



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 35

NUMBER 3

NOVEMBER 2010

LAST ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER FOR NONRENEWING MEMBERS!

If you have not already renewed, you are getting this issue of The Pileated Post because a mail delay may have kept some renewals from reaching the Membership Chair in a timely manner. This delay occurred because an address change caused some mail to be diverted through Denver. If there had been no delays, people who did not renew would not be receiving this issue of the Post, as was announced at the October general meeting.

Without renewal, you will not receive the next issue.

Please renew, we do not want to lose any members.

A PERFECT VOLUNTEER EFFORT!

Big Thank You's to all of the volunteers at the FAS OSNA Work Day on September 25. **You** were perfect! Everything about the group effort was perfect: the people, the weather, the work time, the refreshments, the quality of the work, the resulting improvements, the safety, the fun and friendship and especially the place itself – the perfect riparian area!



Thirty-three determined volunteers pulled weeds, cleared trails, shuttled crews, repaired fence, mowed, clipped, pulled and sawed their way through a successful 2+ hours, then landed at our base of operation (Montessori School) for some lip-smackin' good-

ies, beverages and pats on the back. This year we had some "first timers" and several "everytimers" (never missed a Work Day). Everybody had a good time and made a difference!

One very important contribution to FAS, besides the positive changes at the Natural Area, is the fact that we qualified for consideration of a \$1000 grant from Prudential Global Volunteer Day – submitted by Jane Lopp & Associates Prudential agency. Jane and Bob Lopp are longtime supporters and participants in FAS and OSNA.

This year, the signup sheet logged in the following fine volunteers:

Bob Lopp
Jane Lopp
Joanne Blake
Steve Gniadek
Kay Mitchell
Lois Drobish
Bob Lee
Nancy Zapotocki
Sheryl Hester

John Morris
Lorinda Baker
Dennis Hester
Paula Smith
Bob Smith
Roy Dimond
Randy Kenyon
Gail Cleveland
Bruce Tannehill

Lewis Young
Barb Lutz
Becky Williams
Pat McClelland
Larry Williams
Linda Winnie
Ed Prach
Phyllis Gantner
Terry Welder

Richard Kuhl
Jim Thormahlen
Rod McIver
Donna Harrison
Brent Mitchell
Mary Jo Gardner

Thanks to all! You made a BIG difference at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area!

Brent Mitchell
Former OSNA
Co-Chair

NOVEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, November 8, 2010: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. 7 PM, Conference Room 3, The Summit. Kate Davis presents a program on raptors, with live birds. See page 3 for details.

Monday, November 1, 2010: Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 Third Ave. E.N. All are welcome.

Saturday, November 6, 2010: Birding Around the West Valley. 8-10 AM. See page 2 for details!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Melissa Sladek

WESTERN Tanager—SUMMER BEAUTY

From my office window, I see him. His stark contrast with the dark and light greens of the surrounding forest catches my eye. Today, he is busy...I've now seen him three times flying back and forth across the road.

My coworkers and I started to notice this male western tanager at some point in the summer. His flashy yellow and black body and red head are show stoppers, causing me to freeze in my tracks during my expeditions in and out of the Research Learning Center at Glacier National Park.

The headquarters area in Glacier is actually a perfect habitat for the Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*). During the summer months, this colorful bird lives in open coniferous forests or mixed woods across western North America. They range from the U.S.-Mexican border all the way to southern Alaska, making them the northernmost breeding tanager. Their summer diet consists mainly of insects, although the birds have been seen to eat berries and other fruit. Once the rich growth of summer fades, the medium-sized songbird prepares for the long flight to its wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. There, the tanagers settle in pine-oak woodlands, forest edges, and coffee plantations.

I remember first seeing this rainbow of a bird while hiking at Lone Pine State Park. The bird struck me due to its splash of color on an otherwise dreary, rainy June day. For me, it brought hope that the sunny happy days of summer in the Flathead were just around the corner. And, until then, I had the Western Tanager to keep my spirits up.

As with most songbirds, the male Western Tanager is more colorful than the female. Compared to the bright yellow underparts of the male, the female's underparts are olive green. She also has less contrast between her breast and the gray of her back



and wings. Her tail consists of a grayish-brown or olive color. Both male and female have two wing bars on each wing. Males have one bright yellow and one white wing bar, whereas both wing bars may be white on females or one may be pale yellow.

The male tanager flittering through the woods of park headquarters was most likely helping his female partner with the young of the year. The female builds an open-cup, shallow nest made of twigs, grasses, and bark strips. It is typically placed in coniferous trees toward the end of horizontal branches and is lined with grass, hair or plant fibers. The female produces three to five glossy blue, brown-spotted eggs, which she incubates for about 13 days. The young leave the nest about 11 to 15 days later, but do tend to stay close to their parents for two more weeks.

By September, all Western Tanagers will be on their way to the warmer climates of Central America and Mexico. Although they normally migrate alone, they are also seen migrating in groups of 30. Migration is often the time when they are spotted. Last June, the *Missoulian* reported overwhelming numbers of Western Tanagers seen along the Clark Fork River. Apparently, the wet spring we had this year gave life to an abundance of bugs and caused many a Western Tanager to stop for a snack on their way north.

Unfortunately, we're not always as lucky spotting these bright beauties in the summer. Most often, the birds are foraging for insects in the tree tops, high above most of our purviews. But, this summer I was fortunate. My brightly feathered friend gave me plenty of opportunities to stop, watch and admire as he sped past. I'm sure I was just on his regular foraging route, but I like to think he knew that he brightened my day... especially during those endless June days of rain and gloom.



FIELD TRIP!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 8-10 AM: Birding Around the West Valley

An Audubon morning drive through the West Valley area. The West Valley offers a chance to get up close and personal with the raptors and other birds hanging out there this time of year. Let's go out and see how many we can find! Meet at Fish, Wildlife and Parks on Meridian at 8:00AM and we will carpool from there. Please call Bill Schustrom at 257-2359 if interested.





November 2010 Program KATE DAVIS AND RAPTORS OF THE ROCKIES



RAPTORS—predators that “seize and carry away”—hawks, falcons, eagles, osprey and owls

When Kate Davis “busts out the birds” at our November 8 meeting, it could be *Alisa* the Red-tailed Hawk, *Sibley* the Peregrine Falcon, *iPod* the Northern Pygmy Owl and *Jillian* the Great Horned Owl that she introduces to Flathead Audubon. These raptors are part of the 16-member “teaching team” from the Raptor Ranch in Florence, Montana.



Zoo Junior Zoologists Club. She earned her degree in Zoology in 1982 from the University of Montana. A few years later, she acquired the federal and state permits necessary to care for the rehabilitation, program and falconry birds that come to live at Raptor Ranch.

Kate Davis and her team of live birds are all about EDUCATION. They travel throughout Western Montana and Idaho delivering *Raptors of the Rockies* programs in schools, to public gatherings and adult organizations to promote respect for birds of prey and wildlife conservation and habitat preservation.

Raptors of the Rockies is a nonprofit raptor education project that Kate founded 22 years ago on the banks of the Clark Fork River near Missoula. The Raptor Ranch is now located on the banks of the Bitterroot River in Florence. Although the permanently disabled birds of prey and falconry birds cared for at the ranch cannot be released into the wild, they do well in captivity and serve as project ambassadors. The birds are featured at venues as varied as Montana Public Radio's *Pea Green Boat* and the *David Sibley Birding Workshop* at the Nature Conservancy's Pine Butte Guest Ranch. Kate serves as the project's Executive Director.

Kate began rehabilitating orphaned and injured birds and mammals in 1973 with the Cincinnati

Kate's passion for birds of prey has led her in many creative directions:

She is the author of RAPTORS OF THE ROCKIES, FALCONS OF NORTH AMERICA and the soon-to-be published RAPTORS OF THE WEST, as well as research articles published in scientific journals and RAPTOR ROUND-UP. She is also a taxidermist and an artist who photographs, paints, illustrates and sculpts wildlife, and even helps kids make films! In fact, Kate's breathtaking image of a Peregrine Falcon flying against a Rocky Mountain backdrop was selected by Montana Audubon to publicize *Wings Across the Big Sky*, the June 2010 bird festival in Missoula, and to adorn festival T-shirts.

Kate was named the Montana Audubon Environmental Educator of the Year in 2000, the Montana Wildlife Federation Conservation Educator of the Year in 2002 and received the Montana National History Center Natural History Educator Award in 2004.

Please join us at 7 PM on Monday, November 8 in the Community Room of The Summit, 205 Sunnyview Lane, Kalispell. To learn more about Kate Davis, visit her beautiful website at

www.raptorsoftherockies.org.



PLEASE HELP!



We need your help in obtaining additional funding for our Education program. The program costs FAS \$20,000 per year, of which The Sustainability Fund has historically funded half. We have relied on grants and donations to make up the other \$10,000. This year we have been disappointed by the loss of two grant proposals totaling \$4500. It also seems likely we will lose another one for \$1500 and a donation of \$2000. This leaves FAS with no outstanding grant proposals. We must find further financial support for this important program. We ask any members who know of possible sources of financial aid to let us know so we can follow up. If you can think of any sources, please let Mike Fanning know as soon as possible.



Recycling News



Time for Fall Cleaning! Bring recyclables to the FVCC Green Team before the November General Meeting. Look for their trailer at the west side of The Summit's north parking lot. And now we can tell you that your Styrofoam “peanuts” can be recycled at a UPS Store in the Flathead. Member Barbara Boorman, an avid recycler, called each of their stores to confirm that they will accept those annoying little chips. Thanks, Barb!

Calendars for Sale!

Audubon 2011 wall calendars are \$11. They make great gifts! Buy them at the FAS general meeting or call Jill Fanning at 862-8070.



BOARD MEMBER CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From Linda Winnie



The People behind Bird of the Month

This Audubon season, 2010-11, marks the ninth year that the Bird of the Month series has been part of our Pileated Post fare. At this point, it is hard to imagine the Post without this series. It has become a tradition. Our Bird of the Month series has also become part of Flathead Audubon's education and outreach efforts. For the last five years (starting October 2005), Flathead Audubon's Bird of the Month articles have been published each month in the Outdoors Section of the Daily Inter Lake. And the articles are featured monthly on the FAS website (beginning when the website went online in spring 2006).

The Bird of the Month series would not be possible without the talented and knowledgeable writers who contribute their time and talents to writing for the series. These authors deserve our recognition and thanks.

A very special thanks to Jeannie Marcure, who helped get the series started by writing 5 or 6 bird articles in each of the first two years of the series, and

has written 3 or 4 each year since. Also to Gail Cleveland and Linda de Kort, who each have written 1 or 2 articles almost every year from the beginning. The articles by Jeannie, Gail, and Linda are always well-researched, written with skill and humor, and accompanied by fine photographs – often their own. They have set the bar high for all subsequent contributors.

Over the years, new contributors have stepped forward to keep the series going and maintain the high quality that characterized those early years. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you: Pattie Brown, Karen Nichols, Ben Long, Marcy Mahr, John Ashley, Lewis Young, Mary Neleson, Lisa Bate, and Melissa Sladek.

In this year's Bird of the Month series, look for articles by Gail Cleveland and the last four authors in the list above, as well as by three new contributors: Ben Young, Dennis Hester, and Kathy Ross.

Many, many thanks to all of the Bird of the Month contributors for helping to establish and carry on this great Flathead Audubon tradition.

If you might be interested in writing for the Bird of the Month series next year, please contact me and we can talk about what is needed. I will begin compiling the schedule for next year's series in April and May. AND if you might be interested in helping out with the Post in other ways, please call or email me for more information. Currently we are looking for volunteers to help with the newsletter layout, gather information and write articles on citizen science opportunities, or work on other special newsletter projects.

Linda Winnie

MBTA in Action in Montana

The January 2010 issue of *The Pileated Post* described the history and the gradual evolution of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The MBTA makes it unlawful, except as permitted by regulations, "at any time, by any means, or in any manner" to pursue, hunt, *take*, capture, kill, possess, sell, barter, purchase, ship, import or export any migratory bird, or any part, nest or egg of any migratory bird. The only means of enforcing the MBTA is by criminal prosecution in federal court.

Initially, the MBTA was directed at the establishment of hunting seasons and the issuance of permits for hunting migratory game birds. For decades, charging hunters for possessing birds over the limit and hunting out-of-season was the focus of enforcement efforts. But in the 1970s, criminal cases brought by the US Department of Justice expanded the concept of "take." Three cases from that era involved oil companies that kept uncovered pits of toxic oil sludge which caused the deaths of migratory birds landing in and consuming the water even though the companies did not "intend" to kill the birds.

Recently criminal charges were filed against a Montana oil company for violating the MBTA. The case arose in September 2008, when oil sludge began to leak from a long-existing hole in a storage tank at Provident Energy Associates of Montana LLC's Two-Medicine Cut Bank Sand Unit in Pondera County. The leaking oil flowed about 50 feet across the ground and formed a 10- by 20-foot pond. Over the course of several days, about 18 migratory birds, including an owl, mourning dove and vesper sparrows, came into contact with the oil and died as the result of oil ingestion and coating.

An employee of the company reported the spill and deaths to his supervisors, who notified the oil-field regulating agency, which notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which conducted the investigation. In June 2010, the company pleaded guilty to the violation and was fined \$5,000.

-Dennis Hester

Source: Great Falls Tribune, June 11 & 12, 2010.





THANK YOU, BRENT!

By Linda Winnie, the other Co-Chair of the FAS Owen Sowerwine Committee



In October Brent Mitchell stepped down from his position as Co-Chair of Flathead Audubon's Owen Sowerwine Committee. Though he promises that he "will not disappear" from the FAS team that manages and maintains the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, this transition from team leader to team member is an appropriate time to recognize Brent's many and varied contributions to the Natural Area, and to thank him for his 16 years of dedication to the Area, and for the many, many hours he has put into this project.

Brent is the person responsible for hooking up Flathead Audubon and the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area in the first place. It was Brent who in 1994 arranged for FAS to contribute \$350 to help Flathead County pay DNRC the yearly lease fee for the Area. (Owen Sowerwine is a piece of school trust land, so must be used to generate funding for the state's schools.) DNRC had raised the yearly fee from \$200 to \$550, and the County felt it could not afford the extra \$350. FAS helped again in 1995. At that point the County decided to relinquish its lease on Owen Sowerwine, and Brent proposed that FAS take it over. So March 1997, FAS became the official lease holder, began paying the full \$550 lease fee each year, and became responsible for managing the Natural Area. It was Brent who actually shouldered that responsibility. He began making regular visits to the Area, monitoring needs and surveying weeds, pulled some weeds, cleared some game trails, started keeping track of the vegetation and wildlife of the Area, worked with DNRC and FWP to resolve usage problems, ... and much more. He sometimes enlisted Kay or some friend to help, but it was mostly on his own. A lot of hours and headaches, no funding and no pay – except the gratitude of FAS.

In 2000 Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon joined forces to pay the growing yearly DNRC fee and co-manage the Area, and in spring 2002 the FAS Owen Sowerwine Committee was formed to coordinate this management, with Brent as a Co-Chair. Now Brent had some funding and some help. So now he started doing more. It would require adding another page to this issue of the Post to list all of the "more" he has gone on to do. But there is space to tell about some of the major things he has accomplished.

Brent instituted the yearly Owen Sowerwine Work Days. The first was October 2002. The most recent Work Day, September 2010, was the ninth.

Each year the Work Day volunteers have taken on new and more ambitious projects. Debris has been carted away, entrances have been cleared, walk-in gates have been put in, a kiosk was built, weeds were pulled, the Area property lines were cleared to prepare for fence installation, more weeds were pulled, trails were cleared, trail markers installed, signs mounted, foot bridges built, more weeds pulled, steps put into steep grades, downed fencing fixed – and more. Brent was the principal planner and organizer for every one of these Work Days, and he and his helpers put in many hours of work at Owen Sowerwine in the week previous to each Work Day to prepare the way for the volunteer efforts.

Brent planned and organized the fencing that now lines two sides of the Natural Area. He hired and oversaw the professional fencers that were brought to do the job. And he has fixed many holes that have appeared in the fencing since then – due to fallen trees or in some cases, humans with wire cutters.

Brent developed a creative approach to dealing with weeds in Owen Sowerwine. In addition to having Work Day volunteers pull weeds and cut off seed heads, he instituted a biological weed control program at Owen Sowerwine. Biological control means release of the kinds of bugs that kill off the weeds. Brent did all the background work to find out which bugs would work and get them shipped to the Flathead, then figured out where to release them at Owen Sowerwine and carried out the release, and for several years now has been monitoring their spread and effectiveness. This is an ongoing effort, but the weed pullers at September's Work Day found a lot of evidence that the bugs are doing a good job.

In 2008 Brent and I started the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring program. Brent is the one who has been analyzing the check-lists sent to him by the Volunteer Monitors and using the information they provide to identify problems that need to be addressed -- and then figure out how to solve them. Sometimes that means going into the Area to clear a fallen tree off a trail, remove debris, restore a bridge, or repair a fence -- or finding someone else who will do it. Other times it has involved working with DNRC or with an FWP Warden to handle usage problems.

Flathead Audubon and all who treasure the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area owe Brent a huge debt of gratitude and a tremendous THANK YOU. Please give Brent your thanks the next time you see him.



If you like watching birds, try www.ebird.org. The site tracks migratory patterns and uploads the information which is then used to create migration charts that tell you when and where to expect certain birds. It can also tell you which birds you can expect to see in a given area. You can also select a type of bird. The site will give you a map showing area sightings. It's great for taking the kids on a bird watching field trip!

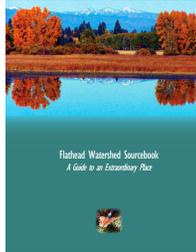
From komando.com

The Flathead Watershed Sourcebook: A Guide to an Extraordinary Place

From Lori Curtis for Flathead CORE

The Flathead Audubon Society's Owen Sowerwine Natural Area is featured in the *Flathead Watershed Sourcebook: A Guide to an Extraordinary Place*, a new book about the Flathead Watershed. Written from a bioregional perspective, the book describes the habitats and biodiversity of the watershed, illustrates land ownership, natural resource management, recreational opportunities, and food production and offers a glimpse into the long cultural and geological histories of the area.

The idea for the book originated from the Flathead Community of Resource Educators (CORE) Watershed Education Committee, of which Flathead Audubon Society is a member. In partnership with individuals, diverse citizen groups, schools, tribes, governmental agencies, and non-governmental entities, Flathead CORE works to increase awareness and understanding of the natural, historical and cultural resources of the Flathead. Within that focus, the Watershed Education Committee concentrates on watershed level programs and education. The committee identified the book project, but recognized that an undertaking of this magnitude would require a dedicated effort. In the fall of 2008, along came Lori Curtis looking for a post-graduate thesis project to work toward a Master's in Environmental Studies. A project steering committee made up of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium, Flathead Audubon Society, Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead Conservation District, Flathead Lakers, Flathead National Forest, and Whitefish Lake Institute worked with Lori to define a project that met the needs of resource edu-



cators and fulfilled the requirements of her thesis.

The resulting 260-page book is filled with over 300 full color photos, graphics, and maps, as well as numerous scientific and informational sidebars. In addition to the main content of the book, there are 57 *Watershed Perspectives*. Each short narrative is written by, or as the result of an interview with, an individual contributor.

"I wanted to include the diverse voices of citizens throughout the book," said Curtis. "This project exemplifies the importance and effectiveness of joining forces to describe, appreciate, and protect this very special place." The outcome is a book loaded with useful information and a story balanced by many points of view. Project funders include the steering committee organizations along with FH Stoltze Land & Lumber, Flathead County River Commission, Flathead National Forest Resource Advisory Committee, Glacier Association, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the River Design Group. Through this sponsorship, the first 1500 copies of the book have been made available at no charge.

The book has a companion website which includes all of the information from the book, with menu bars serving as chapters, and a plethora of linked resources. It is available at www.flatheadwatershed.org and as a link from the Flathead Audubon Society www.flatheadaudubon.org, Flathead CORE www.flatheadcore.org and other participating organization websites.

Jewel Basin Hawk Watch Totals Exceeding Expectations

Record numbers of birds have been counted this fall, the third year of raptor migration monitoring at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch. With a few weeks to go, more than 2,500 raptors of 16 species had been recorded, including nearly 1,500 Sharp-shinned Hawks. We recorded our biggest single-day flight (367 birds on Sept. 25), and our single biggest hour, when a remarkable 82 birds passed between 1 and 2 PM on Sept. 27! Here are the totals from the 34 survey days between August 28 and October 17:

Osprey - 7	Northern Goshawk - 30	Ferruginous Hawk - 1	Prairie Falcon - 1
Bald Eagle - 18	Accipiter, sp. - 66	Buteo, sp. - 10	Falcon, sp. - 2
Northern Harrier - 35	Broad-winged Hawk - 6	Golden Eagle - 304	Eagle, sp. - 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1,483	Swainson's Hawk - 2	American Kestrel - 37	Raptor, sp. - 22
Cooper's Hawk - 321	Red-tailed Hawk - 175	Merlin - 20	Total (16 spp): 2,563
	Rough-legged Hawk - 9	Peregrine Falcon - 13	

These surveys have been coordinated by the American Bird Conservancy, and made possible in part by grants from the US Forest Service and Flathead Audubon, in addition to hundreds of hours of volunteer time donated by FAS members and others in the community. Peter Motyka has been the on-site technician responsible for most of the counts since late September. Surveys will be continued until the first week of November, weather permitting, and final season totals will be included in the December newsletter. Direct questions to Dan Casey, American Bird Conservancy, 756-2681, dcasey@abcbirds.org.

Thanks!

...to all those below who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon from September 18 through October 16.

Merlin \$100+ Jill & Mike Fanning
Bob & Paula Smith



Kestrel \$50+ Bruce Tannehill
Anne Lent & Charlie McCarty
Virginia Axenfield



Supporting Member + donation
Dennis Hester
Wayne & Rosemarie Worthington
Linda Winnie
Richard Kuhl



My Own Vision
June Ash



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.

FAS Supports Sam Bibler Trail Project

The Sam Bibler Trail, basically following Willow Glen Drive, is part of a larger trail system that will eventually reach to Somers and Lakeside. Terry Welder of the Montessori School has been a major force in collecting money and spearheading the project. They still need about \$20,000 now that the county has received bids. The construction will take part in two phases.

Flathead Audubon has been proud to support the construction of this trail. It passes close to the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Plus, Terry and the Montessori School have been enthusiastic supporters of FAS. We hope others can help with the Sam Bibler Trail as well.

Recent articles on the status of the trail can be found at www.dailyinterlake.com; scroll to the bottom of the home page, and in "Search," enter "Sam Bibler Trail."

Donations can be mailed to Sam Bibler Commemorative Trails Project, P.O. Box 515, Kalispell, 59903.

SCIENCE

RITUALISTIC FEEDING IN THE SCARLET Tanager

TIDBIT

SOURCE: *The Private Lives of Birds*

by Bridget Stutchbury
Submitted by Bruce Tannehill



Stutchbury is a professor of biology at York University in Toronto. She and her colleague Paul Klatt studied the nesting behavior of the Scarlet Tanager in Pennsylvania. The male Scarlet Tanager feeds the female during nesting. The female has no difficulty getting enough food on her own. So the feeding must have some other advantage. To see if this were true they captured the male and caged him some distance away. When no one came to feed her, the female spent an hour alarm-calling and then abandoned the territory and nest for good. Even when the singing male was put back on the territory, she did not return. Stutchbury's conclusion is that the feeding is a test of the male's fitness to find enough food for the nestlings. If he can't find enough food, it is better to try again with a different male.

I think I will take my wife out to dinner tonight.



glaciermt.com

Lead in Migrant Golden Eagles. What we know. Why we care.

Rob Domenech (Raptor View Research Institute, Missoula)
Heiko Langner (University of Montana, Geosciences Department)

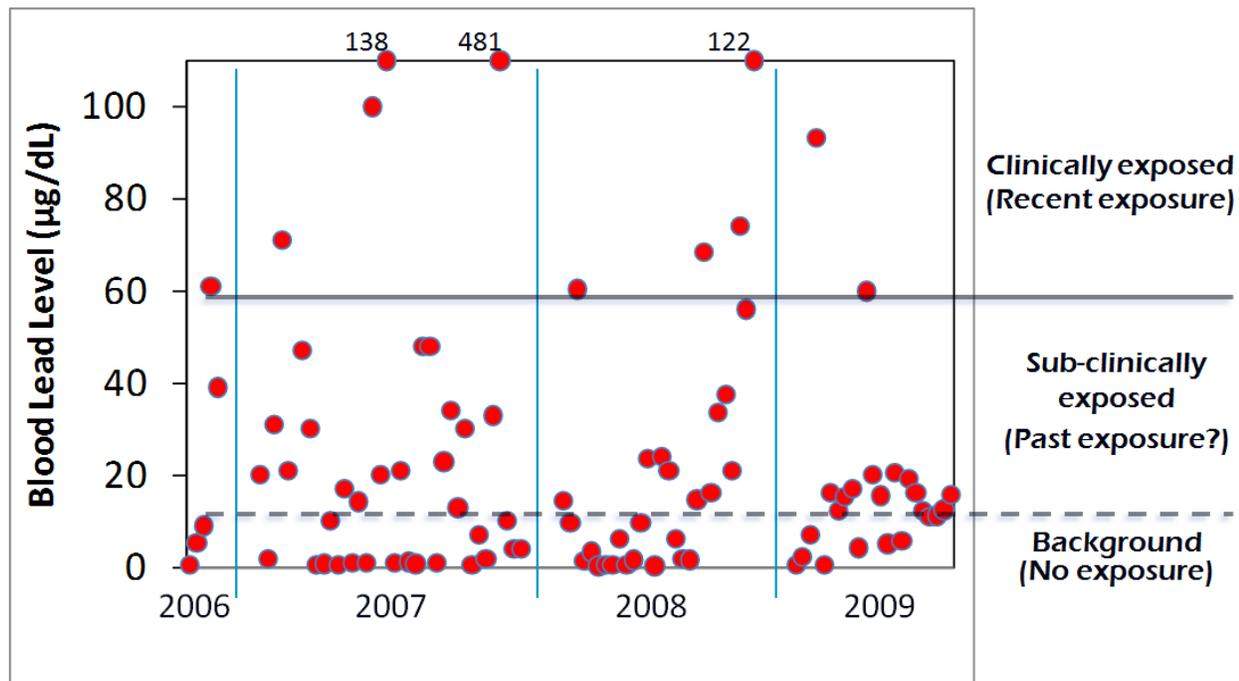


Dave Menck, USFWS

On September 11, 2010, at Raptor Day, Heiko Langner spoke about “Lead in Migrant Golden Eagles. What We Know. Why We Care.” Heiko is director of the Environmental Biogeochemistry Laboratory in the University of Montana Geosciences Department and is involved with various projects relating to heavy metals like lead and mercury in birds of prey. This project was initiated by Rob Domenech, whose nonprofit organization has been counting, banding and tagging Golden Eagles during fall migration near Rogers Pass since 2001.

The best-known health effect of lead is a decrease in IQ and brain function, especially in children; however, there are many other effects of lead such as cardiovascular and kidney disease. Between the 2006 and 2009 migration seasons, the researchers tested blood samples from 93 Golden Eagles. Results reveal an astonishing number of birds with elevated blood lead levels (BLL), presumably from ingesting carcasses and gut piles that contained fragments of lead ammunition. Lead exposure from natural sources is generally low, resulting in natural BLL in the single digit microgram per deciliter range. However, many hunters are not aware that lead-core bullets partially disintegrate upon impact and on average leave more than 100 lead fragments in a game animal’s body. The ingestion of carcasses and gut piles left in the field are the main source for lead exposure in Golden Eagles. In human medicine, treatment is recommended above 10 micrograms per deciliter, 60 units would trigger hospitalization, and most people would die above 330 units. More than half of the captured eagles showed evidence of past lead exposure, having BLL above 10 units (see Figure). There is evidence that BLL increases rapidly after ingestion of lead fragments and then decreases slowly (half-life is two weeks) due to deposition of the metal in bones and other tissues. However, BLL will remain slightly elevated, as the metal is not being excreted. About a dozen of birds had BLLs greater than 60 units that were likely caused by more recent exposure. One Golden Eagle that was originally banded in 2004 was recaptured in 2008 with a BLL of 122 micrograms per deciliter. The same bird was captured again in 2009, in a condition that suggested lead poisoning: it had lost 3 pounds since last capture and had a severely deformed beak.

This study delivers strong evidence of the environmental impact of lead ammunition used for upland game and birds. Although not the major point of the talk, Heiko pointed out that the problem doesn’t stop with eagles and other wildlife. Research shows lead exposure to hunters and their families is much more likely than previously thought, and it is prudent to switch to non-lead ammunition when it comes to hunting for any kind of animals.



Blood lead levels of 93 golden eagles captured during fall migration along the Rocky Mountain Front. Over 50 of the eagles had concentrations greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter, where it is assumed that the birds had lead exposure from eating hunter kills at some point in the past.

KIDZ



Let's Learn More About **Trees and Leaves!**

Teacher: Mary Jo Gardner, Fair Mont Egan School Second Grade
From a unit on Trees and Leaves

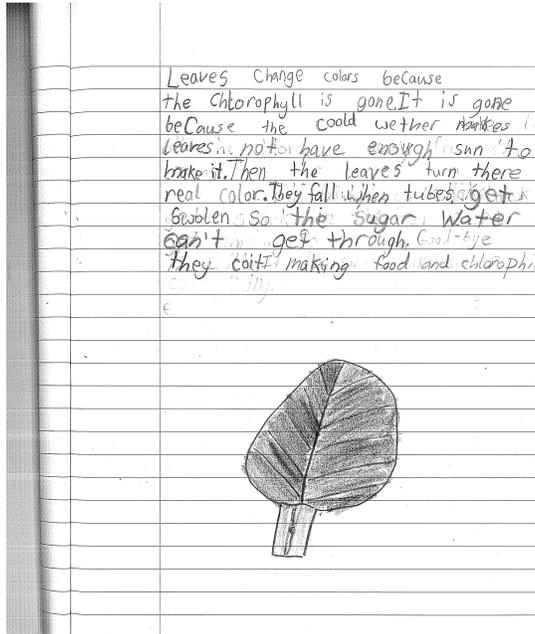
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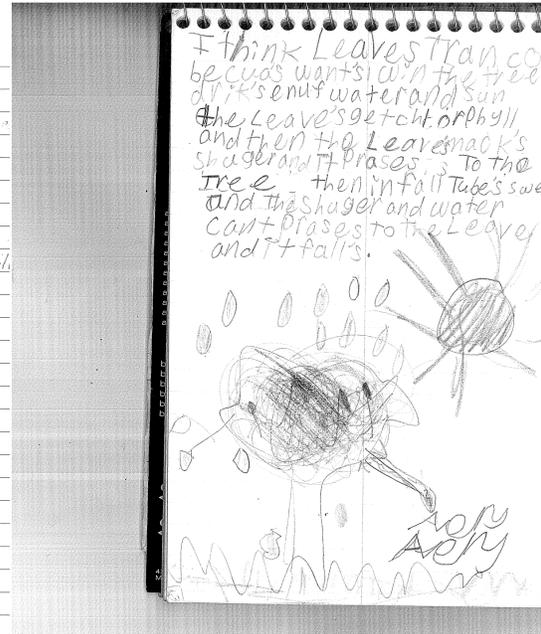
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By Sage Lost-Bear



By Avery Cherot

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!"

I think leaves turn colors because when the tree drinks enough water and sun the leaves get chlorophyll. Then the leaves make sugar and it passes to the tree. Then in the fall the tubes swell and the sugar and water can't pass to the leaf and it falls.

Montana Audubon is seeking applicants for a paid internship to assist with the 2011 Legislative activities. Interested? Go to www.mtaudubon.org for full job description and application instructions.



weeds.sloco.org

Wondering about Weeding at Owen Sowerwine?

By Nancy Zapotocki, Conservation Educator

Does pulling weeds have an impact? According to the *Bradley Method* – a manual approach to weed control, it does. Seeing the results from the weed pulling effort of 200 students, as part of my Together-Green Fellowship project with National Audubon/Toyota, we can see locally that it does! When we went to Owen Sowerwine this September to the area where the students had pulled Common Hounds Tongue in May and June, the positive results were notable. There were very few flowering plants, showing that the students were successful at pulling the second year plants before they produced flowers and seeds. A mature Hounds Tongue plant can produce hundreds of seeds per year!! Great job by the students in preventing that spread!

The *Bradley Method* is actually named after the Bradley sisters of Sydney, Australia. Daily, the Bradley sisters would go for a walk with their dog in a park next to their home. They noticed that the beautiful trees and flowers they had seen since they were little girls were disappearing and were being replaced with thorny, invading weeds. The sisters decided, "These weeds have to be stopped or we will have no beautiful trees and flowers left in our park." Using their manual weed pulling method, the two sisters (both over fifty) cleared a 40-acre woodland reserve of weeds so successfully that the area only needed slight attention once or twice a year to be maintained weed-free.

From *Knowweeds K-12 Montana Invasive Plant Curriculum Guide*



NOVEMBER 2010



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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7:00PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet 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 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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FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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FOR E-YOUR EYES ONLY

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FOR READERS OF THE ELECTRONIC POST

OWEN SOWERVINE WORK DAY



Everybody Gathers at Montessori for Brent's Annual Safety Talk



Passionate Pink makes Tools Easy to Keep Track Of



Nobody saw a bear, but it's handy that we work in groups and make plenty of noise, just in case!



Two new knees haven't stopped Ed from being an "Everytimer!"



On our Work Days, everybody works, even the "supervisors"—thanks, Linda!



Sometimes bending over double is what it takes to get these pesky weeds to surrender!



Everybody checks in and out with Lois, the Gatekeeper!



But in the end, Woman Triumphs Over Weed!

Many Thanks to our Great Work Day Photographer, Sheryl Hester!