

the Silent Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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LEONARD HOWKE: Volunteer Extraordinaire



Leonard Howke has a history of volunteering for MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks and helping Montana's fish and wildlife resources that spans decades. Leonard began volunteering his time with the fledgling NW Montana White-tailed Deer Study in 1989 under head researcher Gary Dusek. He immediately became an indispensable member of the team and began volunteering hundreds of hours each year. He assisted with nearly every aspect of the research, whether it was capturing and marking deer, operating the Olney Game Check Station, collecting specimens or conducting 24-hour monitoring. His expertise in repairing the study's broken-down snowmobiles overnight in his "spare" time is almost legendary. Over time, 4 head researchers on the study came and went, but Leonard was the enduring, consistent factor for the entire study. A final report on the study describes how, over an 11 year period, there were over 2,000 whitetail captures, with over 1,300 individuals marked. Leonard was there for more than 80% of them.

The Olney Game Check Station had its origins in 1990, to gather data to supplement the white-tailed deer study; the Check Station continues to this day as an integral part of MT FWP's R-1 management program. Several hundred animals are measured and recorded each year including white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, black bears, and now wolves. For the past 20 years, Leonard has been there every day,

volunteering his time. He is the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave each evening. He knows by name many of the hundreds of hunters who come through each day. As a liaison between FWP and the public, you couldn't find a better guy.



Photo by
Tim Thier MT FWP

Besides the white-tailed deer study and the Olney Check Station, Leonard helps with any project needing a hand. Examples include capturing bears in the Swan Valley, trapping and transplanting Columbian sharp-tailed grouse from Canada to the Tobacco Valley near Eureka, and helping more than once with bighorn sheep trapping and transplanting operations.

Leonard's commitment to Montana's wildlife resources and hunting go back even further. In 1965 he became a volunteer Hunter Education Instructor, which he continues to this day. He has been the lead instructor in Whitefish for over 25 years. During the past 45 years, he has helped teach thousands of young students to be safe and responsible hunters.

As if being a Hunter Education Instructor isn't enough, he has also been an instructor for the "Hooked On Fishing – Not On Drugs" program for nearly a decade. As such, he takes hundreds of school-aged children fishing each year and teaches them the basics of angling and fisheries biology.

For all the reasons described above, Flathead Audubon Society is proud to present our Conservation Achievement recognition to Leonard Howke.

By Lewis Young

APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, April 12, 2010: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. 7 PM, The Summit, Conference Room 3. FAS Board Member and Wildlife Biologist Steve Gniadek speaks on research in Glacier Park. See page 3.

Monday, April 5, 2010: Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 Third Ave. E.N. All are welcome.

Wednesdays, April 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2010: Beauty of Birds Classes. See page 5 for details!

Thursday, April 22, 2010: Earth Day (see pages 5 & 6 for Earth Day activity information)

SPRING FIELD TRIPS LIST AND DETAILS ON PAGE 5!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Article and Photos By Jeannie Marcure

A COMPANY OF FINCHES

Did you know that a group of finches can be called a **charm**, a **company** or a **trembling**? Personally, I like to refer to the group that frequents our feeders as a **company**, since their large, invasive flocks remind me of a military company or at times even a battalion!

The various members of the finch family are some of the most colorful birds in our area and the House Finch is one of our most common and easily attracted feeder birds. Sometimes, especially in the winter months, flocks of 30 or more visit our feeders regularly, entertaining us daily with their cheery songs and devouring sack upon sack of seed!! It was while observing one of these flocks a few years ago that I first discovered a bird that looked just a little different and after some study became acquainted with the Cassin's Finch.

Named after John Cassin, America's first taxonomist and a renowned curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, the Cassin's Finch is slightly larger than the House Finch and appears to have a larger head and a longer neck. Although both have the chunky, conical bill typical of seed eaters, the Cassin's bill is slightly longer and flat on top, while the upper bill of the House Finch is more rounded. If you are lucky enough to get to compare two males, the difference will be quite easy to see. The House Finch male has a band of red or orange on its forehead and a wash of color on its chest, while the male Cassin's has a rich red crown, almost like a cherry on top of its head and perhaps a faint wash of pink or red on its throat and chest. This distinctive crown is often raised to produce a short and rather spiky crest. Separating the females is more difficult, but again the Cassin's is slightly larger and appears to have a longer neck. Also, both the male and female Cassin's have more distinctive facial markings than their House Finch counterparts.

At this point I would be remiss not to mention that there is a third species, the Purple Finch, which could easily be confused with the other two. However, unlike the Cassin's and House Finch, the Purple Finch is a rather rare sighting in our area and for that reason I've chosen not to include it in my comparison. For a



detailed account of how to separate these 3 similar finches, go to:

www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/finchIDtable.html

House and Cassin's Finch may also be distinguished by where they're seen. As I mentioned earlier, House Finches are commonly seen throughout our area all year long, both in rural and urban areas, while Cassin's Finches prefer to spend their summers at higher elevations in coniferous fir and spruce forests. However, during the winter months, the Cassin's Finches move to lower elevations and the two may intermingle in large flocks. During this time the Cassin's Finches will readily come to seed feeders, offering the host birder a chance to study them and hone their identification skills.

Cassin's Finches breed in open stands of conifers throughout the western mountains of North America. Their favorite foods are seeds and buds and they are often seen foraging on the ground for these as well as insects, wild berries and rock salt. They especially crave the salt and frequently visit mineral deposits. According to Sibley, Cassin's Finches are loosely colonial while nesting and the male defends the female and a small territory around the nest. They usually breed first at the age of one year or less and, interestingly, the juvenile males stay in their female-like plumage during this first breeding season but sing like the older, more colorful males. During courtship, the male raises his crest and flutters his wings rapidly. The female begs for food from her prospective mate by flapping her wings, crouching and emitting soft cries. The male then responds with either mock feeding or by actually regurgitating a small amount of food into the female's mouth. The nest of mosses, twigs and roots is built primarily by the female and placed in a conifer. The 3-6 blue-green eggs have dark markings and are incubated for 12 to 14 days. The altricial young fledge after about 14 days.

Unfortunately, the Montana Bird Distribution Charts currently list Cassin's Finch as a species of concern. The primary cause of their decline is thought to be the destruction of habitat due to logging and development.

THANK YOU, FLATHEAD AUDUBON!

Nancy Z. says THANKS to everyone who contributed to the Food Bank box at the March FAS meeting. Your generosity will help people from our own Valley put food on their tables.



April 2010 Program
WILDLIFE OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
A Look at Recent Research and Monitoring Projects



At our April 12 FAS General Meeting, Steve Gniadek will bring us up-to-date about wildlife research and monitoring projects in Glacier National Park during the past decade. Important new information has emerged from studies of Canada Lynx, Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goats, Wolverines, Showshoe Hares, Pikas, Harlequin Ducks, Northern Hawk Owls, Black Swifts, White-tailed Ptarmigans and birds in burns. Additional studies of Clark's Nutcrackers and Mountain Goats are just beginning. There are also many other species worthy of study.

Steve has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Forestry from the University of Michigan. He also has a Master of Science degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in a conservation program in Columbia, worked as a seasonal naturalist and studied birds in post-fire habitats in Yellowstone National Park, and worked on studies of forest songbirds, shorebirds and wading birds in Virginia and Maryland. His other wildlife work experience has been with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on refuges in Texas, the Bureau of Land Management in eastern Montana, and the US Forest Service in Idaho.

Steve retired in January 2009, after serving as a wildlife biologist in Glacier National Park since 1987. During that time, he represented the National Park Service on the national Lynx Biology Team that formulated the Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy. He remains active on various interagency wildlife working groups, including the Montana Bird Conservation Partnership, Bald Eagle, Harlequin Duck, and Common Loon Working Groups. He also serves on the boards of the Montana Loon Society, and, of course, the Flathead Audubon Society!

Please join us at 7:00 PM on Monday, April 12, to learn how a better understanding of wildlife populations can inform the conservation and management of Glacier National Park wildlife. Also at the meeting, Leonard Howke will be presented with Flathead Audubon's Conservation Achievement Recognition (see article on page 1). We meet in the Community Room of The Summit at 205 Sunnyview Lane in Kalispell.



FAS MAY POTLUCK MEETING
SET FOR NEW LOCATION



Come one, Come All! Flathead Audubon's final meeting of this season will be held May 10 at the Whitefish Community Center for our traditional business meeting, potluck dinner and silent auction. Watch your May *Pileated Post* for directions to the Community Center. Be sure to mark the date on your calendar and plan to bring a dish to share and any items you would like to donate for the silent auction. Each year, our members do a little Spring Cleaning

and come up with plants, bird books, art work, bird houses, CDs, bird feeders, and a host of other treasures. And save up a few dollars now, so you can snap up someone else's treasure that you just can't live without! The Mitchell Recycling Wagon will be in the parking lot to accept all recyclables that your Spring Cleaning turns up, and inside we will enjoy great food and lots of fun. This will be our best one yet—see you there!



"Policy Options for the New, Clean Energy" is the title of a free community dialogue to be held on Thursday, April 15. This is the seventh and final in the series; it will be held at FVCC Arts & Technology Building, Room 139 from 7:00-9:00 PM.



RAISE YOUR HAND!

Your nominations committee is back on the job seeking out individuals who would be interested in serving on our energetic and fun loving board. If you know someone (including yourself!) who would be interested in contributing to the oversight of our organization, please contact Linda de Kort (755-3704, dekort@montanasky.com) or Bob Lopp (257-6886, boblopp@bresnan.net). Thanks!



HELP WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SURVIVE!

Your Montana income tax form gives you a special opportunity to help all of the birds and other critters that we love but who don't receive any other funding for their habitat needs and protections from being "over-loved." Just check the box on the last page of your tax return, and ask that a few of your refund dollars be sent to this important program. You will feel more cheerful about paying taxes!





BOARD MEMBER VIEWPOINT

From

Steve Gniadek, FAS Board Member



On Birding and Responsibility

As Audubon members, most of us share an interest in birds. Birding and bird feeding are great ways to learn about birds and their environment, and they bring us together socially. Maintaining life lists, year lists, yard lists, and pursuing Big Days and Big Years (trying to record as many birds as possible during one day or year) can help build and retain our enthusiasm for birding and contribute to our collective understanding of birds. But our enjoyment of birds and other wildlife comes with a stewardship responsibility to help protect their habitat and minimize our impact on their lives.

The American Birding Association Code of Birding Ethics urges us to "promote the welfare of birds and their environment" by supporting the protection of important bird habitat, and by avoiding stressing birds during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming. The North American Nature Photographers Association has adopted the ABA Code of Ethics, encouraging wildlife photographers to minimize their impacts.

Flathead Audubon, Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society all engage in projects that help protect bird habitat, and as members we contribute to those efforts. We can also support bird and other wildlife conservation projects by joining other local, regional, and national conservation groups, writing letters to the editor, or campaigning and voting for conservation candidates. When we observe or photograph birds and other wildlife, we can reduce our impacts by always considering their welfare. Some people don't care about birds and nature and will do nothing to help protect our natural environment. That leaves it to the rest of us to do what we can to protect what we enjoy.

There are many threats to birds and their habitats, but perhaps the most ominous is the impact of climate change. We can take personal responsibility and proactive measures to minimize our contribution to the problem, but we can also become better informed, talk to neighbors and co-workers, write letters to the editor, and urge our governmental leaders to confront the problem. Individually, we can make a difference; together, we can make a greater difference, for ourselves and for future generations of birders and nature enthusiasts.



New Owen Sowerwine License Signed *Time to Celebrate!!*



Owen Sowerwine's status as a Natural Area has been secured for another 10 years. At the end of February, we signed a new 10-year license with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

Our last 10-year OSNA license ended February 28, 2010. Under the new license agreement, plus a separate agreement between Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon, Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon will continue to pay jointly the DNRC license fee for Owen Sowerwine, and to jointly manage the Natural Area for such purposes as bird conservation and education. The license also ensures that FAS members may continue to visit Owen Sowerwine without purchasing a State Lands Recreation Permit.



Brent Mitchell Photo

Owen Sowerwine is a 442-acre parcel of School Trust Land in the braided section of the Flathead River, with a portion of the Stillwater River running through it. It was designated by the State Land Board as a State Natural Area in 1976. Flathead Audubon has been involved in managing Owen Sowerwine for 14 years. An essential part of carrying out this task effectively is to monitor usage and maintenance needs of the Area. FAS members play an important role in this monitoring effort through the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Program. If you are interested in participating in this Program, please see the article "CAN YOU HELP?" on page 8.

Linda Winnie

Co-Chair Owen Sowerwine Committee



MONTANA TRAVELLERS' TIPS

Planning to travel in Montana this summer? Check out <http://montanabirdingtrail.org>, a website especially for bird enthusiasts. The site contains maps, directions and information about local places of interest to birders, as well as several official birding and nature trails across the state and a wealth of beautiful photographs. You will also find links to other Montana bird and nature websites. Get inspired to explore our own back yard!





COMING ATTRACTIONS!

FIELD TRIPS



SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2010: FOURTH ANNUAL COHEN STROLL. Celebrate our beautiful quality of life in the Flathead as Ferne and Marty Cohen have taught us...by getting outdoors and leaving a small carbon footprint. We will meet at 1:00 PM by the ball field pond off of Hwy 40. In the past, we have seen waterfowl on the pond and riparian species in the wetland. We will stroll along the Whitefish River on the bike path. This two hour trip is accessible for wheelchairs and strollers. Call 755-3704 for information.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2010, 6:00-8:00 PM: BIRDING AROUND SMITH LAKE. An easy-going evening of birding at a local birding hot spot. The Smith Lake area allows an up close and personal chance to see a wide variety of birds. Let's see how many early migrants we can find! Meet at FHS main parking lot (east side of the building) at 6:00 PM. We will car pool from there. Ben Young will lead this trip. Call 257-2286 for information.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010: A UNIQUE FIELD TRIP TO HEAR THE CALL OF THE BARRED OWL. If you haven't heard the Barred Owl call out "Who Cooks For You," this field trip presents a great opportunity to hear the hoot of the only black-eyed owl in the Flathead Valley. Join Pete Smith at 7:00PM at the Silver Bullet Bar (off Hwy 206 about three miles north of Woody's). Contact Pete Smith at 250-9624 to sign up for this trip.

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2010: CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY with a field trip to the Swan Lake area and the Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge from 8:00AM to 1:00PM. We will meet at 8:00AM at the Swan Lake Picnic Area. Please bring binoculars, warm clothing if needed, and a lunch or snack. Boots are appropriate in case it is muddy. It is a good time to see and hear American Bitterns, Sandhill Cranes and Bald Eagles, along with returning warblers, sparrows, swallows and occasional flocks of Snow Geese and swans. Please contact Kathy Ross at 837-3837 to sign up and for more information.



WHITEFISH BIRD CLASS

Introduction to Birdwatching for Families

Ansley Ford will present a fun evening on the basics of bird identification for kids and their parents at the Whitefish Public Library meeting room on Thursday, May 13 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. There will be a follow-up field trip led by Leo Keane on Saturday at 8:30 AM. Meet for the field trip at The Springs assisted living facility parking lot. We will walk around the pond to look at ducks, and then up the river path to look for warblers, robins and flying dinosaurs (if any). Come to either or both events. FREE!

Co-ordinated by Jill Fanning 862-8070.

BIGFORK BIRD CLUB

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 6, 2010, 7:00PM

Location: The Coffee Cellar (located in the Branding Iron Station just south of Napa Auto Parts on Hwy 35)

Program: Bruce Tannehill will give a **Bird Song Recording Workshop**. Bruce will demonstrate how he records bird songs and saves the songs to his computer. He has created CDs containing songs of over 90 local species. These recordings are a great learning tool, plus the sale of the CDs is a fundraiser for Flathead Audubon. A grand time will be had by all!

From Neal Brown



BEAUTY OF BIRDS



Spring is just around the corner ...

Can you believe it? Early signs of spring have already begun. Great Horned Owls are hooting at night, black-capped Chickadees are singing their spring tunes, and it won't be long until our early migratory birds show up. It can be a little tricky to remember who's who and what's what after a long, quiet winter. Many of us could use a refresher course each spring as we welcome back our old friends. Beauty of Birds, Flathead Audubon's spring birding course, may be just what you're looking for. Whether you're a seasoned birder looking for a review, or someone brand new to birding, this course is for you! This year the theme will be "Birding Hotspots" and we have three great presenters lined up! Steve Gniadek has offered to do Birds of Glacier Park, Dan Casey will do Hawks of Jewel Basin, and Josh Coville is going to present an overview of birding in the Flathead, with species photos from several sites. The series is offered for \$10, and classes are held Wednesday evenings in April from 6-8:00 PM at Flathead High School. For more information and to register, please call FHS at 751-3500.



Flathead's Family Forestry Expo will be held this year on Saturday, May 8. Flathead Audubon is one of the original founders of FFX and we will again have an educational booth at the Expo. If you would like to help at the booth, please contact Nancy Z at naz@centurytel.net.



EARTH DAY 2010

Keep the Flathead Clean and Green



Come join us in celebrating Earth Day in Kalispell at Depot Park on April 17 from 9:00 AM to noon. Yes, it is the week before the actual Earth Day! The event is sponsored by Kalispell Parks and Recreation with support and participation by Flathead Community of Resource Educators, Valley Recycling and Montana Conservation Corps. There will be a local clean-up, education booths and activities for the whole family. Hope to see you there! If you are available to help at the FAS Education Booth, please let Nancy know at naz@centurytel.net.

After participating in the events in Kalispell, carpool up to Whitefish for the Fourth Annual Cohen Stroll on Saturday, April 17. See all the details on the Field Trip List, previous page.

HOME

Save April 14 for a showing of *Home* at the Whitefish Public Library, beginning at 7:00 PM. To make this acclaimed film (93 minutes long), Yann Arthus-Bertrand and his team flew over more than 70 countries. The spectacular photography shows the human footprint on our fragile planet. The film concludes with the statement, "It is too late to be pessimistic," accompanied by spectacular footage illustrating what we are now doing to reverse our negative impacts, including renewable energy, national parks, energy efficient buildings, innovative sustainable communities and international cooperation. Learn more about this film at www.GoodPlanet.info. This was the first film ever released in theaters, on DVD and on the internet simultaneously. Now we have the opportunity to view it collectively in our Flathead Valley. What a great way to begin Earth Week! Linda deKort



LOCAVORE: A Large Hungry Talking Bird?? NOPE!!

Locavores are people who only eat products cultivated near them and who prefer seasonal products. In the United States, these new consumers are in the news. On average, a fruit or vegetable produced locally consumes 10 to 20 times less fossil fuel than a fruit or vegetable imported from a distant country.

RIPARIAN MEDIA EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Keep your eyes and ears open beginning April 19 for TV, radio and on-line banner ads that will educate the public about the importance of riparian vegetation buffers. The ads are part of a six-county wide project to raise awareness of the function and value of trees and shrubs along our waters. Locally, Flathead Audubon Conservation Education, with Nancy Zapotocki's assistance, has joined efforts with Patti Mason at the Flathead Conservation District (FCD), who is splendidly leading the effort to bring the education campaign to the Flathead. Other participating areas are Lake, Missoula, Ravalli, Lewis & Clark and Gallatin counties. A grant to the FCD from MT Department of Environmental Quality is helping to pay for ads, planning and evaluation of the campaign, and the time for partners' participation.



extension.usu.edu

The ads will hopefully awaken an interest in more information, which can be obtained on the website www.WaterSmartMT.com. The website will be full of information, workshops, activities and opportunities for the whole campaign area. In addition to the grant from MT DEQ, the project is also sponsored by funding from Lewis & Clark CD, Flathead CD and Missoula Valley Water Quality District and will run through June 6.

From Nancy Zapotocki
FAS Conservation Educator



gis.fs.fed.us



Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival



Montana Audubon, Five Valleys and Bitterroot Audubon Chapters are hosting a fantastic festival June 4 - 6. Fifteen field trips on Saturday range from the local Clark Fork River Grass Valley Important Bird Area to a 750-acre working cattle ranch west of Frenchtown. Saturday's lunch speaker is Kate Stone. Saturday evening features a social hour, banquet, silent auction, and fabulous raffle items, as well as the dessert auction. Sunday has 15 exciting field trips, ranging from a beautiful drive to Upsata Lake to a 6-mile hike through Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine forests. Information about conservation, habitat, and research projects will be shared. There will be something to meet everyone's fitness level and birding interest. More detailed information is at <http://mtaudubon.org>. Plan to be in Missoula in early June! *Group sizes will be limited so register early!*

Thanks!

...to those below who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon since February, 2010.

Merlin

Roy Dimond
Janice and Eugene Holmberg
In Memory of Ferne Cohen



Kestrel

Milt and BJ Carlson
D. Craig and Dayna McClure
In Memory of Ferne Cohen



From: The Trumpeter Swan Society News
Volume 2, Number 2 – February 2010

2000-2010: A 10-YEAR UPDATE FROM MONTANA'S FLATHEAD VALLEY

The Trumpeter Swan Society Board President Dale Becker coordinates Trumpeter Swan reintroduction efforts as a wildlife biologist and Program Manager for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

In late June of 2009, in cooperation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dale directed release of 24 Trumpeter Swans at Pablo National Wildlife Refuge on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Partners on the project included Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Wyoming Wetland Society/Trumpeter Swan Fund, Montana Waterfowl Foundation, WJH Bird Resources, and several local cooperating private landowners.

Over the last 10 years, the project has resulted in the establishment of a slowly-increasing local population that has produced at least 69 cygnets since 2004. Becker expects the local Trumpeter Swan population to grow slowly but steadily in the future. During the 2009 breeding season, pairs at four successful nests on the Reservation produced 13 cygnets.

To date, most of the released Trumpeters have wintered on the lower Flathead River on the Reservation. An aerial survey in January 2009 documented 76

Trumpeter Swans, continued on page 9...

IS YOUR YARD GOOD BEAR HABITAT?

It is if you have any of these attractants:

- ◆ Seed left in bird feeders
- ◆ Bird seed left under feeders
- ◆ Suet cakes still hanging
- ◆ Pine cones with peanut butter still hanging
- ◆ Garbage cans left outside
- ◆ Bags of dog or cat food stored in accessible buildings
- ◆ Greasy BBQ grills
- ◆ Fallen fruit under trees
- ◆ Outdoor freezers or refrigerators with food in them

Be a good steward – watch bears in Glacier Park, not in your backyard!



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



Dave Menke, USFWS

* * * *

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

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

* * * *

☐ *I want my gift to recognize another:*

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

* * * *

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

☐ Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

* * * *

Please make checks payable to:

Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173

Kalispell, MT 59904

Your gift is tax deductible.

Milt and BJ Carlson
receive Flathead Audubon's
Conservation Achievement
Recognition from
Past President Bob Lopp
at the FAS
March General Meeting.





CAN YOU HELP?

Flathead Audubon Needs Volunteer Monitors for Owen Sowerwine
From Linda Winnie, Co-Chair of the FAS Owen Sowerwine Committee



We are still looking for volunteers to help Flathead Audubon keep track of activities and maintenance needs at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

How does it work? Pick up an OSNA Monitoring Checklist and OSNA map at the FAS meeting, or print them from the FAS website (click on CONSERVATION, then on Owen Sowerwine Natural Area), or contact me and I will send them to you.

Take the Checklist and map with you on a visit to Owen Sowerwine; fill out the Checklist as you walk around. The Checklist tells you what to look for and where to look. The map shows the areas and trails referenced on the Checklist. Talk with people you meet on the trails, or with Owen Sowerwine neighbors, to find out what they like to do at Owen Sowerwine and how often they visit, and get their comments and suggestions.

Write this kind of information in the "Comments" section of the Checklist.

Then send the completed Checklist to Brent Mitchell, Co-Chair of the Owen Sowerwine Committee (address on the Checklist). Brent is the data collector on this project.

* * * * *



Here are two different ways to help as a Volunteer Monitor.

OPTION 1. *Volunteer for a scheduled Monitoring Visit.*

We divide each month from March through November in half, to form a total of 18 Volunteer Monitoring Periods. We need at least one volunteer to cover each of these Periods. This will ensure we get regular feedback throughout these 9 months.

Sign up to cover any Monitoring Period that is convenient for you. Several people can sign up for the same Period; friends can get together and sign up as a team. The more eyes and ears we have at Owen Sowerwine, the better. "Covering" a Monitoring Period simply means doing at least one thorough monitoring visit to Owen Sowerwine during the half-month. A "thorough" monitoring visit means look at as many of the places noted on the Checklist as possible – recognizing that you may have to curtail your visit because of things like heavy snow, high water, bad weather, or mosquitoes. A weekend visit is best, since weekends are busier times at Owen Sowerwine, but this is not required. A thorough monitoring visit usually takes about 2 hours.

To volunteer for a monitoring period, or to get more information, please contact me or see me at the upcoming Flathead Audubon meeting.

OPTION 2. *Send us feedback whenever you feel like visiting Owen Sowerwine.*

Whenever you go to Owen Sowerwine – whether it is for just a short walk on the trails, or for a few hours of birding, please take a Monitoring Checklist with you. Use the Checklist to indicate what parts of Owen Sowerwine you visited, and what you saw there, and then mail it off to Brent.

* * * * *

Which ever way you choose to help, please be sure to let us know about the birds you see on your visit. Use the Monitoring Checklist to report your sightings. If you find a species as yet unreported for Owen Sowerwine and tell us about it, we'll make sure that it gets added to the Owen Sowerwine Bird List.

We encourage all Flathead Audubon members to become the Chapter's eyes and ears at Owen Sowerwine. Even when you forget to take a Checklist along on your visit Owen Sowerwine, if you see something of note, please let Brent know. You may contact me at lindawin@centurytel.net or 755-1406; and Brent at bkmitch@centurytel.net or 756-8130.



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF OUR MIGRATORY BIRDS



May 8, 2010, is set aside this year to recognize and focus our attention on the incredible journey birds make between summer and winter homes. "Migratory birds are some of the most beautiful, observable, and remarkable wildlife that share our world. Many know migratory birds as symbolic harbingers of spring and melodious songsters of the woods. Migratory birds are also an important economic resource, controlling insect pests and generating billions in recreational dollars. Unfortunately, research shows that many migratory bird species are in decline, facing a growing number of threats on their migration routes. Thus, IMBD, in addition to being a day to foster appreciation, is a call to action." Learn more about IMBD at <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd> or <http://www.BirdDay.org>, quoted above. Join the celebration May 8. There are a number of field trips planned around the area, but if you cannot make one of these, just keep your "eyes to the sky" and your ears to the wind. Every day is a good day to appreciate the beauty, marvels, magic and voices of our feathered friends.

By Kathy Ross

KIDZ O R N E R



Let's Learn More About Migration!

Article and Photos by Travis Harlen, age 13, Home School



Have you ever wondered why or how birds prepare to migrate? For a smaller bird like a Sparrow or Warbler, eating foods that are high in fat is very important. It is the stored fat that will fuel them for the hundreds of miles they might travel during their migration between summer and winter homes. The more food they eat, the greater their chance to survive the long journey. So eating foods that build fat reserves is key to most birds' success in migrating.

This is really important for tiny Hummingbirds. They need to fatten up because their migrations can take from 1-4 weeks and cover 200-250 miles per day. Hummingbirds can gain up to 40% of their body weight in insects and nectar before they begin their journey. If a larger bird like a Hawk gained that much weight, it might have trouble getting off the ground!

The journey is a difficult one for most migrating birds. Young birds who have never migrated may find it even harder. They may become prey to larger birds like Hawks, Eagles or Owls. Even a young migrating Hawk might become prey to larger Hawks and Eagles. Learning survival methods from their parents is important. It is difficult sometimes to see a hawk swoop down and grab a little chickadee, but this is part of the food chain in the bird world. One bird will be the food that another bird needs to make its migration.

You may have noticed that some migrating birds, like geese, fly in a V-shaped formation. The Geese in or closer to the lead have to work harder than the Geese farther to the rear of the flock. Also flying in a V-shaped formation assists in flight and saves energy for the entire flock. The bigger birds benefit most from this energy-saving formation. Wind is another thing that migrating birds use to save energy. Geese, Hummingbirds and many other migrating birds will use a tail wind to speed them along their migration routes.

Our birds that migrate south are starting to return. Over the next three months, you could see a new kind of bird every day. It is fun to make a list of all the new birds you see and hear in the spring time. See how many you can identify this year!

I would like to thank the following resources for making this article possible:

Exploring Creation With Zoology 1: Flying Creatures Of The Fifth Day

by Jeannie K. Fullbright

Welcome To The World Of Hummingbirds at www.worldofhummingbirds.com



Kids Korner is coordinated by our Conservation Educator, Nancy Zapotocki. If you have a topic of natural history interest and a budding student author, send Nancy an email at naz@centurytel.net. Include the topic, school, grade, student and teacher name. Your idea could be the next article. A teacher may even give extra credit 😊 "Kids sharing nature with kids!"



Trumpeter Swans, continued from page 7 ...

trumpeters there, but migratory movements to north-eastern Colorado, eastern Idaho, and elsewhere in western Montana have also been recorded.

Each released swan has been fitted with a red neckband with a white alphanumeric code, such as T01 or OT1, and a matching leg band to assist with tracking migration and movements. Observers of the marked swans are asked to report their observations, including date, number of swans and location, to the Tribal Wildlife Management Program at (406) 883-2888, ext. 7278, or daleb@cskt.org

In 2000, the Tribes began working with the Wyoming-based Trumpeter Swan Fund to initiate captive propagation to produce Trumpeter Swans for the project. The Montana Waterfowl Foundation and WJH Bird Resources have also provided swans for the re-

lease. Since 2001, 160 captive-raised Trumpeter Swans have been released on the Reservation. Dale notes, "Similar techniques have also been successful in reestablishing nesting populations in Wyoming, Iowa, and Ontario."

The swans have been released on Pablo National Wildlife Refuge and private properties that provide the proper degree of seclusion, stable water levels, adequate aquatic vegetation for food, and limited hazards such as power lines and the presence of lead in the form of spent shot and fishing sinkers. "We really appreciate local people who welcomed the swans to their ponds and wetlands and who have been helpful in sharing their observations with us," Becker said. "They are an integral part of this project."





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

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