



the **Flatheaded Post**

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

LAST NEWSLETTER ISSUE FOR FAS MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RENEW BY OCTOBER 18
RENEW NOW - DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!



What I learned over summer vacation...

by Rochelle Pope – Education Coordinator

Summer was a busy time for the education arm of Flathead Audubon Society (FAS). Back in May we participated in the Forestry EXPO hosted by Flathead National Forest and Stoltze Lumber Company. We chose cavity nesters as our booth theme and promoted our recently completed Cavity Nesters Educational Trunk along with information about FAS, field trips and birding in Northwest Montana. We were fortunate to share a space with the rescue birds, providing a close-up opportunity to learn about raptors including a Golden Eagle, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl and a Bald Eagle.

For the Montana Bird Festival, we sponsored a children's birding program complete with games, dressing up like a bird, and learning to use binoculars. We took a hike along the Swan River Nature Trail and viewed birds in the wild among the roaring rapids. In the future, we are hoping to open this field trip to the general public free of charge and spark the interest of future Audubon members!

In August, all the education trunks were used at Lone Pine State Park for a week of birding fun including a Junior Ranger Birding Workshop on Saturday August 13 from 9 a.m. - 2p.m. This workshop was funded, in part, by an educational grant from FAS. Students built and decorated their own bird feeders, learned what makes a bird a bird, where to look for birds, how to use binoculars and guide books, and dissected owl pellets to find out what they eat! Also available for check out at the park, Junior Ranger Birding Backpack filled with

activities for kids to learn about birds and work towards earning their junior ranger badge!

On Thursday August 18, we shifted gears and taught the adults instead! Teachers from around Northwest Montana were invited to the 2nd Annual Teachers' Educational Trunk Workshop at Lone Pine State Park for continuing education credit. Teachers spent a day with agencies, organizations and individuals from around Flathead Valley who provide educational trunks and learned how to utilize them in a classroom setting. *(continued on page 3...)*

OCTOBER
FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, October 10, 2005: Flathead Audubon General Meeting

Wednesday, October 5, 2005: Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting. 295 Third Ave EN, 6PM (Note temporary change of date!)

Thursday, October 6, 2005: Publicity Committee Meeting. 12 noon at 295 Third Ave EN. Brown Bag Organizational Meeting. New Members are needed and are encouraged to bring new ideas!

Saturday, October 22, 2005: Sunflower Seed Delivery Day. See page 5 for locations and times

BIRD OF THE MONTH

FAITHFUL WINTER VISITORS



"The chickadee is a symbol of faithfulness. It lives the year around in the same region. It never deceives its human friends, as so many birds do, by changing its coat and colors. In the summer, to be sure, it is not much seen. But with wintry blasts, time the others go south, the Chickadee begins to be noticed. Then there comes a time when it is almost the only thing to lend a touch of life and a note of gladness to a bleak outdoors.

William Athenton Dupuy
Our Birds, Friend and Foe, 1925

Now that fall has arrived and the excitement of spotting the many migrants that pass through the Flathead on the way to their winter homes is mostly over, it's time to start thinking about buying Audubon sunflower seeds and cleaning our bird feeders. Much as I enjoy these last fleeting days of good weather, I have to admit that I'm looking forward to hearing that the bears have hibernated so that I can safely welcome some old friends back to our feeders. When I first started feeding birds years ago, a Black-capped Chickadee was our very first visitor and they and the other species of chickadees in the valley have become regular visitors.

Chickadees are among the most frequent and loyal feeder visitors. They are also some of the tamest, often waiting patiently on a nearby twig while I refill feeders and water. As members of the Paridae Family, chickadees are closely related to titmice. Both are small, energetic, social birds with short conical, pointed bills. The species with crests are titmice and those without crests are chickadees. Our area is home to four species of chickadees: Black-capped, Mountain, Chestnut-backed, and Boreal. Last winter we were fortunate enough to have Black-capped, Mountain and Chestnut-backed visit our feeders regularly.

All chickadees have strong legs and short, stout bills which are put to good use in feeding behaviors such as hanging upside down at the tip of a branch eating a bud or holding a seed with their feet while pounding it open. Chickadees also store food in temporary caches. Sometimes the food is cached and retrieved almost immediately, as when they move many sunflower seeds from a feeder and hide them in nearby tree bark. In this case, the cache is used just to help the bird get a large portion of the available food for itself. At other times the caches are more long-term, such as when seeds are stored in the fall for use later in the winter. This behavior

which involves large spatial memory is crucial in their survival in our harsh winters. Also key to their ability to survive extreme weather conditions is their ability to go into a state of regulated hypothermia, lowering their body temperature from a day time temp of 107.6 ° to a night temperature of 86 °. While in this state of torpidity, they can still fly (somewhat weakly) if the need to escape a predator arises.

All four kinds of chickadees found in the Flathead have dark caps, black throat patches, and white cheeks and prefer forest habitats. Males, females and young all look alike. All are smaller than sparrows and very acrobatic when feeding. Black-capped have buffy sides and Mountain can be distinguished from Black-capped by the thin white eye-brow and grayer flanks. Chestnut-backed is the most brightly colored chickadee and has a rich reddish-brown back and reddish brown flanks while Boreal has a smaller white cheek patch and is more subdued in color. Boreal is the shyest and the least often seen of the Rocky Mountain chickadees.

All chickadees are cavity nesters and prefer natural holes such as those created when a large branch breaks off at the trunk or those made by woodpeckers, but they will use wooden nest boxes as well. This nest is also used in the winter as an escape from the cold with several birds huddling together to keep warm during cold snaps.

Currently, all chickadee species are plentiful in our area but deforestation and development could threaten their habitat, so urge your friends and neighbors to save those trees and snags and become bird watchers!

Information for this article was gathered from The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior, eNature.com, and www.naturepark.com/chickade.htm

By Jeannie Marcure



OCTOBER PROGRAM

A Naturalist's Journeys in Mexico



The country of Mexico harbors a diverse array of habitats within its borders. From the vast deserts and sun-drenched beaches of Baja California, to the cloud forests of the Sierra Madre Oriental, to the climax Oyamel fir forests of the high volcanoes, to the humid rainforests of the Sierra Tuxtlas, there is incredible diversity of habitats to explore and bird in this country.

Lou Bruno has been leading and lecturing on Elderhostel tours throughout Mexico for the past four years. His adventures have taken him to Copper Canyon, Baja, the Veracruz Gulf coast, the Monarch Butterfly preserves in the mountains of Michoacan, and many other parts of this vast country.

Lou Bruno is a retired school teacher from East Glacier Park. He served three years as president and many years on the board of the Montana Wilderness Association. He's an avid birder and has conducted breeding bird surveys for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and raptor surveys for the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He teaches two birding classes for the Glacier Institute every June.

Community Naturalist Volunteers Needed

FAS is looking for a few good people who are willing to donate their time for educating Flathead Valley students about the world around them. Worried you wouldn't know what to do? Anyone interested will be provided hands-on training, guidance, and suggestions. If you are interested, please contact Rochelle Pope, Education Coordinator, at 270-5919. It is completely painless and a ton of fun!

Thanks, Amy Sabins!

When Amy came to go birding by ear with me, I was on my front porch, listening to the buzz at my hummingbird feeder. Amy identified the hummers as Calliopes. I am so pleased to know the birds I heard at home, at the Whitefish River, and the pond at Riverside at Whitefish. Thanks! Ferne Cohen



RECYCLING GODS SMILE ON FLATHEAD AUDUBON

What a great start to our new Audubon year! For the first time in FAS recycling history, the Mitchell Recycling Wagon got to make not one, but TWO trips to the recycling center for September. By the end of the second trip, we had hauled 976 pounds of milk jugs, newspaper, aluminum, cardboard, paper, and magazines, and collected \$33.45 for the FAS treasury. Wow! Flathead Auduboners really know how to do this! Now we all get another chance to be "part of the solution" in October. The Recycling Wagon will be parked at the west end of the Summit parking lot at 6:30 PM to accept any recyclables you bring us. It helps if you have your items separated into bags or boxes. Brown paper bags go with corrugated cardboard, flyers stay in the newspapers and all other paper and paperboard can go together. If you're not sure, bring it anyway and we'll help figure it out!



(What I Learned This Summer, continued from page 1...)

A total of 25 teachers participated with FAS, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Flathead National Forest, Glacier National Park, Swan Ecosystem Center, Kootenai Culture Committee, and Women in Timber presenting.

In September, FAS is participating with the Flathead Community of Resource Educators (CORE) to provide a series of trainings throughout the year beginning with a kickoff potluck at Lone Pine State Park. These events are open to anyone with an interest in resource education (natural, cultural, and historical) as an opportunity to learn and network with other resource educators. CORE is a network of individuals and organizations working together to increase awareness and understanding of natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Flathead Region. If you are interested in attending any of these events, please contact me at 270-5919.

Teachers never lose their class!

Coming in late October...Classroom volunteer training!

Audubon Society will be hosting this training for anyone interested in learning how to be a classroom volunteer. I am looking for individuals or partners who would like to volunteer time in local classrooms and at local natural areas assisting teachers with bird education units. If you would like to become a classroom volunteer, please contact me A.S.A.P. at 270-5919.

Thanks to everyone who donated their time for these great educational events!



FROM THE BOARD:

LEWIS YOUNG

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CHAIR
BOARD MEMBER



CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT
October 2005

Since the last report here in the Pileated Post, the Conservation Committee has reviewed and prepared comments on two principal issues. First was a proposal by developers along the north shore of Flathead Lake to fill 2.8 acres of wetlands and 1.5 acres of the lake itself, as well as build a 2850 feet long seawall to “protect” their properties from wave erosion. Besides being a clear violation of Flathead County Lake and Lakeshore Regulations, the wetlands that were proposed for filling are unique to the north shore area and could not be replaced by wetlands away from the north shore situation. The seawall portion of the proposal had a very high likelihood of increasing erosion on the nearby Flathead Waterfowl Production Area. FAS twice submitted letters to the US Army Corps of Engineers (the agency that would have approved the necessary permits) stating our opposition to the proposed projects due to the unacceptable environmental effects. Because of public comment, the seawall proposal was dropped in favor of a more benign yet effective system called a dynamic-equilibrium beach that was developed by researchers from the Yellow Bay Biological Station. To our knowledge, the Corps has not issued any permits for filling wetlands to this date.

The second major issue was a proposal by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to introduce tiger muskies into Horseshoe Lake west of Kalispell. Tiger muskies are hybrids between muskellunge and northern pike, claimed to be sterile, and known to be voracious predators that grow to large sizes. FAS submitted comments stating our concerns with numerous points of the proposal. Foremost perhaps was the introduction of another non-native species into our waters. Montana has a long history of severe effects on native fish species due to other non-native species being introduced. Since northwest Montana leads the state in illegal movement of fish, it is virtually a certainty that the tiger muskies would end up in other waters, where they could impact existing game and non-game fish. Potential predation on loon chicks and boreal toads, a U.S. Forest Service Sensitive Species, was also a concern for FAS. A decision by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is expected later this fall or winter.



Petition filed to emergency-list migratory shorebird that preys on horseshoe crabs

Defenders of Wildlife, American Bird Conservancy and the Audubon Society have asked the US Fish and Wildlife Service to emergency-list the red knot, a migratory shorebird whose population has plummeted 80% in the past 10 years. The red knot makes an 18,000-mile roundtrip each year from its winter home at the tip of South America to the Arctic and back. “The scientific models indicate the extinction of the red knot by 2010. This is only five years away, a blink of the eye,” said Delaware Audubon Conservation Chair Nick DiPasquale. “Emergency listing is the only hope we have of saving this important species. Never before has the FWS considered for listing a species whose declining numbers so closely follow a well-documented extinction curve with such a short time hori-

zon for survival.” The red knot is one of the most heavily studied shorebirds in the world, with more than 30 biologists conducting as many as 15 projects each year. Data link the rapid disappearance of the red knot and other shorebirds to over-harvesting of horseshoe crabs. The red knot is the hardest hit shorebird by the decline. Given the long life-cycle of the horseshoe crab and the nine to 12 years it takes to reach sexual maturity, actions to restore the horseshoe crab may not have an immediate impact on egg abundance. It could take years to rebuild crab stocks to the point where Delaware Bay food sources are adequate to spark a rebound in red knot populations. The red knot is the size of a dove with a distinctive breast of brilliant rusty red. This russet color extends up the neck and around the eyes.



Endangered means there is still time.

FLATHEAD AUDUBON'S ANNUAL SUNFLOWER SEED SALE



Feed your feathered friends and support local
Audubon projects!

Black, Oil Sunflower Seeds 50 lb. Sack - \$17

This sale is Flathead Audubon's primary fund raising
project and your purchase will help fund local
conservation and educational programs.

DELIVERY--OCTOBER 22

Bigfork (837-1456)---IGA Parking Lot-----9:00-11:00 AM
Columbia Falls (387-4150)----Glacier Bank---10:00-12:00 AM
Whitefish (862-8070)-Train Depot-----11:00-1:00 PM
Kalispell (862-8070)--Fairgrounds North End-12:00-2:00 PM
(North of the Fairgrounds on Wyoming Ave. Please enter on 7th Ave West North because of all
the construction on Meridian.)

Swan Valley (754-2289)Call June Ash for pickup information
Eureka (889-3492)--Call Lewis Young for pickup information

*Clip and send the order form below to:
June Ash, PO Box 1129, Condon, Mt. 59826*

SALE CLOSES OCTOBER 15--ORDER NOW

Number of Sacks: _____ @ \$17 = Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

I will pick up my order Saturday, October 22 at (check one)

Bigfork____ Columbia Falls____ Condon____ Kalispell____ Whitefish____ Eureka____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Are you a member of Flathead Audubon? Yes _____ No _____

If you are not a member, you can join for only \$15. Use form on back of newsletter.



LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

DID YOU KNOW???

Flathead Birding Hotspots brochure can be seen at <http://www.FlatheadValues.org> and then follow the link to "EnjoyWildlife."



OVER 10,000 HUMMINGBIRDS BANDED IN MONTANA

Our hummingbird research season has come to a close with a total of 3415 individual hummers banded for 2005. This year a significant number of hummers was banded near Lincoln, Tizer Gardens, Blacktail Guest Ranch, Canyon Ferry Lake, Nelson, and Spotted Bear/Bob Marshall Wilderness. The breadth of this research was due to the overwhelming cooperation and support of many participating hummer enthusiasts who feed these tiny birds throughout the season each year. We graciously thank them for their many years of dedication to the hummingbirds, and subsequently granting us permission to study their birds. Although hummer banding began in 1955, it is just now reaching its prime, with new and exciting data being revealed from the cumulative volunteer work of about 100 active humbanders. For example, last year approx. 34,000 hummingbirds of 16 species were banded in 37 states, and 3 provinces in N. America. We feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this ongoing network of scientific study and remain passionate about our years ahead devoted to learning about the life of the hummingbird.

During our 5-year study, we have banded over 10,000 hummingbirds in 115 Montana loca-

tions, with our home bases consisting of Red Lodge (3 years), Bigfork (1 year), and Helena (1 year). Six hummer species were banded: Calliope, Rufous, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned, Ruby-throated, and Annas, as well as 5 adult male hybrids.

West-central Wyoming is our next destination, where we will continue our banding in 2006 and establish a baseline study which will indicate the species and their densities that breed in the area. Our ultimate goal in Wyoming is to reencounter some of our previously banded Montana hummers from earlier years, traveling through Wyoming during their migrations. The future will also include a few return trips to previous Montana banding sites where the potential for the recapture of these banded birds will contribute new knowledge of both their migrational routes and longevity.

We sincerely hope that our passion for these magnificent winged creatures has been passed on to many of you and that your fascination and appreciation for them will continue to endure. Significant field findings in the future will be submitted to the Independent Record to keep you updated on our hummer research. Thanks so much to everyone.

By Ned and Gigi Batchelder

Audubon's Second Annual Butterfly Count

What do you get when you put together six people, six butterfly nets and lots of **fast** butterflies? Lot of fun!

We had yet another superb day to survey our local butterflies in the West Glacier area this July 24th. Butterflies like it hot, and it was a windless, very warm day. The only down side to the heat was that the butterflies were a lot faster than we were! Nevertheless, this collection of hot butterfly enthusiasts were continually in hot pursuit of these fast fluttering beauties, and did a great job of even catching a good number! Once again, we were lucky to have the expertise of Chris Tonkinson and Will Kerling, who made the journey to the Flathead for count day. They both have been instrumental to helping get counts started all over the state, and we were very lucky to have them fit us into their schedule. This year everyone who showed up got a high quality net to use, thanks to The Glacier Institute, who lent us nets for the day. Thanks, Jamie Belt!

The final count came up similar to last year with twenty different species. We had some that were also common last year, like Northern Crescents (42 this year!), Mariposa Coppers (32) and Northwestern Fritillaries (47!). Some species were seen last year that did not make a showing this year, like the Common Branded Skipper. New species seen this year for the first time are the Peck's Skipper. We hope to grow interest for this event, and gain insight into our beautiful butterfly populations. Thanks to all those who participated: Pat McClelland, John and Diana Kyle, Chris Tonkinson and Will Kerling.

From Sonja Hartmann





FAS Annual Sunflower Seed Sale

This is Flathead Audubon's primary fund raising project. The seed is very clean, Montana-grown, black sunflower seed much loved by many birds. This is an opportunity to support Flathead Audubon and enjoy the feeding of birds. Proceeds support local conservation and educational programs such as:

- Book Purchase Award to local elementary schools for library books of natural history
- Scholarships for environmental education
- Research grants for field studies of birds and bird habitat
- Employment of an Education Coordinator
- Educational materials for lectures by Audubon members to local classes and civic groups
- Support to Local Elementary Schools through Project Feeder Watch
- Lease, Care and upkeep of Owen Sowerwine Natural Area



Aztecs worshipped sunflowers as a symbol of the sun.

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

Albert Einstein



Audubon Launches Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Site

New York, NY, June 6, 2005 - In response to a flood of requests for information on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Audubon has launched a new Ivory-billed Woodpecker site, <http://audubon.org/bird/ivory/challenges.php>

The site features comparison charts/illustrations to identify and compare the Ivory-billed Woodpecker with the Pileated Woodpecker, a species it is most often confused with. There is a detailed profile page for each bird with facts on ecology, conservation status, images of male and female, and range maps.

Come Join Us!

Audubon's Education Committee would like to invite you to come be part of the fun and exciting work we are doing! If you like brainstorming fun educational projects, sharing your love of birds with others, or just want to learn more about birds and education, you are the right person for the job!

Our committee has been working on creating a collection of bird education materials for school-teachers and other interested community educators to use. We now have quite a collection, but are talking about starting to work on an Owl box, in response to teacher demand. We are also helping to plan the information to go on the Kiosk at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area that Flathead Audubon helps to manage.

But that's not all! We are also working to help create a network of volunteers to go into classrooms and support teachers teaching bird curriculum units. Our members at Audubon are a wealth of knowledge that teachers are excited to tap into! We hope to continue to offer training opportunities to people who may know a lot about birds and the natural world, but may not feel comfortable sharing their expertise in the classroom.

Our committee meets about once a month during the spring, fall and winter. If you would like more information, or would like to come to our next meeting to explore getting involved, please call Sonja Hartmann at 387-4150.



Use the talents you have. The woods would be quiet if only the best songbirds chose to sing.

Birds & Blooms Magazine





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OCTOBER, 2005

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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 Board of Directors meets the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. 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 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to pileatedpost@hotmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Bob Lopp	52 West View Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-6886
Vice-President	Vacant		
Secretary	Gail Sullivan	932 Columbia Ave., Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5775
Treasurer	Bruce Tannehill	239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-4548
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DIRECTORS

2003-2006	Lisa Discoe	(ldiscoe@hotmail.com)	837-1456
2003-2006	Lewis Young	50 Garrison Dr., Eureka, MT 59917	889-3492
2004-2007	Dan Casey	(dcasey@abcbirds.org)	857-3143
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2005-2008	Paula Smith	(paulabobsmith@centurytel.net)	837-0181
2005-2008	Shirley Harrison	(harrisons@sd5.k12.mt.us)	844-2291

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Birdseed Sales	June & Rod Ash	754-2289	Owen Sowerwine	Brent Mitchell	756-8130
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Conservation	Lewis Young	889-3492	Newsletter Editor	Linda Winnie	755-1406
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Education Coordinator	Rochelle Pope	270-5919	Program	Leo Keane	862-5807
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Hospitality	Lois Drobish	756-7405	Refuge Projects	Leslie Kehoe	837-4467
	Jill Fanning	862-8070	Sales	Lisa Discoe	837-1456
Membership	Mike Fanning	862-8070	Wetlands/Waterfowl	Neal Brown	837-5018

MONTANA AUDUBON

Montana Audubon, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949
 Executive Director: Janet Ellis jellis@mtaudubon.org
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FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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