



## New Montana Audubon Director

Montana Audubon announces the appointment of Larry Berrin as its new Executive Director. An avid birder, Berrin has dedicated his career of more than 25 years to conservation science and environmental education in multiple states including Pennsylvania, Vermont and Oregon. Montana Audubon is a leader in wildlife conservation in Montana and one of the largest conservation organizations in the state.

"The Board of Directors of Montana Audubon are proud to announce the appointment of Larry Berrin as our next executive director," stated Fred Weisbecker, President, Board of Directors. "After an exhaustive search, he was our unanimous pick. We all look forward to Larry leading the organization, working with staff and active Audubon chapters on bird conservation, nature education, and policy work promoting birds and habitat protection."

Berrin comes to Montana Audubon from Asbury Woods Partnership in Erie, Pennsylvania. As President & CEO, he led a major acquisition of the 205-acre Asbury Woods and Nature Center, which included securing over \$1.3 million in government grants, representing some of the largest acquisition grants ever awarded to Erie County. During his tenure, he helped launch a \$4.5 million capital campaign with \$3.6 million raised to date.

Previously, Berrin served as Principal Execu-



MT Audubon photo

tive/Manager at the Oregon Department of Forestry where he managed the Tillamook Forest Center and focused on legislative policy, partnership development, grant management and fundraising initiatives. Berrin has also served as Branch Director for Discover Your Northwest in Central Oregon at the Deschutes National Forest. In this role, he was responsible for managing multiple visitor centers, retail operations, recreation sites and programs reaching over 150,000 visitors and 10,000 students per year. He also led the effort to develop the 1.3 million-acre Deschutes Children's Forest, the first of its kind in the northwest.

Earlier in his career, Berrin served as State Education Director in Vermont for the National Audubon Society where he was the recipient of that organization's 2001 ACE Award in the category of Team Achievement.

"I'm so excited to be joining such a talented staff and an equally dedicated Board of Directors to help build on our conservation legacy in Montana," said Berrin. "I look forward to enhancing our role as a leader in the conservation of native birds, other wildlife and natural ecosystems and continuing to expand our impact through our policy work in Helena, conservation education programs at the Montana Audubon Center in Billings, grassroots efforts in communities throughout the state, and partnership opportunities with volunteer-run, National Audubon chapters."

**THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP!** Thanks to all our loyal members who have renewed for this year! Flathead Audubon could not accomplish the important things we do without you. Most important, our education program would not exist without your support.

Thanks again. *Mike Fanning, Membership Chair*

### NOVEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

**Monday, November 13, 2017. 7 PM Flathead Audubon General Meeting,** Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

**Monday, November 6, 2017. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting,** Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. All welcome.

**No field trips scheduled for November.** See page 5 for what's coming later.

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

## Townsend's Warbler

by Gail Cleveland

It's November. We are thinking turkeys, chickadees and nut-hatches, our permanent fall and winter residents, as well as flocks of waxwings, redpolls and, if we are lucky, a snowy owl. But, it is also good to look forward to the splashes of color and songs of warblers that will return in the spring. One of the first arrivals is the Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*).

This bright yellow, black, white and greenish warbler is named for John K. Townsend, an avid ornithologist who at the age of 24 joined an expedition in 1834 at Independence, Missouri, to travel to the Pacific. Along with hunters and trappers, several other scientists were on the journey to observe and bring back plant and bird specimens from the West. When they reached the Pacific, John Townsend and Thomas Nuttall collected many bird specimens, including the one that today bears his name. They then hopped a ship to the Hawaiian Islands, returned to the Pacific Northwest and, finally, Pennsylvania with crates of specimens and notes. Unfortunately, Townsend died in 1851 from arsenic that was used at the time to preserve bird skins.

In the U.S., the warbler that bears his name is found in the breeding season almost exclusively west of the Rocky Mountains in Montana, Idaho, parts of Washington and Oregon. There are similar species such as the Black-throated Green and Blackburnian, but they are found mainly in the East. Along the Oregon and Washington coasts, they can be confused with the Hermit Warbler. In fact, there is an area in which the two species have hybridized.

Here in Montana, they are easy to recognize if you can see them. These colorful warblers have dark cheek patches surrounded with yellow, a black throat, white wing bars, and extensive yellow with black stripes on their breast. The underside is primarily white.

They spend the breeding season in Montana high in the tops of conifers where they also build their cuplike nests of plant fibers, bark, moss and plant downs as high as 100 feet off the ground. They feed almost



exclusively on insects and spiders. One would expect them to be quite visible with their dramatic coloration, but they are often hard to see unless sitting at the very top of the tree.

They are early arrivers in Montana, sometimes as early as late April, and they begin nesting as early as late May. When they first arrive, I have observed them in small conifers in the valley. Then they leave for higher breeding grounds such as the Big Mountain and Glacier National Park, preferring large spruce, larch, hemlock and cedar forests.

The easiest way to find these warblers is to listen for their song, which has a very distinct quality. The Peterson Field Guide to Warblers calls it "a high, raspy, wheezy, buzzy" song." That is a good description of the quality. I say the rhythm is "zee, zee, zoo, zee." That is a good start, but the pattern is quite variable. That quality and rhythm should work well as a starting point for identification. One thing in our favor is that there aren't similar species in our area that have that buzzy quality.

My husband and I became very aware of their variations in song while camping at Upper Stillwater Lake late last spring. He recorded six different Townsend's Warbler songs in a mile of hiking to Lagoni Lake. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has good examples of the songs on their website.

Townsend's Warblers winter on the West Coast and down to Central America. In the winter they can flock together and can be easier to see. They also winter in a small area in southeastern Arizona. In a workshop there, my husband and I encountered several people who said the Townsend's Warbler was one of their favorite warblers because it is so easy to see. We said, "Really???" They can be seen lower in the trees foraging for insects. Their winter behavior is quite different than their breeding behavior as is the case in many migrating passerine species.

Even though I can count the times I have "seen" a Townsend's Warbler each summer, I can't wait to hear their buzzy song each spring and hope for a sight of this distinctive warbler.



# November Program

## Cottonwood Ecology in Owen Sowerwine Natural Area

presented by

Conrad Hedinger, Molly Adams, Sarah Randolph and Brandon Pyron

Join Flathead Audubon Society on Monday, November 13, 7:00 PM at the Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell, for a look at the ongoing study of cottonwoods in Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA), a 442 acre river bottom managed by Flathead Audubon for educational purposes. OSNA appears to have high percentage of very old black cottonwood trees and very little recruitment of new cottonwoods in the "micro-upland" areas. Flathead High School students volunteered, through their Community Action Service Program, to get some hard data supporting the casual observations.

The Flathead Conservation District generously granted Flathead Audubon just over \$2000 for the purchase of the tools needed for their study. For the last few months, FHS International Baccalaureate students Conrad Hedinger, Molly Adams, Sarah Randolph and Brandon Pyron have been coring and aging trees in a grid pattern throughout the mainland portion



of OSNA, and aging all the cottonwood trees. Their next step will be to correlate the ages of the old trees to past major flood events, which have been shown to stimulate new growth.

Through this study, we hope to get a true picture of the present state of black cottonwood age diversity as a baseline for future studies on the effects of (1) micro-elevation changes of just a few feet, (2) the effects of browsing by white-tailed deer, (3) the effects of upstream changes on the historical frequency of flood events, (4) the plant succession patterns going on under the old cottonwoods, and (5) the effects of invasive plant species on succession patterns.

Since bird species diversity in riparian zones has been shown to correlate with cottonwood age classes diversity, it will be important for FAS to examine possible management options to increase both cottonwood age diversity and bird diversity.

Please join us on Monday, November 13.

*by Jan Metzmaker*

## New Montana Bird Advocacy Organization

The Montana Bird Advocacy (MBA) was established in 2017 in Missoula, Montana, and is in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to increase knowledge of the distribution, status, and biology of Montana's native birds and to promote conservation of these birds and the habitats that support them. Although the MBA itself is new, our staff and board have a long history of interest in the state's birds. Founders Jeff Marks and Paul Hendricks have studied birds in Montana for more than 30 years, and with board member Dan Casey, they published *Birds of Montana* in 2016. We are conservationists, ornithologists, and avid birdwatchers, and we are very excited about serving these constituencies through our organization.

Our mission and interests overlap broadly

with those of several other NGOs and agencies who are dedicated to bird conservation in Montana. We strive to provide new information on the status and biology of many of the poorly known bird species in the state, to focus attention on critical habitats whose suitability for native birds is under constant threat, and to serve as a clearing house for the latest information on the state's birds.

As part of our service to the birding community, we host the Web pages for the Montana Bird Records Committee.

Please visit our site often to view our dynamic content, or contact us with questions and suggestions, or donate to support us.

*adapted from the homepage of*  
[www.montanabirdadvocacy.org](http://www.montanabirdadvocacy.org)

## Sandhill Crane Field trip a Success!

The October 7 field trip to view Sandhill Cranes in the West Valley area was well attended and saw lots of cranes. Check out the FAS website (<http://www.flatheadubon.org>) for more details.

## "Swiftling" Up High and Under Waterfalls: Training the Citizen's Eye 2017

Check out this article by Amy Seaman on Montana Audubon's website (<http://mtaudubon.org/2017/10/inside-citizen-science-black-swift-research/>) to learn how citizen science is applied to surveying for Black Swifts.



## Conservation Educator's Niche

By Denny Olson

About this time last year, I was bushwhacking through a trail-less part of Audubon's Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and happened upon a two-inch diameter sapling, rubbed barkless at about knee level. A few cream-colored bark shreds speckled the leaves below – leaves which had fallen just hours before. It was a fresh whitetail buck rub. From past experience, I faced the rub-side of the little tree and could make out a faint trail leading past it. About a hundred feet away I could just make out another rub, and when I arrived at that one, the pattern repeated. I followed the "flagging", which the buck uses to stay on course in the dark parts of a day.

Likely, on the upwind side of this trail, there was a heavily used doe trail somewhat parallel to this one. After half a dozen of the trail-markers -- which bucks not only use for navigation in low light, but also to wear off some of the effects of "testosterone overload" this time of the year – I found "doe central", a spoked junction of six trails. The buck couldn't pass this up.

Twenty feet ahead, I found a "scrape" pawed to bare dirt, three feet in diameter. In the scrape were tracks about five and a half inches from front to the dew-claw. "Big boy," I thought. A fresh wet spot in the center smelled musky and rich. He had been there recently, rubbing his inside-the-hock tarsal glands together as he urinated on them, leaving an irresistible deer version of English Leather as a calling card for the girls.

I had tried to be quiet and move very slowly to the spot, and as I waited, listening, a mature doe stood up from her bed about 50 feet away. She was probably in estrous and waiting for Mister Right to bring flowers and a romantic card. Being motionless in

these situations often pays dividends, and from the corner of my eye, slightly behind me, a flicker of motion materialized into Bad Leroy Buck, pointed toward the doe like a German shorthair, neck stretched and tail pointed straight back, belching like a college student toward the end of a good party. I was close enough to smell the hormone mix of tarsal, metatarsal, supra-caudal and pre-orbital glands. He totally ignored me, which wasn't surprising. I've seen that kind of hormone overload in our species as well.

She played "coy" and walked away slowly, her suitor in tow, who was trying to conserve energy by taking shortcuts to her whenever she changed course. It was probably a good strategy for him; by the time the primary "rut" is over in late November, he will have lost a quarter of his body weight to lust and the resultant forgetting to eat.

White-tailed deer have a notoriously high reproductive rate, and that causes a few problems in places without normal predation -- like a 442-acre river bottom right next to a city -- to counter-balance that rapidly growing population. They overbrowse seedlings of aspen and cottonwood, affecting major habitat for birds and other animals. They are great transport systems for invasive plants, like the Velcro-seeds of houndstongue. As a scientific and educational project, FAS is considering putting up a deer "exclosure" or two, to see how much they affect the landscape over the years.

Any species, overpopulated, can be a problem. But in the fall, they can also entertain, and remind us that a "natural area" is not just for the birds ...



## Montana's Pioneer Botanists – the Stories and the Book

Rachel Potter will share choice vignettes from the recently published book *Montana's Pioneer Botanists: Exploring the Mountains and Prairies*, and recount the history of the book itself, at the upcoming meeting of the Flathead Chapter of the Montana Native Plant Society, Wednesday, November 15, 7 PM, Museum at Central School, 124 Second Ave. E, Kalispell. The book will be for sale at the meeting.

The book, co-edited by Rachel and Peter Lesica, contains biographies of more than thirty of the pioneer botanists of Montana – indigenous peoples; early explorers, geographers, and entrepreneurs; followed by teachers, scientists, and curious and dedicated lay persons, and through these stories traces

the growth of botanical knowledge in the state. The biographies are written by 17 different Montana authors, and are illustrated with over 200 images including portraits, photos of Montana's landscapes and flowers, as well as botanical illustrations. Three of the pieces were written by Jerry DeSanto (1928-2017), a founding Flathead Audubon member, and one of the essays is about botanist Marie Moar (1909-1997), another Flathead Audubon founder.

For more information about the book, including reviews and places where it may be purchased, visit <http://www.mtnativeplants.org/Montana's%20Pioneer%20Botanists>.

## FALL/WINTER 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 at 837-3837 or Cory Davis at 257-3166, 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](http://www.FlatheadAudubon.org).



**NATIONAL WINTER TRAILS DAY: WINTER BIRDS AND TRACKS IN OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA, Saturday, January 20, 10:00 AM-noon.** Join FAS Conservation Educator and long-time teaching naturalist Denny Olson on a winter hike of all the OSNA trails. Winter birds, bird songs, tracking, botanizing, and seat-of-the-pants interpretation will be the unstructured itinerary. This is one of the best spots in the area to see Pileated and other woodpeckers, many kinds of chickadees, Bohemian and Cedar waxwings in flocks of thousands, Pine Grosbeaks, Townsend's Solitaires -- and there's always an unexpected bird. Not just ID, but lots of natural history lore, which is Denny's trademark. Dress warm, bring binoculars and snow boots, and check with us on the need for snowshoes if the snow is deep. We have binoculars and field guides if you need them. Call Denny at 249-3987, or contact at [auduboneducator@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneducator@gmail.com) to register and get directions.

## WELCOME TO FLATHEAD AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS!

Our goal is to help you have a safe and fun field trip with lots of good birding! Following are our field trip guidelines for the comfort of all participants.

### Leaders:

- We visit the destination prior to the trip to assess parking, accessibility, private property, nests, etc.
- We limit the size of the group so as not to disturb birds.
- We inform participants of: meeting location, time, and other plans prior to the trip.
- We get a contact number from participants, and provide our contact info, in case of last minute cancellations.
- We also inform participants about the level of accessibility and strenuousness, entrance fees, and rules and regulations of destination.
- We encourage participants to wear drab clothes.
- We start on time.
- We arrange for bathroom stops.
- We give an Intro that includes your name, destinations, rules and regulations, etc.
- We organize carpooling before leaving the meeting spot.
- We report any problems to the Executive Committee.
- We have fun!

### Participants:

- We conduct ourselves as exemplary role models to the community.
- We wear drab colors, layered clothing for the weather, and appropriate footwear.

We arrive early and prepare to carpool! Be prepared to jump in with someone else at the meeting spot. Meet some fellow birders and reduce our carbon footprint!

We walk and talk quietly.

We stay together, keep up, and let others know if our plans need to change.

We encourage children to attend, but with an adult. These are our future birders!

We discourage bringing pets, as they may unnecessarily disturb the birds.

We allow phones/tablets for photos and visual ID and recording devices for post-trip ID.

We do not allow bird calling, electronic or otherwise, or pointing lasers.

We are careful to remain on public property, unless we receive permission to bird on private property.

We obey all rules of the road when driving including only stopping where we can safely and legally pull completely off the road.

We help beginning or hesitant birders learn and enjoy.

We appreciate our trip leaders for their time, planning, and teaching.

We all have fun!

*Adopted by FAS Board of Directors 10/2/2017, with thanks to Field Trip Co-Chairs Cory Davis and Kathy Ross*

## Rare Birds Observed in Montana

The Montana Bird Records Committee (MBRC) recently accepted a new rare bird for Montana: the Wood Sandpiper. To quote the minutes of the meeting: "[h]ighlights in 2017 included the state's 1st record for Wood Sandpiper (one of only a small number of inland North American records), the 3rd record for Mississippi Kite,



Wood Sandpiper by Shantanu Kuveskar

and the 2nd for Eastern Towhee.

Currently, all reports of rare birds must be reviewed and accepted by the MBRC before they are added to Montana's official bird list. Rare birds are identified as birds that have been seen in the state fewer than 20 times.

## Education Committee News

Jay Sumner presented a program about Peregrine Falcons at the September general Audubon meeting. His three month old Peregrine was the evening's highlight. Because these falcons were nearly extinct in Montana in the 1940's and are now slowly making a recovery due to public awareness and education, Peregrines could be a valuable addition to our education programs involving falcons. Visit [www.montanaperegrine.org](http://www.montanaperegrine.org) for more information.

Non-fiction nature and birding books have previ-

ously been provided to area school libraries by the Flathead Audubon Society. Kay Mitchell shared that the program was popular and that the books were frequently checked out. We could re-introduce this program as an extension of our current education program.

The education committee will discuss both of these topics at our December 4 meeting.

*by Gail Shay Linne, Education Chair*

## 2018 FAS CALENDAR AVAILABLE!

Christmas is coming  
Don't panic just yet  
Do think about gifts  
Your gift getters get

A perfect gift have we  
For your nature lover  
This crowning achievement  
They've yet to discover

With stories of mammals  
And birds that are flocking  
A perfect gift it makes  
But too large for a stocking

It's packed full of info  
From flowers to deer  
You'll learn something new  
Each day of the year

Buy for the photos  
For our Audubon chapter  
Get it for the info  
Snag it for the raptor

So go ahead and buy one  
Buy one, two, or three  
Your loved ones will love you  
And (to be perfectly honest), so will we!

*by Jake Bramante*



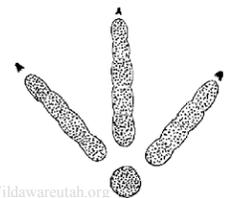
2018 Phenology Calendar

*In the next issue (December) of the Pileated Post look for the announcement of the "Shop With the Birds" event at Sportsman Ski Haus in partnership with FAS. The 2018 calendar will be featured along with live raptors and our own Denny Olson.*

## CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

### Highlights from October 2, 2017 Board Meeting

- ◇ Kay Mitchell is pricing a 2<sup>nd</sup> vinyl FAS banner to be used by the Education Committee.
- ◇ The hawk watchers have surveyed 26 days and listed over 1800 raptors.
- ◇ Net profits from calendars sales were \$2,620 to date.
- ◇ Carole Jorgensen will co-chair Conservation reviews with Lewis Young.
- ◇ The Birds of Prey Festival had over 500 in attendance and was well received.
- ◇ Joe Batts was elected Vice President of the Montana Audubon Board.





# Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon May through mid-October 1, 2017.

## Snowy Owl

Katherine O'Neil & Toby Graff

## Merlin

Joe & Lana Batts

John Hughes

Robert Lopp

Mr. Franklin E. Schroeter



## Kestrel

Mr. Terrell L. Abell

Thomas Harding

Dennis Hester

Robert Lee & Leslie Kehoe

D.B. Mitchell

Margaret R. Parodi



## My Own Vision

Gael Bissell

Rosemary McKinnon

Shawn Richmond

Pauline Sjoldal

Susan Waldron

Dawn Walker

John Winnie



## 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:

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Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

\*\*\*\*\*

Please make checks payable to:

## Two November Climate Smart Events

Wednesday, November 8, 7 PM, O'Shaughnessy Cultural Arts Center, Whitefish. FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN: A Multi-Media Evening of Fishing & Hunting, Climate Change & Snow featuring Hilary Hutcheson, Ryan Busse, and Todd Tanner. Co-sponsored by Protect our Winters, Conservation Hawks, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

Thursday, November 16, 7 PM, Cedar Creek Lodge, Columbia Falls. ENVISIONING MONTANA'S CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY – A forum featuring local clean energy businesses and a new UM research white paper on social and economic impacts of Montana's transition to a renewable energy future.

More info on Climate Smart web site <http://climatesmartglaciercountry.org/>



Find us on: **facebook®**



Be sure to check [flatheadaudubon.org](http://flatheadaudubon.org) for  
Late breaking FAS news and announcements  
Online FAS membership sign up or renewal  
Real time tally of migrating birds seen at the Jewel Basin Hawkwatch  
Latest eBird reports on species being observed in the Flathead area





Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173  
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NOVEMBER 2017



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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 Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, 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: [lindawin626@gmail.com](mailto:lindawin626@gmail.com).** Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: [lindawin626@gmail.com](mailto:lindawin626@gmail.com)

Website: [www.FlatheadAudubon.org](http://www.FlatheadAudubon.org)

Conservation Educator - Denny Olson: [auduboneducator@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneducator@gmail.com)

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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2017-2018	Mike Fanning	<a href="mailto:shrdlu@centurytel.net">shrdlu@centurytel.net</a>	862-8070

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Owen Sowerwine	Linda Winnie	755-1406			
Natural Area	Bob Lee	270-0371			



MONTANA AUDUBON

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Board Member representing FAS, Bob Lee [rml3@centurytel.net](mailto:rml3@centurytel.net) 270-0371



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership Individual or Family

Basic Membership ————— \$25

Pays for newsletter and operating costs

Supporting Membership ————— \$40

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

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

You may renew or join online on our website:

<http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/>

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

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