts and habits of this most charismatic little bird. A coordinated network of banding stations – Project OwlNet – spans the continent from coast to coast. Restani operated a station in central Minnesota from 2010-2015.

Marco Restani is Director of Conservation at Montana Audubon, a position he has held since December 2015. Prior to returning to the state, he was Professor of Wildlife Ecology at St. Cloud State University for over 13 years. He obtained a BS from the University of Montana, an MS from Montana State, and a PhD from Utah State. He has studied raptors in Montana since 1987.

MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 9, 2016

Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street, Whitefish.

Doors Open 5 PM, Potluck Dinner 6 PM,

Meeting Begins 7 PM.

Arrive early to look over and bid on silent auction items!

BRING YOUR OWN PLATES, UTENSILS, & CUPS for dinner!

Officers and Board Members will be elected at the meeting

- see candidate list on page 10.



SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at the Flathead Audubon May Potluck.

Now's the perfect time to gather all of the valuable "stuff" that you might be able to live without. Popular items at past Silent Auctions have been bird books, outdoor gear, art work, live bedding plants, homemade pies and cookies, bird houses and feeders.

FOURTH ANNUAL FLATHEAD AUDUBON BIRDATHON—SATURDAY, JUNE 18



For the fourth consecutive year, the Tanager and the Jays will face off, searching mountains, meadows, streams and backyard bird feeders to see which team can find the most bird species in one day.

After three consecutive years in second place, the Jays have a new leader in Jake Bramante. Will the Tannehill Tanagers continue their winning streak or will Jake's Jays become the 2016 Birdathon Champs?

But the real question of the day is who will have the most fun? Of course, it is the team finding the most species of birds from morning to night on that momentous Saturday or the team member finding that rare species. There is no doubt, fun will be had!

Flathead Audubon invites you to join in supporting one of its teams. Each team must complete the count within 24 hours. Team members can bird all day or for an hour to two at their feeders or favorite birding habitat. The competition will end in a tallying of

species, a declaration of a winning team, as well as a discussion of favorite sightings.

The Birdathon works like any other "athon," where team members seek donations either per bird species seen or as a pre-determined amount. In the last three years we had exceptional days for birding with teams seeing from 130 to over 160 species. We hope to repeat these high numbers, but weather is always an issue that we can't control.



Funds from pledges received will be applied to our education and conservation efforts: FAS education trunks, workshops; Beauty of Birds class; license and maintenance of Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

When contacted, we hope you will support Flathead Audubon's efforts.

If you would like to join one of the Birdathon teams or support a team with a donation, email Bruce Tannehill at tanneland239@gmail.com.

Mark your calendars – 10th ANNUAL RAPTOR DAY – Saturday, September 10th at Lone Pine.

Conservation Education Corner

by Lisa B. Flowers, FAS Conservation Educator

Adult education class - **Beauty of Birds** ran at Flathead High School on Wednesday evenings from 6 – 8 PM in April. The 4-week class got off to an exceptional beginning with wildlife biologist Steve Gniadek presenting his photos of birds in Glacier National Park. One of the favorite photos was of a hawk owl Steve had found in GNP. The detailed information and stories Steve told us are memorable. Kari Gabriel was our second presenter and was accompanied by her two birds of prey which she uses for educational purposes throughout the year. Her presentation on hawks, falcons and eagles was very informative. The third class Bruce Tannehill taught participants about bird songs and calls. The final class will be a fantastic field trip out to Smith Lake with Leslie Kehoe and Bob Lee. It will be interesting to see how many more birds had arrived since our field trip with the FVCC Senior Institute – Birds of Northwestern Montana class.

The educational trunks are being checked out by teachers to use in their classrooms. Wand we are so thankful to Beth and Eliza at the Northwestern Montana Learning Cooperative for letting us house our trunks in their building space at Linderman School. They are always accommodating of the needs of teachers to pick up the trunks, and make it easy for us to keep our educational resources organized and ready to be used by educators in the Flathead Valley.

In May we will be working with the biology teachers at Flathead High School to select up to 5 monitoring locations on the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area property. This field trip will help us develop a plan for a fall field day in which older high school students mentor younger students as they gain knowledge and skills focused on wetland/riparian habitat, birds & wildlife and their needs in OSNA, and soils and plants, including invasive species. Our field day will also include cross curriculum activities such as journaling and cultural history.

There are many exceptional upcoming educational presentations and opportunities in May, June and beyond! If you or anyone you know are interested in volunteering or learning more contact Lisa Flowers, 406-781-1721, auduboneducator@gmail.com. Your interest, support, and participation in FAS's Conservation Education Program are much appreciated!!

CASH REWARDS FOR LOON REPORTS



Montana Loon Society is offering cash prizes for the greatest number of 2016 observations of banded and unbanded confirmed breeding Common Loons in Montana. The contest is generously funded by the Weyerhaeuser Company.

One \$200 prize will go for the most observations of banded and unbanded breeding loons reported by May 31. A second \$200 prize will go for the most observations reported by July 18. And one \$100 prize will be decided by a random drawing from the names of all individuals who submitted at least one observation. Federal and State employees are not eligible if they observe loons as part of their job.

Send band observations before these dates to Chris Hammond, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (chammond@mt.gov). The most useful band reports are ones that come to Chris as soon as possible, so send them in as soon as you observe a loon, even if you are not 100% sure of your observation or have trouble reading the bands. Qualified observations will be determined and counted solely by Chris.

Winners will be announced at the July 20-21 summer meeting of the Montana Common Loon Working Group. Chris will notify winners soon after.

Further details about the contest, including how to write a report on observed bands and tips for spotting and reading loon bands, are on the Montana Loon Society website www.montanaloons.org; click on "Click here" about half way down the home page.

KEEP HUMMINGBIRD & SEED FEEDERS CLEAN

From www.allaboutbirds.org, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Hummingbird feeders must be kept clean.

Bacteria and mold grow in sugar water, and sugar ferments, so sugar water should never be left out more than 2 or 3 days; change daily in very hot weather.



Clean feeders at least once a week with hot water and a brush. Don't use soap or a detergent. Or clean feeders by filling with dilute bleach solution, then rinsing thoroughly. Let them air dry before refilling.

Don't put oil or other sticky substances around feeding ports to deter bees; this can contaminate the nectar. If bees, wasps, or ants are a problem, try moving the feeder. For other solutions see Cornell Lab's web page on feeders, pests, and predators.

Keep **seed feeders** clean too. Moldy or decomposing seeds and hulls can make birds sick. Bird droppings and other contaminants may also spread infectious bird diseases.

Clean seed feeders about once every two weeks, more often during times of heavy use, wet weather, if salmonella is in your area, or you've seen sick birds in your yard. To clean a seed feeder, take it apart and use a dishwasher on hot setting, or hand wash with soap and boiling water or with a dilute bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water). Rinse thoroughly and allow to dry before refilling.

Clean the area under feeders. Moldy or spoiled food is unhealthy for birds and outside pets. Seed scattered on the ground can attract rodents.

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS



Highlights from April 2016 Board Meeting

- * Heard report that IRS Form 990 due by May 15.
- * Board meeting scheduled for June 6 to make up for the one missed earlier.
- * Heard that Bruce Tannehill will be doing the annual financial examination.
- * Tabled Montana Audubon request for 2 year donation commitment until obtain more detailed information.
- * Heard Education Committee report that Strategic Plan accomplishments are on track and at a high level.
- * Heard that the Conservation Educator will be leaving for a new job at the end of June.
- * Heard report that the people involved with 2017 Calendar project are discussing strategy options and will need a decision on the theme soon.
- * Heard Field Trip Committee report that field trips are set and that the American Prairie Reserve trip is filled but names are being taken for a waiting list.
- * Decided to purchase 10 screen covers for toilet vents to prevent entrapment of birds and donate to the US Forest Service in Eureka to supplement their ongoing efforts.
- * Heard that the final 2015 Hawk Watch report is out and agreed to continue the project in 2016.

THE WARBLER WEEKEND AT TALLY LAKE

Thursday afternoon thru Saturday 11AM, June 9-11



Come join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary two days of birding and relaxing. The pavilion campsite at the campground has been reserved for us.

We will be focusing on bird id, birding by ear, and photography. This is an ideal time of year to find a wide variety of migrant and resident birds; most notable is that all of the warbler species which can be found in NW Montana are found here. Several of our expert birders will be available to lead us around the campground. Other activities can be enjoyed at Tally Lake as well: you can bring canoes and kayaks, play volleyball or horseshoes, hike on one of the numerous trails found close to the campground, or bring board games. There is a covered pavilion for rainy weather.

We will have an optional potluck meal Friday evening around 6 PM. Please bring something to share if you want to join in. All other meals are up to you. Someone will show up Thursday afternoon to get a fire going, scout the area, and start creating a bird list. Bring camp chairs for sitting around the fire. Please bring FIREWOOD if you have it, or tools to harvest it from the woods.

Camping is FREE, courtesy of FAS. Just tell them at the gate you're with Flathead Audubon at the pavilion. Contact Jill or Mike Fanning at 862-8070 or shrdlu@centurytel.net if you have questions about this outstanding adventure into the world of birds.

Be sure to TAKE AN OSNA MONITORING FORM when you visit Owen Sowerwine this summer.

Use the form to tell us what parts of Owen Sowerwine you visited, and what you saw and heard there. Feedback from Volunteer Monitors helps Flathead Audubon do a better job of managing Owen Sowerwine.

Get the form from www.flatheadaudubon.org or email lindawin@centurytel.net to have it sent to



FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO



The 27th annual Family Forestry Expo will be Saturday, 7 May, 9 AM to 3 PM, at Stoltze Lumber's Ron Bunttemeyer Educational Forest, north of Kalispell along Trumble Creek.

This family event offers hands-on understanding of the role that forests play in our everyday lives. Expo visitors explore how the different parts of a forest are connected in a dynamic, living system; how people and all parts of the environment depend on one another; and how each affects the other.

Featured are a free "loggers lunch," logging demonstrations, exhibits, and a forest walk with many educational stops — including one by FAS.

For more information contact Lisa Flowers, the FAS Conservation Educator, at auduboneducator@gmail.com or 781-1721.

Whitefish Soroptomists Team with Flathead Audubon

The Soroptomists of Whitefish have recently contributed a significant sum to Flathead Audubon, to further our work with local girls and young women, in education about the outdoors, nature, birds and the Flathead watershed. The Soroptomist grant will support our mentoring program, in which older students support and assist younger students in outdoor activities. Flathead Audubon is pleased to have this opportunity to make an impact on young people with the generous support of the Whitefish Soroptomists.

We also thank the Soroptomists, and Mary Nelesen in particular, for a separate grant, and for their help in distributing our remaining 2016 calendars to outlying schools.



THANK YOU to ALL who are helping with OSNA Monitoring!

THIS IS YOUR LAST PILEATED POST UNTIL SEPTEMBER

Be sure to check the FAS website for summer news and events!
Watch for OSNA Fall Workday Date and Information in the September 2016 Post.

SPRING/SUMMER FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!

All Flathead Audubon field trips are free and open to the public and are geared for all ages and levels of field experience. They are led by area biologists, retired professionals, and some of the best birders in the region. For all Field Trips, dress for the weather, bring binoculars or spotting scope if you have them, wear sturdy footwear, and drive and pull off the road safely. All drivers must have their own vehicle insurance. For more information, contact Kathy Ross, 837-3738, or Gael Bissell, 261-2255, or the individual field trip leader listed below. Also, a free brochure, "Birding Hotspots of the Flathead" is available at the Flathead Audubon general meetings and on www.FlatheadAudubon.org.



BIGFORK WILD MILE CORRIDOR WALKS. Tuesdays in May, 10 AM to noon. Join Anne Morely and Neal brown for these gentle, two-hour spring birding and wildflower identification strolls. We wander two miles along the Old-Swan River Road. Meet in front of Showtyme Restaurant in Bigfork. For more information contact Anne at 886-2242 or Neal at 837-5018. Sponsored by Montana Native Plant Society.

BIKE AND BIRD MCWENNEGER SLOUGH AND FAIRVIEW MARSH. Saturday, May 14, 9 AM to noon. Join us for a bike and bird tour of McWenninger Slough and Fairview Marsh, hosted by Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, and Flathead River to Lake Initiative. We will bike about 8 miles on a 412-acre Flathead Land Trust conservation easement that includes a large portion of McWenninger Slough and in the Fairview Marsh area. Pete Fisher, the conservation easement landowner and bird expert of Flathead Audubon will help lead this trip. Meet at the Fisher residence, 390 Columbia Falls Stage Rd. Because we will be on both paved and gravel roads we recommend mountain or fat tire bikes. These can be rented from Wheaton's (Kalispell) or Glacier Cyclery (Whitefish) for the day. Wear a bike helmet and appropriate clothing; bring water and binoculars. Please RSVP to Laura Katzman of Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 or lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org

BIRDING NEW PARTS OF WHITEFISH TRAIL WITH BRUCE TANNEHILL & GAIL CLEVELAND. Thursday, June 9, 6-8 PM. Flathead Audubon's Bruce Tannehill and Gael Cleveland will lead a walk on the new sections of the Whitefish Trail in the Dollar Lake area. Come learn bird songs and meet the ducks, sparrows, woodpeckers, warblers, and nuthatches that live in the area. Novice and experienced birders and families are all welcome. Bring your binoculars and sturdy hiking shoes. Spotting scopes will be available to see the exquisite details of birds within view. Meet at Dollar Lake Trailhead at 6 PM or at the tennis courts at Grouse Mountain Lodge at 5:30 PM to carpool to the trailhead. Sponsored by the Whitefish Legacy Partnership.

WARBLER WEEKEND AT TALLY LAKE. Thursday through Saturday, June 9-11. Join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary 2 days of birding and relaxing. All the warbler species of NW Montana can usually be found here. Camping fees paid by FAS. For more information see article on page 7 .

COMMON LOONS AND LOON CHICKS. Sunday, June 12, 8:30 AM-2:00 PM. Join the Tally Lake/Kalispell West Loon Ranger to see recently hatched common loon chicks and adults on several local nesting lakes. Actual destinations will depend on timing and success of this year's loon hatch. Trip is ideal for people of all ages and young families. Walking may be necessary for short distances and down hills or trails to observation points. The Loon Ranger intern will provide an excellent spotting scope and information about northwest Montana loons, loon behaviors and loon interactions with each other and humans, the result of years of banding efforts, as well as other little known facts about our local loons. Meet at 8:30 AM at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 490 North Meridian Road in Kalispell. Bring lunch, binoculars, warm clothes, boots and rain gear. Return will be between 12:30 and 2:30 PM depending on distance to the lakes. To sign up or for more information, contact Laura Holmquist at the Flathead National Forest (lholmquist@fs.fed.us or 758-3501).

LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Sunday, June 19, 8:30 AM-2:00 PM. Join refuge wildlife biologist Beverly Skinner and tour the incredible wetlands and grasslands of this hidden jewel west of Kalispell. See restored Dahl Lake with nesting Trumpeter Swans and an abundance of shorebirds and waterfowl species. We will also spend time looking for bird species associated with Palouse prairie, riparian/wetland, and larch/pine forest habitats of the 9,000+ acre Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge northwest of Marion, MT. The trip may include seeing one of the Refuge's rarest plant, the federally threatened Spalding's catchfly. We will drive and walk along some of the refuge's closed roads with short hikes to the best viewing sites. Meet at the Lost Trail Refuge Headquarters (about 45 miles northwest of Kalispell) between 8:15-8:30 AM. For location and more information about the refuge, go to http://www.fws.gov/refuge/lost_trail/. To sign up for the field trip or get more information about the trip contact Beverly at 406-858-2286 or beverly_skinner@fws.gov.

EXPLORE WILD HORSE ISLAND WITH DOUG MACCARTER. Wednesday, June 22, 9 AM.-3 PM. Enjoy a boat ride, spectacular views and the exciting wildlife of Flathead Lake's Wild Horse Island. As we hike the island we will see herds of Bighorn Sheep, Mule Deer and a wide variety of bird species found on and around this island paradise. The trip will include some up hill hiking and will be limited to 10 people. In case of a rough lake, the trip may be canceled that morning. To reserve a spot, contact Doug at 602-663-8611. Bring a lunch and be prepared for possible wet or cool weather conditions.

ALVORD LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST CELEBRATION. Friday, July 8, 2016 10 AM-2 PM at Alvord Lake (Troy, MT). Come learn about the Alvord Lake Community Forest, a recently protected and outstanding 142-acre forested parcel located on Alvord Lake about 2 miles north of Troy, Montana. With the help of a federal Forest Service Community Forest and Open Spaces grant as well as donations from foundations, private donors, the landowner, and several Montana non-profits such as Flathead Audubon Society, Flathead Wildlife Inc., and Montana Loon Society, the Vital Ground Foundation was able to purchase this \$1 million+ valued parcel and protect it from possible future development. Vital Ground will manage the parcel in conjunction with the community stakeholders for its habitat, open space, educational, and recreational values. The Alvord Lake Celebration begins at Roosevelt Park in Troy around 10:00 AM where you will be shuttled to Alvord Lake's Outdoor Classroom for an education/celebration event that includes lunch for all. We will learn about the Community Forest, ongoing forest restoration activities, currently nesting Common Loons and others birds of the lake via educational stations and short presentations. There will be some time for birding a portion of the 3-mile lake trail loop trail. Lynn Kelly, Paul Rumelhart, and Steve Gniadek will lead this joint Flathead Audubon/Montana Loon Society field trip. Those traveling from the Flathead can meet in Kalispell at 7:45 AM in the Gateway West Mall west parking lot near the United Way Public Meeting Room entrance. Return will be around 5 PM. Please **RSVP to Paul Rumelhart by July 5th** so we have a head count for food and travel. To sign up or get more information, contact Paul Rumelhart at 406-293 7544 (h) or 406-293-1359 (c) or by email pwr@frontiernet.net. More information about the Alvord Lake Community Forest Project can be found on the FAS website under [Conservation>FAS Conservation Activities](#).

GOING BATTY! Friday, August 12, 8:30 PM-11 PM. This cooperative trip between Flathead Audubon and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks will go to a site with known bat activity where electronic equipment will be used to detect the ultrasonic calls of bats flying overhead, and mist nets will be used to capture bats for closer inspection. Wildlife biologists Lewis Young, Lisa Bate, and Chris Hammond will demonstrate the equipment, handle bats captured in mist nets, and talk about the amazing adaptations bats have for navigating, catching food, and hibernating. Participants will not be allowed to touch or handle bats. Headlamps or flashlights are necessary and come with suitable clothing for the evening temperatures and possibly mosquitoes as the day cools. Limited to 25 participants. Call Lewis Young (889-3492) to sign up.

EXPLORE OSNA LEISURE AND BIG ISLANDS WITH JEANETTE OLIVER. Saturday, August 20, 9 AM to noon. Join retired Biology Professor Jeanette Oliver for a stroll in the portion of OSNA just north of her property on Leisure Island, followed by an easy walk across a mostly dry portion of the Stillwater to explore OSNA's Big Island – a part of OSNA that is usually only accessible by boat. Focus will be on identifying OSNA vegetation, including typical flood plain vegetation, and spotting birds. This trip is limited to 20 participants. Meet at 9 AM at Jeanette's house – you'll get directions when you sign up. For questions or to sign up contact Jeanette at jopjoliver74@gmail.com or 755-8622.

The Caseys *continued from page 1.*

Dan left Fish, Wildlife & Parks in 2000 to open the Northern Rockies Office for American Bird Conservancy in Kalispell. In this position, Dan greatly expanded bird habitat knowledge, and both he and Susannah used that knowledge to increase local conservation activities. Dan served on the technical committees for three different Montana Joint Ventures: Intermountain West, Prairie Pothole, and the Northern Great Plains. He wrote the Landbird Implementation Plans for two Joint Ventures. He also chaired the Western States Working Group of Partners in Flight, authored and/or edited the technical questions of nine successful standard North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grants in Montana.

Susannah joined Dan at American Bird Conservancy as a GIS specialist. In this capacity she became an invaluable partner in the Flathead River to Lake Initiative, a collaboration of conservation organizations and agencies focused on protecting important riparian/wetland and farmlands along the Flathead River and North Shore. Susannah mapped and analyzed wetland habitats, land ownerships, prime agricultural soils, ground water and many other attributes of the Flathead Valley to help partners obtain grants and fund the subsequent successful conservation of over 5,000 acres of riparian/wetlands and farms in the Flathead Valley (see <http://www.flatheadrivertolake.org>).

In 2014 the Caseys moved to Billings where Dan became leader of the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture in Billings. They often return to visit the Flathead.

Susannah and Dan Casey have had an incredible, positive influence on our quality of life in the Flathead Valley through their sense of community and commitment to education, science, volunteerism, and the arts. Dan's pioneering work in the early phases of the state's nongame and avian programs helped shape the future of these programs, and his ongoing work has led to a huge increase in our bird knowledge that, in turn, has led and is still leading to greater efforts and collaborations in bird conservation. Susannah's hands-on volunteer efforts and GIS expertise have provided invaluable support to this conservation work. It is with great appreciation that we recognize their extraordinary and invaluable efforts to benefit our valley, our wildlife resources, and our state. Thank you Susannah and Dan Casey!



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY TREASURER'S REPORT (Calendar Year 2015) – From Joe Batts

In 2015 the Flathead Audubon Society continued its valley wide education program while supporting and improving the Owen Sowerwine Nature Area, developing the Robbins bird viewing site, and supporting the Alvord Lake Forest and Jewel Basin Hawk Watch. The board continues to work with the challenge of financially supporting these projects. The donations of foundations, local organizations, and individuals make it possible.

In 2015 Flathead Audubon produced and sold another truly unique calendar. The printing cost this organization about \$5500. This was offset by income of \$12,763 in sales.

Expenditures are in three categories: Operations, Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, and Education.

EXPENDITURES FOR CALENDAR YEAR	2014	2015
Operations (Newsletter, Office, Insurance, etc.)	\$14,732	\$11,346
Owen Sowerwine	\$950	\$1,041
Education	\$22,167	\$22,995
TOTAL	\$37,849	\$35381

The chart below illustrates how hard our members have worked to fund these programs. Note the substantial increase in revenue from Calendar sales and dues but this was offset by a decrease in organizational grants and donations. We covered expenses from rollover of cash from 2014.

The \$15,400 drop in income is due to: a onetime special donation in 2014; drop in income from grants.

INCOME FOR THE YEAR	2013	2014
Local Dues	\$4,690	\$6,185
Membership Donations and Sponsorships	\$3,575	4,391
Amount Withdrawn From Funds (See ** below)	0	\$1,634
June Bird-a-thon	\$5,766	\$3,109
Sponsorships of FAS Calendar pages	\$6,000	
Calendar Sales	\$10,690	\$13,253
Other Income (Sales, Interest, etc.)	\$1,680	\$1,263
Grant from COCEEC	\$500	
Rhodes Scholar		\$1,000
U.S. Forest Service Education Grant	\$1,815	
Sustainability Fund	\$1,000	
Estate of Roy Dimond	\$5,500	
Prudential Foundation	\$1,100	
Whitefish Community Foundation	\$1,000	
Soroptimist International of Whitefish	\$1,500	\$1,500
Montana Chapter of Wildlife Society	\$913	
Tom and Teresa Quinn Foundation	\$1,000	
Cinnabar Foundation	\$2,000	
National Audubon	\$1,889	\$1,879
TOTALS	\$50,618	\$3,5214

The Flathead Audubon Society's board instituted four investment portfolios to be dedicated to long term support of projects. Part of the capital monies in these funds were bequests. Four percent or less of the portfolio is to be spent on projects each year so that these funds can grow to be a permanent financial support for these projects.

FUND	AMOUNT IN FUND 12/31/15
Education Income Fund	\$102,354
Owen Sowerwine Income Fund	\$14954
Conservation Income Fund	\$34,153
Jack White Conservation Fund	\$23,697
Operating Fund	\$16,088

wings across the big sky

June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

Step back in history and learn how Montana Audubon began as a fledgling organization 40 years ago; hear the highlights of these last 4 decades of conservation successes! What have they been doing since 1976 and who has been part of that journey?

Meet the authors of the long-awaited *Birds of Montana* at this year's festival and get your autographed copy!

Hear Erick Greene as he brings you fascinating stories of how birds communicate to alert each other to danger and get a bird's-eye view of the Clark Fork watershed.

Learn about Kate Davis' raptor education in the Bitterroot, as well as the important work of the American Prairie Reserve.

Five Valleys Audubon (FVAS) has been working with local schools to bring some "Art" to the Festival. They are offering an abundant variety of silent auction items, along with some great custom field trips. There are going to be some creative desserts for our Dessert Auction, so come prepared to bid to enjoy your beautiful dessert at the banquet.

FVAS has also done a fantastic job providing a great selection of field trips – but they are filling up fast, so please register as soon as possible. Register by mail, or online at www.mtaudubon.org. Also—be sure to reserve your rooms at the Holiday Inn Downtown by calling 1-406-721-8550 or 1-800-399-0408. (Be sure to mention that you are part of the Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the group rate if you call. – Code MAS.)

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



Birds Of Montana

Available for Pre-Order

The long-awaited book, *Birds of Montana* by Jeff Marks, Paul Hendriks, and Dan Casey, is now available for pre-order until May 15. It provides a thorough review of the status, distribution, relative abundance, ecology, and conservation of the 433 bird species that have been found in the state since Montana entered the Union in 1889. Get a 20% discount when you preorder. For more information see the Montana Audubon website.

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 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.html. Nominations are due at the office by May 19, 2016. Mail completed forms to *Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena MT 59624*.

Volunteers Needed!

Long-billed curlews are back in Montana for the summer, and already volunteers are reporting their whereabouts in the Mission Valley. This year's surveys are off to a great start, with many of the survey routes getting covered at least once. But our goal is to have each route covered **TWO TIMES**. Fortunately there is plenty of time left to help us locate this charismatic shorebird, as surveys will continue until May 31st. What's fun is that birds should be getting very vocal as they initiate and later defend their nests, so now is a great time to go birding. You will also see and hear a lot of other great species on the way.

Surveying for curlews is easy! Routes consist of early morning road-side stops repeated every half mile. At each stop, you will get out of the car for five minutes and look and listen for curlews. Along the way you will collect important data on the time, habitat, and presence or absence of curlews. And, the great thing is that you only need to look for one big beautiful bellowing bird. So, choose a route, catch up on Curlew identification, and you are all set to go!

To read more or get involved, visit our weebly website and view the routes available in the Mission Valley and Flathead Indian Reservation: <http://missionvalleycurlews.weebly.com/>. Here you will find survey details such as the protocol, data sheets, and route maps. You can also contact Amy or Janene if you would like us to send you a route packet or if you have any questions. Feel free to take a partner, do a route more than once, or do more than one route. The Curlews are just waiting to be found!

To brush up on Curlew identification visit Montana Audubon's webpage: <http://mtaudubon.org/birds-science/long-billed-curlew-initiative/>. It has a link to the Curlew's call and much more. Also visit Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All about Birds: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed_Curlew/id.

For more information contact Janene Lichtenberg: janene.lichtenberg@skc.edu, 406.275.4896; or Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org, 406.210.49449.

Candidates for Officers and Board Members

FAS Nominations Committee recommendations for Secretary, Treasurer and two Board of Directors positions:

Marylane Pannell – Secretary:

Marylane will be entering her third full term as Board Secretary. The Board depends on her to record and promptly publish minutes of our board meetings each month. She has been our quiet “rock” during sometimes tumultuous board meetings. We are very pleased that Marylane has accepted the nomination for Board Secretary for another two-year term.

Joe Batts – Treasurer:

Since last July, I have served as the appointed treasurer of Flathead Audubon Society (FAS). I have enjoyed that role and I look forward to becoming the elected Treasurer. I have been very fortunate to receive the support of the Board and especially from Bruce Tannehill and Bob Lopp, to make the transition as smooth as possible. The message that I have received – and fully support – is that the membership and the board love their organization and want FAS to be both financially sound and responsive.

In my wife’s and my businesses, I currently handle five small accounting systems using QuickBooks and Quicken. As a result, I know that every organization has different financial needs. Being treasurer of FAS is more than knowing where to correctly put the credits and debits; FAS is unique, especially in the areas of grants and donations. In this regard, the board has been very diligent in the pursuit of grants and contracts and the members have been very generous with their donations. Some members have been extremely generous in their wills to fund endowment investments for allocation to conservation and education. And accordingly, the board has been respectful, responsible and conservative in the use of those resources. Correspondingly, our financial system does--and should continue to remain--transparent to all.

My wife and I have been birders for 30 years. We were introduced to birding by friends and found it an activity that we could do together. In 2013, we moved permanently to the Valley after having lived here part-time since 2006. I am a graduate of Flathead High School and we both are graduates of the University of Montana. Since returning to the Valley, we have become very involved with Flathead Audubon Society activities. The responsibilities of the Treasurer have been an extension of that involvement.

Therefore, I ask for your support for my election to position of Treasurer of Flathead Audubon Society.

Cory Davis – Board of Directors:

Cory Davis is a Research Associate in the University of Montana’s College of Forestry and Conservation and the Coordinator for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Biology from UC Santa Barbara where he first started studying birds while working at the campus Vertebrate Museum. After graduation, Cory went on to live the life of an itinerant field ornithologist working jobs in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon, Washington’s Olympic Peninsula, the sky islands of southeastern Arizona, Alaska’s interior, and in Belize. He finally got tired of living out of his car and went on to get an M.S. degree in Biology from Arkansas State University where he studied the effects of forest fragmentation on songbirds around McCall, Idaho. He also spent four years in a PhD program at Montana State University researching the effects of land use change on national parks, though that degree still eludes him. In his current position, Cory coordinates a group of partners from NGOs, local agencies, and private citizens that work closely with the Forest Service to implement forest restoration projects on the Swan Lake District of the Flathead National Forest, the Seeley Lake District of the Lolo National Forest, and the Lincoln District of the Helena National Forest. He coordinates a monitoring program consisting of projects on wildlife, vegetation, aquatic systems, and socio-economic conditions resulting from these Forest Service management actions. He also works with local school groups and community members to help monitor forest conditions and water quality. Cory grew up in California and moved to the Flathead Valley in 2003. He currently resides in Whitefish where he enjoys cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and brewing beer to share with friends.

Barbara Summers – Board of Directors:

I am a retired Physical Therapist, who has spent a lifetime roaming mountain ridges. I discovered birding later in life and am so grateful for all I have learned and all there is yet to learn. Probably my most favorite thing is to sit quietly and observe. I have been a part of monitoring loon nesting success for 9 years and have been part of a team monitoring Harlequin Duck populations for 8 years. I can spend hours watching these species and love returning to the same habitat over and over.

And then I was introduced to raptor migration. WOW, what an incredible learning curve and what an incredible experience. So consequently, I have been a part of the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch for several years.

I would like to be on the board, because I believe that wildlife conservation needs every little bit of help it can get, and hopefully this is another way that I can help. I believe that FAS is an incredible organization and plays a vital role in sharing the wonder of the natural world with others.



Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through March 2016

Osprey
Soroptimists of Whitefish



Supporting Member + donation
Michael Yelinek



THANKS AGAIN to ALL WHO HAVE DONATED to FAS THIS PAST YEAR!

We again thank all our donors. You have been so generous throughout the year. As a result, Flathead Audubon has been able to continue our many fine programs that reach a broad spectrum of people.

And Thank You to all who have contributed their time and energies to Flathead Audubon — officers and board members, committee chairs and members, and all the volunteers who make events and projects happen.

Flathead Audubon is a team effort. Thanks to all for being a part of the team.

2016 Community Bird Festival

Please join us for the 4th annual festival celebrating birds in science, art, and Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai tribal culture!

May 5, 2016

Salish Kootenai College

4:30-7:30pm

International Migratory Bird Day 2016

Spread your Wings for bird conservation

LOONS AND LEAD — you can help!

Here in northwest Montana we are fortunate to have both a population of common loons and good fishing in many lakes that support loons. Unfortunately, the lead sinkers and jigs often used for fishing pose a significant threat to loons. Loons often swallow fishing tackle and lead is toxic to loons. One lead sinker can kill a loon. Lead sinkers and jigs 1 ½ inches or smaller along the longest axis are known to cause loon mortality. In our neighboring state of Washington, 1/3 of loon mortalities from 1999-2010 were attributed to lead poisoning. Numerous other studies around the country have documented the same adverse effects. Many other species such as waterfowl and fish also suffer from lead toxicity.

The good news is that non-toxic alternatives for fishing tackle are available at local fishing supply stores and online from many sources. A list of 35 companies that



SPECIAL GIFTS

I wish to help make Flathead Audubon's vision a reality. Here is my contribution to the continued success of our chapter.



- Eagle Donation, \$1000+
- Osprey Donation, \$500+
- Snowy Owl Donation, \$250+
- Merlin Donation, \$100+
- Kestrel Donation, \$50+
- My Own Vision, amount of my choice

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

- Education Programs
- Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- Scholarships and Grants
- Field Trips and Outdoor Events

I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

Please make checks payable to:

Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173

Kalispell, MT 59904

Your gift is tax deductible.

sell lead free tackle is available on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website: go to www.pca.state.mn.us then search for nontoxic tackle. Tell all your fishing friends about the problem with loons and lead tackle and be sure to add that non-toxic alternatives are easily available. The quicker more people become aware of the problem and switch to non-toxic fishing tackle the quicker the lead poisoning rate in loons will decline.

More information about loons and lead poisoning is available from the Montana Loon Society (www.montanaloons.org) and the Montana Common Loon Working Group (chammond@mt.gov).



APRIL 2016



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. Both meetings are open to all.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. For membership information or address change, please call Mike Fanning at 862-8070. **To receive this newsletter electronically, email your request to: lindawin@centurytel.net.** Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Lisa Flowers: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Kay Mitchell	kbmitch@centurytel.net	756-8130
Vice-President	Gael Bissell	gbissell535@gmail.com	261-2255
Secretary	Marylane Pannell	kuhlpn@cyberport.net	871-7613
Treasurer	Joe Batts	jbatts@me.com	844-0299
Past-President	Bob Lopp	boblopp@bresnan.net	752-7026

DIRECTORS

2014-2017	Jim Rychwalski	james_rychwalski@yahoo.com	755-3229
2014-2017	Denny Olson	dlocwild.mt@gmail.com	249-3987
2015-2018	Lewis Young	68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917	889-3492
2015-2018	Paula Smith	paulabobsmith@centurytel.net	837-0181
2015-2018	Doug MacCarter	dsmaccarter@gmail.com	602-663-8611
2015-2018	Jan Metzmaker	jmetzmaker@hotmail.com	862-7960
2015-2018	Jake Bramante	jake@hike734.com	250-8394
2015-2016	Jill Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
2015-2016	Mike Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
2015-2016	Kathy Ross	mtkat67@gmail.com	837-3837
2015-2016	Bob Lee	rml3@centurytel.net	270-0371

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Christmas Bird Count	Vacant		
Conservation	Lewis Young	889-3492	
Education	Denny Olson	249-3987	
Field Trips	Kathy Ross	837-3837	
	Gael Bissell	755-8709	
Finance	Mike Fanning	862-8070	
Donations	Mary Nelesen	755-7678	
Hospitality	Lois Drobish	756-7405	
Membership	Mike Fanning	862-8070	
	Jill Fanning	862-8070	
Owen Sowerwine	Linda Winnie	755-1406	
Natural Area	Bob Lee	270-0371	
Newsletter	Linda Winnie	755-1406	
	Kay Mitchell	756-8130	
	John Hughes	261-2506	
	Lewis Young	889-3492	
Nominations	Bob Lee	270-0371	
Program	Bob Lee	270-0371	
Publicity	Paula Smith	837-0181	
Sales	Jill Fanning	862-8070	

Refuges	Kathy Ross	837-3837
Website	Paula Smith	837-0181
Wetlands	vacant	



MONTANA AUDUBON
 P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
 443-3949
www.MTAudubon.org
 Executive Director: Steve Hoffman
shoffman@mtaudubon.org
 Board President: Fred Weisbecker
 443-4229
 Board Member representing FAS
 Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

- Basic Membership \$20
(Pays for newsletter and operating costs)
 - Supporting Membership \$35
(Extra \$15 funds local projects such as Conservation Education and Owen Sowerwine Natural Area)
- Additional Donation of\$ _____
 to Education Fund
 Owen Sowerwine Fund
 Wherever needed

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Email _____

The Pileated Post is sent to FAS members by email. If you wish to receive a paper copy by USPS, check this box.

Mail this form with your check to:

Flathead Audubon Society Membership
 P.O. Box 9173
 Kalispell, MT 59904