

## FERNE COHEN--Earth Day, Every Day

Something wonderful happened at Flathead Audubon in 1990. Audubon wanted to participate in the revival of Earth Day and the Board of Directors rejoiced when Ferne Cohen stepped forward to take the reins. As Audubon's contribution to this valley-wide celebration, Ferne rounded up 100 organizations to display at the Kalispell Center Mall, and distributed information on recycling, 'green' shopping, and organic products. "It all fell into place naturally; people were very willing to participate."

Fifty years as an Audubon Society volunteer is not an honor that many can claim. Ferne has generously given her organizational and public relations skills, first to the Sea and Sage Audubon in Orange County, CA and, since 1988, to Flathead Audubon.

"My husband, Marty, and I have always had a strong interest in conservation, and birding was just part of that." Ferne claims that her people skills came from membership in the League of Women Voters, plus her educational and work experiences. "My undergraduate studies in psychology and sociology included lots of community service." Her Master's degree in counseling led to a career as a vocational counselor. She has, however, natural qualities of certainty, focus and motivation to tackle a project and see it to completion.

"I always felt honored to serve on the governing boards of Audubon and the Glacier Orchestra. I was interested in contributing." She served in almost every capacity on the Sea and Sage Audubon Board, becoming president in the mid-80's. That 2,000 + member chapter tackled many environmental issues in the sunshine state, but Ferne is most proud of their long-term collaboration to preserve natural areas in the Irvine Ranch Land Reserve. The 100-year-old Irvine Company owned 1/5 of the land in Orange County, California, but has now donated more than 50,000 acres as parkland.

"The League of Women Voters trained me to deal with county government. The League is

nonpartisan and does not take a political position without study of the issue. Likewise, when Audubon spoke, it was from information backed by biologists' studies." Ferne has an album full of photos taken in the Reserve's Wier Canyon Wilderness Area, showing Audubon members planting native vegetation, taking bird inventories, and enjoying monthly fieldtrips. Ferne moved to Montana before Weir Canyon had its official dedication ceremony, but is planning to attend that celebration.

"It took us years to find just the right property for our home," recalled Ferne. "We needed an open, southern exposure." Their house builder son, Richard, moved here in 1980 and his parents

followed. The three wanted to live what they preached and build a resource efficient home. "We were really adventurous," said Ferne, explaining its ....  
(continued on page 12)



### APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

**Monday, April 12, 2004:** Flathead Audubon presents Tim Davis of the Montana Smart Growth Coalition. The meeting will be at The Summit health center in Kalispell and begins at **7:00 p.m.** (note new starting time)

**Saturday, April 3, 2004: Second Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour:** See Field Trips, pgs 7-8

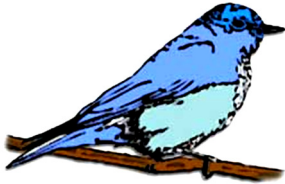
**Sunday April 25, 2004: Smith Lake Birding** See Field Trips, pgs 7-8

**Monday, May 10, 2004-Flathead Audubon general meeting and annual pot-luck.** Join FAS for our silent auction, dinner and special photography program. Watch for more details in May's Pileated Post.

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

## HARBINGERS OF SPRING!

*The arrival of the first bluebirds is a welcome sign that spring has returned to the Flathead. This year that event took place for me on March 13 when a Saturday morning drive on Smith Lake Road provided us with the first bluebird sightings of the season. What birder's (or bird-watcher's) heart doesn't beat a little faster at the sight of one of these brilliant birds perched jauntily on a fence post in the sunshine?*



As members of the thrush family, bluebirds are relatives of the American Robin and Varied Thrush. Three kinds of bluebirds live in North America and Western Montana is home to two—Mountain and Western. Telling the males of the two species apart is fairly easy. The Mountain is all blue—a vivid sky blue on its back and wings and a slightly lighter blue on its chest. The Western male has a deep purplish blue on its head, throat, wings and tail and a rusty brick red on its chest. Differentiating between the two females is a little more challenging. Mountain females have a pale grayish-brown body and sky blue wings and tail while the Western females have a rusty wash on the breast, a slightly thicker bill and the back and wings are a more subdued blue.

Bluebirds prefer to live in open parklands, pastures and meadows or on forest edges and are often seen perching on fence posts or small trees. They feed by gathering insects from foliage and are able to hover briefly to hawk insects from the air. They also frequently capture insects on the ground by dropping from a perch to capture the prey. This behavior called ground-sallying is often used by the Mountain Bluebird. Because sixty to eighty percent of their diet is insects, bluebirds are very beneficial birds to have as neighbors.

Male bluebirds return early to the nesting area to establish the breeding territory and advertise their presence by singing vigorously and aggressively trying to drive rival males away. After establishing the territory, bluebirds form strong pair bonds that last throughout the breeding season—usually for two broods. Nests are established in cavities in trees and snags and frequently in nest boxes. Only the female builds the nest, however the male sometimes acts as if he is helping, but he either brings no nest material or he drops it on the way. A nest of weed stems, grasses and twigs lined with fine grasses and feathers is placed in a natural tree cavity, an abandoned woodpecker hole or a birdhouse. The four to eight pale blue eggs hatch in approximately two weeks and the babies fledge about three weeks after that.

Until the early 70's bluebird populations were in serious decline due to habitat loss and competition from House Sparrows but thanks to conservation efforts promoting the use of nest boxes, they are currently stable and even increasing in most areas.

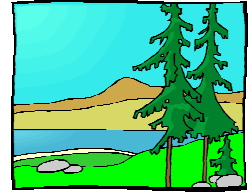
If you would like to attract bluebirds to your yard, start by adding some nest boxes and providing nesting materials. Bluebird boxes can be purchased at many local hardware stores for about \$5.00. If you prefer to make your own, I found some good patterns on the net at <http://nabluebirdsociety.org/plans.htm>. Bluebirds like soft grasses and fragrant pine needles for their nests. Offer these materials in an empty suet feeder or simply gather bunches and situate them in the bark of a tree. Since collecting the appropriate materials can require hundreds of trips, the availability of these materials will be a strong factor in bringing the bluebirds to your yard. Also, like all insect eaters, bluebirds get thirsty and offering plenty of fresh water for drinking and bathing will make your yard more attractive to them. A birdbath full of splashing bluebirds is a sight you'll long remember!

Facts for this article were gathered from *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior*, *Stokes Field Guide to Western Birds* and the North American Bluebird Society website: <http://nabluebirdsociety.org/facts.htm>

By Jeannie Marcure

## April 2004 Program

### The Community, Economy, and Environment: How to Maintain Vibrant Downtowns, Quality of Life, and Open Spaces



Flathead Audubon presents Tim Davis of the Montana Smart Growth Coalition at its April 13 meeting. Davis will draw upon best community development, planning, and conservation practices from around Montana and the intermountain west to talk about what residents of Kalispell and Flathead County can do to maintain their quality of life, conserve the open spaces, and promote long term economic health. Davis will specifically discuss the impacts that the Glacier Mall would have on the community and county and viable alternatives to the mall.

Tim Davis, the executive director of the Montana Smart Growth Coalition, grew up in Lander, Wyoming, as well as other places in the West. He has worked on smart growth, community development, and environmental issues for more than 10 years, including as an organizer with Northern Plains Resource Council, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine, director of the Greater Seattle YMCA Earth Service Corps, and with several other community development and environmental organizations in Seattle.

The Montana Smart Growth Coalition is the only organization dealing exclusively with growth, development, and conservation issues statewide by representing over 40 member groups and hundreds of Montanans at the legislature, conducting cutting-edge research of the best planning, development, and conservation practices, and providing advice and technical assistance to communities and people across Montana. MSGC's mission is to support safe and healthy communities, sustainable economies, conservation of farm, forest, and ranch lands, and protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat.

Flathead Audubon meets at The Summit health center, in conference room #3. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. The Summit is located on the north end of the Kalispell Regional Medical Complex, at 205 Sunnyview Lane. There is ample parking in the north lot.



*'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

### Meeting Time Change

Several people have mentioned that our meetings' historical starting time of 7:30 p.m. is hard on families, with the programs sometimes running past bedtime. So, beginning with the April meeting, **we will begin at 7:00 p.m.** And there will be a

**"Natural History Moment" beginning at 6:45 p.m.** for those who would like to come even earlier and get a bit extra. Hopefully, this change will offer a better opportunity for folks to enjoy the programs without having to scoot out early.

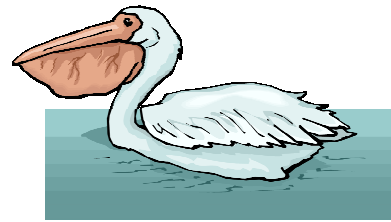


### NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Elections will be held at the May potluck meeting. If you would like to suggest a person for a Flathead Audubon position, please contact the nominations committee, which is made up of Linda Winnie, Bruce Tannehill and Neal Brown. A full report, complete with biographies of the nominees, should be in the May newsletter, so that members will be prepared to vote at the annual meeting.

## FROM THE BOARD: **BOB LEE**

- \* **Board Member**
- \* **Incoming Newsletter Editor**
- \* **"Beauty of Birds" Instructor**
- \* **Bird Tuber Extraordinaire**



I sit here reflecting on Flathead Audubon and what it means to the Flathead Valley. I have been involved for just over a year and have been quite impressed at the level of commitment and participation in local issues. We have developed a great affiliation with DNRC in the management of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. This includes projects that have caught the attention of Prudential Financial, who help support those efforts financially. There are still issues associated with Owen Sowerwine and the development of a comprehensive management plan. We take part in the Family Forestry Expo and alert the public to the benefits of nongame and habitat. We have developed a purple loosestrife eradication project at Ninepipe – a very ambitious undertaking. The fires of last summer led to a new approach to public participation in the development of forest management strategies, especially regarding salvage logging. And Flathead Audubon rose to that challenge. As more and more suburban development takes place, we are being asked to get involved. We recently decided not to join in on a lawsuit; Flathead Audubon has always preferred non-litigious tactics. We have put on a Beauty of Birds class to incorporate the community into birding. Our Teacher's Workshop is the best in the state, possibly the northwest. All this, in addition to just enjoying the splendor of watching birds on all the amazing field trips.

How do we keep all of this connected? Through the Pileated Post. I have the honor and responsibility of taking over the editorship. It comes with some pretty large shoes to fill. Leslie Kehoe turned out excellent newsletters for many years. And she did it mostly by herself. When she stepped down, it took a committee to carry on. Karen Nichols performed wonderfully as the editor with Kay Mitchell doing layout and Jeannie Marcure writing articles and forecasting needs. Karen is refocusing her energies on an upcoming family addition, but Kay and Jeannie are staying on to help me out. With all the issues regarding Flathead Audubon, the Pileated Post will probably change somewhat as well. Certainly we will maintain the high standards. But we would also like feedback from the members as to what they would like to see as well. So please give me a call with suggestions at 257-0363 or 758-6879. And still keep watching those birds.



*Have faith in yourself. The mighty oak tree was once a little nut that held its ground. Anonymous*

## AUDUBON TEACHER WORKSHOP

Twenty-eight people attended the teacher workshop on March 13th and 14th. This number included 11 naturalist volunteers and 17 teachers from the area. Paul Belanger from Montana Audubon led the workshop, which focused on place-based education and citizen science. The Flathead Audubon Education Committee presented the teacher education materials that we have been developing and helped with the field trips into Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

The weather cooperated very well and gave us the opportunity to spend much of the workshop in the field, modeling the activities that can be used with students and enjoying the sights and sounds of this important birding area. Among the birds that participants spotted were raptors, woodpeckers and various waterfowl. Other highlights included watching the impressive courtship behaviors of the goldeneyes and observing the great blue herons in the rookery.

A special thanks to Kalispell Montessori for opening up their wonderful building for us to use for the workshop. Also, thanks to Montana Coffee Traders for donating delicious shade grown coffee for both days of the workshop. It was very much appreciated!

Vonnie McDonald, Co-Community Naturalist Coordinator



# LANDSCAPING FOR THE BIRDS

*I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than of cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs.*

*Joseph Addison*

After a long and snowy winter in the Flathead Valley, the arrival of April and the spring seed catalogs start most of us dreaming of the beautiful yards and gardens that we want to create this summer. As you begin those plans for your own private Shangri-La, keep your feathered friends in mind and you'll not only have a more beautiful yard to enjoy this year but you'll also have the added pleasure of more watchable wildlife right there at home.

As with most projects, you'll want to start with a plan. First, take stock of what you already have. Use a drawing (or one of the new software titles) to note buildings, sidewalks, fences, trees, shrubs and the location of existing feeders and nest boxes. Next, decide what your own personal vision of Paradise looks like. I find it useful to keep an idea journal handy as I peruse catalogs and magazines throughout the year. I simply clip pictures and ideas that appeal to me and stick them in a blank notebook with a glue stick or double-stick tape. Before I start a new project, I look through this journal and select the ideas that I want to use. This is so much easier than trying to locate a magazine article or picture that I remember reading several months ago!

To make your yard more bird friendly, include as many of the following plant groups as possible:

conifers  
grasses and legumes  
nectar-producing plants  
summer-fruiting plants  
fall-fruiting plants  
winter-persistent plants  
nut and acorn plants



If there are specific birds that you'd like to attract to your yard, check your bird guides to see what they like to eat. The larger the variety of plants you grow, the more different bird species you'll be able to attract.

To increase the chance that your new plants will survive, plant species native to our area. Some exotic plants will survive in the Flathead for a while but many will not survive our "Arctic Express" events. Also, natives will offer the foods most suited to the birds that frequent our area. For help in determining which plants are native to the Flathead, I like "***Plants of the Rocky Mountains***" published by Lone Pine Publishing. Additionally, the Flathead Chapter of the Montana Native Plant Society publishes a wonderful packet of information, "***Native Plant Gardening and Landscaping References and Recommended Species for Native Plant Gardening in the Flathead.***" The packet can be mailed to you for \$2.50. Contact Tara Carolin at PO Box 382, West Glacier, MT 59936 or call 406-888-7919 or e-mail [tara\\_carolin@nps.gov](mailto:tara_carolin@nps.gov)

For year-round bird watching, plant a variety of species that will produce foods in different seasons. For winter residents and for those returning early in the spring, plants that hold their fruits during the winter are a vital food source. You've probably noticed the large flocks of waxwings that frequent the mature mountain ash trees in Kalispell during the winter and spring.

Shelter is another important consideration for birds. Provide dense thickets where birds can nest, perch and escape from predators by planting shrubs, hedges or training vines over fence lines. Mimic a natural environment by encouraging a thick wild growth. Also try to leave dead limbs and trees in place where it's safe to do so. Old hollow trees provide homes for cavity-nesting birds such as woodpeckers, nuthatches and bluebirds, while the insects that live under the bark and in the decaying wood

...(more Landscaping for the Birds, next page)



.....(LANDSCAPING FOR BIRDS, continued)  
are an important food source. Although the small larch snag in front of our house might be considered ugly by some, in the past three years it's been home to several families of flickers, bluebirds, and nuthatches and it's one of our favorite landscaping features. If you live in a more urban setting and want to conceal a dead tree, try planting a climbing plant at the base.

Do you hate to clean up your yard and garden in the fall? Well, the birds will love you for it! Leaving dead seed heads on daisy-relatives such as purple coneflowers and black-eyed susans will attract seed loving birds such as redpolls and finches to your winter garden. Instead of bagging up fallen leaves and sending them to the landfill, try raking them under trees and shrubs. They will harbor insects that ground-dwelling birds will feed on and then in the spring the birds will welcome this handy supply of nesting materials. Recycle dead branches and twigs to start a brush pile and your yard may soon be home to a flock of Juncos. They will appreciate the protection from the cold weather and predators.

Adding a water source is one of the fastest ways to increase the bird population in your yard. A frog pond, a water garden, or a birdbath will bring in lots of birds, especially if the water is dripping, splashing or moving. When we installed a dripper over our birdbath, the hummingbirds found it almost immediately and used it for bathing. They

also found the small tabletop fountain on our deck and took baths in the spout portion. For an easy, low maintenance and inexpensive water feature for your yard, consider adding a frog pond. I found some great on-line directions at.

<http://frogirvana.com/garden-frog-ponds.php>

and hope to add this feature to our yard this summer. Don't forget that birds need water in the winter as well and you may want to add a heating element to your water sources for the winter months.

Lastly, I'd like to add a word of caution. After you've attracted lots of birds to your yard, keep them safe and healthy by using pesticides and herbicides only when absolutely necessary and by careful selection of the types you use. As you attract more birds to your area, you may find that you have fewer insects to deal with. In our neighborhood, an abundance of native yarrow and lots of birds keep us almost mosquito free. I also think that some "weeds" are actually rather pretty—especially when there's a bird perched on them! Audubon's guide to safe pesticide use can be found at:  
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/pdf/pesticideguide.pdf>

Some of the facts for this article were taken from the Cornell Lab website. Further information can be found at:

[www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/Landscaping/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/Landscaping/)

By Jeannie Marcure



## Helping Preserve the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area

As most of you know by now, Flathead Audubon together with Montana Audubon has taken on the license for the only legislated Natural Area in the state of Montana. This 442 acre piece of river bottom is Montana school trust land. It is critical to keeping bird and animal habitat viable on the Flathead River.

The trend has been for the Flathead Valley to become more and more urban, making this an even more precious area in the future. This area has also become central to our educational mission of helping the valley's teachers to learn and pass on the "beauty of birds." The OSNA is host to many school field trips as well as private birding trips.

The license for this land is about \$550/year, increased by 1.5% each year. On top of this fee, we have taken on the management of the land. This will include fencing, signing and weed control as well as building an informational kiosk on the site. This license lasts until 2011, at which point we will have to negotiate a new license at a new fee. Obviously, we need a more permanent solution to the problem of supporting this natural area. Because of this, we have set up a fund specifically for the OSNA. Donations to this fund will go to pay for management of the land and keeping Owen Sowerwine a natural area forever.

Consequently, we need your donations. We have two generous contributors who will each give \$100 in matching grants. That means that for every dollar you contribute, they will match it with a dollar. A great way to multiply your giving. If you need help making up your mind, go down to the end of Treasure Lane south of Kalispell and spend an hour or two walking around in the OSNA. Then think about what this valley will be like in 30 years. I think you will be convinced.

Please send contributions to: Flathead Audubon Society  
PO Box 9173  
Kalispell, MT 59904

For more information, call: Linda deKort (755-3704)



Bruce Tannehill, Flathead Audubon Treasurer

# FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

## 2004 SPRING FIELD TRIPS

The Public is Invited on all Field Trips  
All Trips Free of Charge unless Otherwise Noted

### SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 27-28: FREEZEOUT LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

**FIELDTRIP.** Migrate over to Montana's premier migration stopover! In past years, more than 40 bird species, including thousands of Snow Geese have been counted. Call leader to arrange carpool. Leave at 10:30 a.m. Saturday from the Tidymen's parking lot in time to watch geese arrive at Freezeout Lake that evening. Stay overnight at the Bella Vista Motel in Choteau. After watching the geese leave the lake Sunday morning, head for home in time to arrive in Kalispell by 5 p.m. Contact person: Dan Casey, 857-3143 or [caseys4@centurytel.net](mailto:caseys4@centurytel.net)



**SATURDAY, APRIL 3: SECOND LOWER VALLEY WATERFOWL TOUR.** This four-hour tour of wetland sites in the Somers area features a variety of resident and migrating waterfowl, including recent spring arrivals—at least 20 species in all. Participants can expect to see some unusual birds, such as Eurasian wigwags, as well as ducks engaged in courtship behavior, and local raptors and songbirds. Meet at the Somers Recreation Area (Somers Bay boat ramp) on Highway 93 at 8:30 a.m. For more information contact Bob Rost, [mobob@cyberport.net](mailto:mobob@cyberport.net) or 837-2255.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 25, SMITH LAKE BIRDING.** The Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area this time of the year will have many varieties of ducks, including grebes, buffleheads, and ruddy ducks. We will search for sandhill cranes, March harriers, eagles, and osprey. We will certainly see and hear western meadowlarks and bluebirds. It will be an enjoyable morning of bird watching. Meet at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks building in Kalispell at 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning. For more information please contact Leslie Kehoe at 837-4467 or [likehoe@digisys.net](mailto:likehoe@digisys.net)



**MAY 21-23 MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL IN STEVENSVILLE.** Don't forget about this year's big birding festival! For information about this annual event, see the May PILEATED POST, the Montana Audubon web site, or contact Barbara Johnson in the Montana Audubon office in Helena—406-443-3949 [bjohnson@montana.com](mailto:bjohnson@montana.com). In addition, the Montana Audubon web site ([www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org)) will contain a summary of the full program and registration information.

**MAY & JUNE. BIGFORK WILD MILE CORRIDOR WILDFLOWER & BIRD WALKS.** Each Tuesday of May and June, 10 AM to Noon (May 4, 11, 18, 25 & June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29). Join Anne Morley (Montana Native Plant Society) and Neal Brown (Flathead Audubon Society) for a gentle morning of wildflower and bird identification along the Old Swan River Road. Meet in front of Showthyme Restaurant in downtown Bigfork. Contact: Neal Brown at 837-5018 or [nealpatt@cyberport.net](mailto:nealpatt@cyberport.net)



**SATURDAY, MAY 8. HARLEQUIN DUCKS AND AMERICAN DIPPERS.** See first hand the amazing adaptations of Harlequin Ducks, one of Montana's rarest birds. We will watch them courting in the rapids alongside the American Dipper, a hearty year-round resident. Easy, all morning trip with short level walks. Glacier National Park entrance fee or pass required. The number of participants is limited to minimize disturbance to these shy ducks. Please contact Jim Swab, 387-4299 or [suejim@bigsky.net](mailto:suejim@bigsky.net) for more information.

# FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

## 2004 SPRING FIELD TRIPS

The Public is Invited on all Field Trips  
All Trips Free of Charge unless Otherwise Noted

**SATURDAY, MAY 8. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AT THE BISON RANGE.** The birds brought spring back, and here's your chance to enjoy it by celebrating International Migratory Bird Day at the National Bison Range. A variety of bird activities are planned, including an advanced birding hike and a beginning bird walk (space is limited, so pre-registration is required). There will also be a variety of other activities, including a talk about bluebird habitat and houses, information on backyard bird feeding, special bird video showings, giveaways, contests, coloring pages, and a book sale. The National Bison Range is also planning to open the 19-mile Red Sleep Mountain Drive in time for this celebration (fees are charged for the drive). The Range will open at 7:00 a.m. Please call the National Bison Range at (406) 644-2211, extension 207 to register for activities.



**SATURDAY, MAY 15. SPRING LOON CENSUS DAY.** The Montana Loon Society and the Montana Common Loon Working Group will need volunteers to help look for and count loons on the lakes in north-west Montana on this day. The need is especially great for people to help in the North and Middle Fork areas, the Thompson Chain of Lakes, and the Troy and Libby areas. If you can help, please contact one of the following: for north and west of Kalispell or the Swan Valley, Jane Ingebretson, 837-5081, or Gael Bissell, 752-3874; for the Libby/Troy area, Joni Manning, 295-7495.



**SATURDAY, MAY 22. GLACIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES VOLUNTEER DAY.**

Join members of GNPA for their annual Volunteer Day in Glacier National Park. Volunteers will meet with park officials at 9:15 a.m. in front of the GNP Community Center to select from a list of work projects ranging from trail clearing (bird watching opportunities) to working in the park nursery. For additional information, contact Jim Swab at 387-4299 or [suejim@bigsky.net](mailto:suejim@bigsky.net).

**SUNDAY, MAY 16. LOST TRAIL WILDLIFE REFUGE TRIP.** Join us for a trip to the new National Wildlife Refuge in the Pleasant Valley near Marion. This is a very exciting time to visit this wonderful place. The fields and marshes and woodlands are alive with bird song not to mention birds. The habitat is very diverse, and we will have a chance to see everything from shore birds to ducks to warblers to raptors. We will meet at 7AM at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Building in Kalispell. To sign up, please contact Leslie Kehoe at (406) 837-4467 or [lkehoe@digisys.net](mailto:lkehoe@digisys.net)

**SATURDAY, JUNE 5. BIRDING IN THE NORTH FORK.** We will meet at the Polebridge Mercantile store at 9:00 a.m. and car pool to 8 miles north on the Outside North Fork Road and begin our search for warblers and other birds. Contact Donna at 257-4362.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 13. OWEN SOWERWINE CANOE TRIP.** Join Susannah & Dan Casey for a half-day exploration of an island park in the Flathead River near Kalispell. Canoe to the island (easy flat-water paddling) and bushwhack through the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Features breeding birds and a close-up look at the diversity of endangered cottonwood communities. Bring canoe and life jackets (one jacket for each person). Contact Susannah and Dan Casey at (406) 857-3143 or [caseys4@centurytel.net](mailto:caseys4@centurytel.net) to sign up for this trip.



**SATURDAY, JUNE 19. SQUEEZER CREEK BIRDING AREA.** Join Rod Ash for a unique birding experience in the Swan Valley's Squeezer Creek area. Afterward, the group will gather for lunch at the Swan Ecosystem Center in Condon, and an optional tour of the Center will be offered. Meet at the junction of Rt. 83 and the Swan River State Forest Headquarters (1/2 mile south of mile post 59), 9:30 a.m. and bring a lunch. For more information, call Rod at (406) 754-2289.





## APRIL 22 IS EARTH DAY 2004 WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

President Gerald Ford on the founding of Earth Day made this statement: "The earth will continue to regenerate its life sources only as long as we and all the people of the world do our part to conserve its natural resources. It is a responsibility which every human being shares. Through voluntary action, each of us can join in building a productive land in harmony with nature."

Here are a few tips and reminders of what we can do to make a difference. Some of the suggestions make very small changes in our lives but those small changes can make a large difference if all of us take them to heart.

- TURN OFF THE LIGHTS WHEN LEAVING A ROOM
- REPLACE INCANDESCENT LIGHT BULBS WITH ENERGY EFFICIENT FLUORESCENT BULBS
- DRIVE LESS, WALK MORE
- KEEP THE CAR TUNED; IT WILL RUN MORE EFFICIENTLY
- INSULATE THE WATER HEATER
- INSTALL LOWFLOW SHOWERHEADS AND TAKE MORE SHOWERS; BATHS USE MORE WATER AND ENERGY
- DRY CLOTHES ON A CLOTHESLINE OR DRYING RACK RATHER THAN IN THE DRYER
- TURN THE THERMOSTAT DOWN IN THE WINTER AND UP IN THE SUMMER; FOR EVERY DEGREE YOU TURN IT DOWN OR UP, YOU CAN SAVE UP TO 5% ON YOUR HEATING BILL, NOT TO MENTION USING LESS ENERGY
- CLOSE CURTAINS AND SHADES AT NIGHT
- HAVE GAS AND ELECTRIC APPLIANCES INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED REGULARLY
- KEEP SOUTH FACING WINDOWS CLEAN TO MAXIMIZE SOLAR HEAT GAIN
- DON'T KEEP THE REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER TOO COLD; CHECK THE TEMPERATURE PERIODICALLY. RECOMMENDED TEMP. FOR THE REFRIGERATOR IS BETWEEN 37F AND 40F AND FOR THE FREEZER IT IS 5F. FOR A STAND ALONE FREEZER IT IS 0 F.
- WHEN COOKING, MATCH THE BURNER SIZE TO THE PAN SIZE
- WHEN USING AN ELECTRIC STOVE, TURN

THE BURNER OFF SEVERAL MINUTES BEFORE THE ALLOTTED COOKING TIME; THE RESIDUAL HEAT WILL FINISH COOKING THE FOOD

- BUY ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES WHENEVER POSSIBLE
- IF YOU HAVE A HOT WATER HEATER THAT IS MORE THAN 7 YEARS OLD, CONSIDER REPLACING IT WITH THE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT ONES MADE TODAY
- REUSE PAPER AND PLASTIC BAGS. IT IS AMAZING, BUT 1/5 OF ALL THE WOOD HARVESTED IN THE WORLD TODAY ENDS UP AS PAPER
- USE RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES AND DISPOSE OF THEM RESPONSIBLY WHEN FINISHED
- STORE DRINKING WATER IN A CONTAINER IN THE REFRIGERATOR RATHER THAN LETTING THE WATER FLOW UNTIL IT IS COLD
- COMPOST LAWN CLIPPINGS
- BUY LARGER SIZE PACKAGES OF PRODUCTS TO AVOID EXCESS PACKAGING. 10 CENTS OF EVERY SHOPPING DOLLAR IS USED TO PAY FOR PACKAGING
- BRING YOUR OWN CLOTH BAGS TO THE GROCERY STORE
- USE FEWER PAPER TOWELS; SWITCH TO CLOTH NAPKINS AND TOWELS
- RECYCLE, RECYCLE, RECYCLE --- VALLEY RECYCLING IN KALISPELL WILL TAKE MOST RECYCLABLES AND FLATHEAD AUDUBON WILL BENEFIT IF YOU ASK FOR THE PROCEEDS TO GO TO FAS. RECYCLING OF 1 ALUMINUM CAN SAVES ENOUGH ENERGY TO RUN A TELEVISION FOR 3 HOURS (IT TAKES 95% LESS ENERGY TO RECYCLE AN ALUMINUM CAN THAN IT DOES TO PROCESS ENOUGH ORE TO MAKE A NEW CAN). FOR EACH TON OF PAPER THAT IS RECYCLED, 17 TREES AND 7000 GALLONS OF WATER ARE SAVED.

For more information and tips on what you can do to be more Earth-friendly, visit such web sites as [www.epa.org](http://www.epa.org), [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) and [www.earthday.com](http://www.earthday.com). Compiled by Leslie Kehoe



*Eat it up,  
Wear it out,  
Make it do,  
Do without.*

# Jack Joy Whitney: A Flathead Valley Legend

By Leo Keane

At the March 8, 2004 meeting of the Flathead Audubon Society, longtime Audubon member Jack Whitney received our Conservation Achievement Recognition Award. It was my honor to present the award to Jack that evening, and a great pleasure to witness the standing ovation Jack received when he came up to accept our award. There is no doubt that Jack has made an indelible impression on many people in his 87-year lifetime in the Flathead Valley. The modesty, sincere gratitude and winning smile with which Jack accepted our Flathead Audubon coffee mug and a new jack knife (for whittling his signature dogwood whistles) are some of the qualities that has made Jack so well-loved in our Audubon chapter.

As a prelude to presenting this Conservation Award to Jack, I stopped by his home overlooking the Swan River on the edge of Bigfork. I wanted to have a chat with Jack, visit him again at his home and make sure that he felt comfortable with this recognition. Of course he did. Jack is no shrinking violet.

I remember very well creeping into my first meeting of the Flathead Audubon Society. That's been almost 20 years ago, when our meetings were in the basement of the Bigfork Bank. I was a bit shy then, and a newcomer to the Flathead Valley—but no stranger to birds. And by that first meeting I knew quickly that for the love of birds I was among kindred spirits.

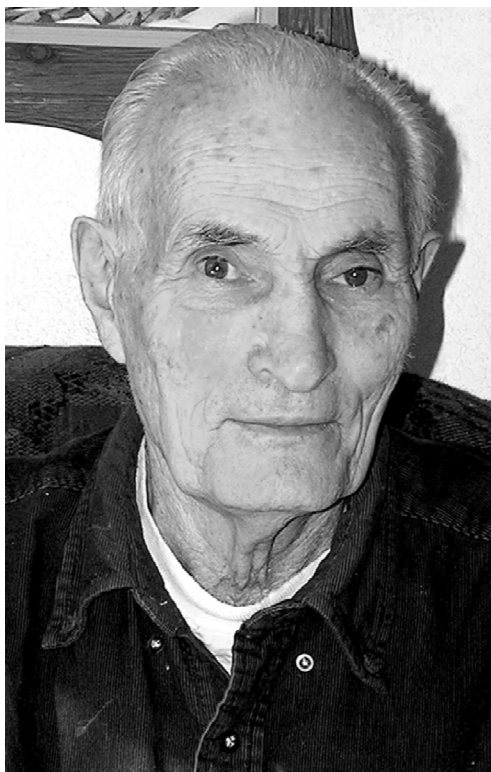
Sitting in the front row, that very first meeting, tall and erect, dressed in a plaid, flannel shirt, logger jeans and dusty boots was a most unlikely man for a "bird-watcher." Beside him sat a tiny woman, as demure as this man loomed large. When the big man spoke it was with a resounding voice, and with a surprising enthusiasm for birds and a noticeable authority about things to be found in the woods. The demure woman beside him listened quietly and attentively. This couple struck me as yet another reason why I liked my newly chosen home. By the end of the meeting I had been introduced to husband and

wife, Jack and Ursula Whitney.

After all these years, it is a special Monday night when Jack Whitney shows up at one of our meetings. His stride is still healthy, but slowed by the years. And though Jack is now the one sitting quietly and attentively in the back of the room, he never fails to mention the return of the osprey, or when the nuthatches begin to nest. It has been some time since we've seen Ursula, arm-in-arm as she always was with Jack. Ursula now resides at an assisted living

home in Bigfork. She doesn't get out much, but Jack assures me Ursula is still sharp as a tack and reads a lot.

On this day, this afternoon prior to the meeting in which Jack will be recognized for a lifetime of conservation work, I am sitting in his living room. The sun streaming through the west-facing window illuminates Jack's face where he sits relaxed on his couch. An array of bird feeders just outside the window is animated with the coming and going of chickadees, nuthatches and a plump pine squirrel Jack likes to call "Peanut Butter." It is evident that I am in the home of a man of the outdoors. The Whitney residence is a consummately modest home, yet extravagant with the riches from a life of good work and old friends. Handmade bows and arrows, woven baskets and wooden



tools reside in each corner as though placed there after just being used. The walls of this room are adorned with impeccable and probably priceless works of art by Elmer Sprunger, Fred Fellows and Jack's own brother Wayne Whitney. An osprey soaring over stormy Flathead Lake—a Sprunger original—makes me feel like I'm a sentinel on the shore of a windy day. Around Jack's feet, like so many well-used references, are strewn field guides to the birds, the butterflies and wild flowers. At 87, Jack is still eager to learn. He slides photographs from a nearby drawer and I see a robust, handsome young man with a jaunty cap and a bow slung over his shoulder. In this photo a young Jack Whitney

*(JACK WHITNEY, continued, next page)*

.....(JACK WHITNEY, *continued*)

displays a cougar taken with the bow. In another it's a mountain goat. There are several of trophy elk and deer, all of these harvested with the bow—and the jaunty cap—and all close to home, Jack's backyard, his beloved Swan Valley.

As the afternoon sunlight wanes, a soft glow is cast on Jack's face. We've been talking for hours about these early years: from hunting exploits to becoming a carpenter and woodworker to frequent, drawn out battles with the Forest Service over protecting the Swan Front from road building and logging. Watchdogging the Swan would become Jack's life work, and solidify his commitment to preserving wildness.

Finally, by way of wrapping up our conversation I say, "Jack, you've led a good life." "No", he says, "It's been a hard life." And with that a cloud comes over Jack's face. He casts his eyes down and tells me that all of these things: the renowned hunting, the solitary hours of nature study for which he is equally famous, the craftsmanship of his work with wood, the public man, on the front lines for conservation, all of it has been a diversion and solace for a sadness that won't go away. Jack and Ursula lost the only two children they would ever have, both as babies. He tells me that you never get over it, and I fully understand.

Jack declines my invitation to join me for a late afternoon walk up in his woods. He politely explains that he just can't get around that much anymore, that all his favorite places in the world are now but his memories. It occurs to me that perhaps we both need a moment to be alone.

Up in the woods it feels like the opening day of spring. The tangy, pungentness of warm pine duff fills my nose, the first taste of the season. Jack's forest is the classic western blend: ponderosa pine as the stately over-story, western larch are like rising stars, shouldering their way above the ever present and adaptable Douglas fir, and then wherever a spare shaft of sunlight sifts

through, it's the humble lodgepole pine securing a toehold. In Jack's woods, paper birch add a splash of contrast here and there, and offer a nice, soft hole for the nuthatches' nest.

I walk to the brink of a rock outcropping, where the forested hill breaks to the valley. Surveying from this high vantage I realize that, in a sense, Jack just gave this all away. Some of the most valuable real estate in Bigfork, prime for development, as they say, with views to die for, Jack has placed into a conservation easement. This forested hillside, Bigfork's backyard, will not be developed, ever. It will always be a home for nuthatches and goshawks and the elusive critters we continually replace with our developments. After Jack and his stewardship values are gone from this property, the conservation easement remains with the title, securing this hill as unspoiled and protected forestland and wildlife habitat.

Which is, ostensibly, why we will honor Jack on March 8. But there is a bigger picture, and that comes to me with great clarity as I take a walk in Jack's woods on this first spring-like day of the year drawing to a close. Of course we want to recognize Jack for this gift to nature and to us. That is an important and significant decision and speaks volumes about Jack's commitment to the natural world. But now that I've spent a good afternoon with the man, this legendary outdoorsman and naturalist, and he has selflessly revealed his most human doubts and sorrows, I realize what is most significant about Jack Whitney. It is not so much what he has accomplished or shared or even given away that's important, but what Jack represents by the example of his life. That's what I find most honorable.

In a world where the prevailing attitude seems to be "get yours while the getting's good", Jack is a simple counterpoint: when it's all said and done, what counts is that your presence on the earth has left it a better place.

## HARD-A TAXES THIS YEAR?

If the bottom lines of your checkbook and your tax return don't quite match up this year, and if you're sore from "giving until it hurts," Flathead Audubon may be able to help. Because of our status as a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, you may have some deductions you didn't know about. Did you fill your bird feeder with Flathead Audubon sunflower seed? Half of the \$17 price of a bag of seed is deductible as a donation to FAS. Did you take "stuff" to your local recycling center and ask them to credit Audubon? Did you make a birdhouse, write a check, or donate an item for the silent auction at last year's potluck in May?

With your newfound deductions, perhaps you'll want to check the Nongame Wildlife box on your return. See, it pays to be part of the Flathead Audubon flock!

Kay Mitchell



Don't forget - Flathead Audubon Meeting starts at **7PM**

...(FERNE COHEN, *continued*)

unique features, including 15 inch walls, composting toilets, and grey water irrigation of a raised bed garden in the greenhouse.



Robert Bateman's painting of an alert Golden Eagle, a gift from Audubon, has provided daily inspiration. "I see this as myself, ever watchful over the environment." For instance, Ferne points out, "When looking at the Montana constitution, you see a lot of democratic strength and process. Then you notice a Republican candidate for governor, right now, who wants to weaken environmental laws. Well, does he think this state would have the wonderful resources it has if we had not had good environmental laws?" She also watches over Audubon's decisions and encourages progressive activities.

"This is a very rich community, it has so much for us, and the divisiveness we have is painful and destructive," said Ferne. "As a Flathead Audubon board member, I tried to counter this by launching the Conservation Recognition program, bringing as many people as possible into the process. We had to do something positive." Recognition awards have highlighted not only the deeds of Audubon members, but also of folks in the community who make a positive difference to our environment. "Ferne can think outside the box," according to Neal Brown, an Audubon chairperson. "She always pushes us to take action."

"I couldn't have done all this without Marty's support. He has sat through so many board meetings." She and Marty represented the chapter in many regional and national Audubon meetings. Framed photos of themselves with President Clinton and Vice-President Gore evoke good memories of the 1996 Environment Day reception in Washington, D.C. "It's been hard work, but very gratifying," said

Ferne. "I never worked alone, but always with chapter and community support."

Ferne has certainly had a positive impact on the people of this community, who have shown their respect by presenting her with the Flathead Arts Council 1997 Volunteer of the Year Award, nominated by the Glacier Orchestra League, the Citizens for a Better Flathead Volunteer of the Decade, plus Flathead Audubon's Conservation Recognition for her long-term contribution. "I was awed by the other recipients of the Arts Council award and felt honored to be among them."

Giving of one's self is a fulfilling life that is hard to give up, but recently, Ferne has resigned from most of her volunteer activities. Ferne's eyesight began to deteriorate during the past year. "My organizational ability is based on integrating information from all my senses, and the transition has been really difficult." Her saviors arrived in the guise of counselors from the Montana Division of Blind and Low Vision Service. These folks have taught her how to walk with a cane, read with a closed circuit television and to use her computer in new ways.

"I am an active person. I still have dinner to fix every night and to do the shopping. We take many things for granted, but we really need our sight," said Ferne. "When things get overwhelming, Marty and Richard keep me on track."

Although day-to-day activities take more time now, she has not given up all her community service. "I volunteer at the Whitefish branch library," says Ferne, relating how encouragement from the librarians has meant so much. "They have really embraced me." Ferne's input on new and ongoing issues still blesses Audubon. Her storehouse of knowledge, experience, and savvy is, indeed, far-seeing.



Written by Robin Maggadino

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are several ways that Audubon members can contribute their time to other projects in the area. Here are some golden opportunities:

**Spring Loon Day** is dedicated to determining loon pair presence and nesting attempts in Glacier National Park. It is scheduled for 15 May, but can be done any time during the last 2 weeks of May; most birds are on their nests by early June. Contact Steve Gniadek ([Steve.Gniadek@nps.gov](mailto:Steve.Gniadek@nps.gov)) for more information. Glacier National Park also has opportunities for volunteers with the **Senior Ranger Corps**. Steve is a contact for that as well.

The **Family Forestry Expo** will be held May 8-9 at the Stoltze experimental forest on Trumbull Creek. Flathead Audubon has an exhibit featuring "Sally the Snag" to educate the public about the wildlife benefits of snags in the forests. If you would like to participate, talk with a member of the Education Committee at the Audubon April meeting.

The **Owen Sowerwine Natural Area** is a major Flathead Audubon project and includes dealing with DNRC and neighbors as well as organizing projects at OSNA. Brent Mitchell and Neal Brown are co-chairs of the OSNA Committee and would love to have your help and participation.

# Boreal Conservation Framework Lays Out Vision for Protecting Vital Breeding Grounds for Billions of North American Birds

Stretching from Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean, Canada's boreal forest is one of the world's largest forests. It accounts for 25 percent of the earth's remaining intact forests, covers 1.3 billion acres, and is larger than the Brazilian Amazon. With more fresh water than any place on earth, Canada's boreal forest supports some of the largest populations of wildlife such as grizzly bears and wolves, and provides vital breeding grounds for up to a third of North America's land birds and 40 percent of its waterfowl.

In December 2003, the Canadian Boreal Initiative (CBI) announced a landmark vision to protect this global treasure. The Boreal Conservation Framework proposes a new approach to balancing conservation and economic development: the establishment of a network of large interconnected protected areas covering about half of Canada's boreal region, and the use of cutting-edge sustainable development practices in remaining areas. The Framework reflects an extraordinary alliance of conservation organizations, First Nations, and timber and oil companies who have signed on to the Framework. (Information about the Framework can be found at CBI's web-site: [www.borealcanada.ca](http://www.borealcanada.ca))

While vast tracks of the boreal region remain unspoiled at this point, the release of the Framework comes at a time when development is rapidly escalating and land use decisions in every Canadian province and territory will determine the fate of much of the boreal region within the next three to five years. With over 90% of the boreal under public ownership, a critical next step will be to persuade Canadian governments to play a central role in making the Framework's vision a reality.

Much of the resource development in the boreal is being driven by U.S. consumption. The U.S. is the leading importer of Canadian forest prod-

ucts and oil and gas. Eighty-one percent of Canada's forest products go to the United States, and most of the wood cut in Canada's boreal is used to make paper, including catalogs, junk mail, magazines, and newspapers. And the U.S. buys more of its oil and gas from Canada -- 60% of which is produced from the boreal -- than any other single source.

Of the 298 bird species that have some of their breeding grounds in the boreal forest, at least 40 species of land birds and several species of ducks are already experiencing population declines in part due to habitat loss from logging and oil and gas development.

While American consumption is largely responsible, it also means that American citizens and companies can influence the fate of this global treasure. The boreal is perhaps the greatest forest conservation opportunity left on earth.

An international campaign focused in the U.S. is emerging. The Boreal Songbird Network is a new network of conservation groups that include: the Boreal Songbird Initiative, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the American Bird Conservancy. These groups are working to build a broad base of international support for boreal conservation and the adoption of the Boreal Framework.

For more information on how you can help protect the boreal forest, please go to the Boreal Songbird Initiative website at [www.borealbirds.org](http://www.borealbirds.org).

*The Boreal Songbird Initiative is a new project dedicated to educating bird conservationists and naturalists throughout the United States about the importance of North America's boreal forest to migratory birds.*



## BE AN AUDUBON HERO!

The last meeting of the year is quickly approaching for Flathead Audubon – May, that is. We have a silent auction as a fundraiser. Anything that you might like to donate would be greatly appreciated – it doesn't even have to be bird-related.

Flathead Audubon would like to move into the electronic age in a bigger way. We would really like to have a webpage. Is there anyone out there who would be interested in developing and maintaining one for us? Please talk to a board member at the April meeting.





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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. The regular meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. and includes a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

**THE PILEATED POST** is published September through May and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. For membership information or address change, please call Mike Fanning at 862-8070.

**Deadline for newsletter copy is the 20th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 758-6879; email submissions to pileatedpost@hotmail.com**

## FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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2003-2006	Andrea Goff	(bigfork@digisys.net)	837-1530

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