



# the Flathead Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 35

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DECEMBER 2010



## LOCAL TARGET STORE TO RECEIVE FAS CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION



Three times each meeting season (September through May), Flathead Audubon recognizes an individual, group or organization that has made significant contributions to conservation in the Flathead Valley. The first Conservation Achievement Recognition for this season, which will be awarded at the December 13 FAS General Meeting, goes to our local Target store in appreciation of their glass recycling program.

In 2010, Target launched a comprehensive recycling program in all of its retail stores in the US. Local residents can now easily recycle glass bottles, as well as plastic bottles, plastic bags, aluminum cans, MP3 players, ink cartridges and cell phones right in our local Target store. Simply take them to the bins located in the Guest Services department to the left of the front doors. Paul McClintock, General Manager at our local Target store, encouraged us to bring in glass on Wednesdays because the glass is shipped out on Thursdays. The glass is taken back to distribution cen-

ters in Oregon in trucks already making trips.

The glass is then recycled by local recycling centers in Oregon. Electronic waste is collected by a national vendor who resells them for reuse, refurbishing or recycling. Anything that can't be reused is scrapped by certified companies that dispose of the materials responsibly. Plastic bags are sold to a vendor who converts them into composite decking.

It's too early to know exactly how much waste will be diverted from landfills with the recycling program, but Target anticipates that it could eliminate at least six million pounds of plastic bags, glass, plastic, aluminum beverage containers and electronics each year. Whatever the amount, we are grateful for the opportunity to keep our glass bottles out of the Flathead landfill. This is the only glass recycling program in the valley that does not charge for collecting glass.

Thank you, Target!

From Linda DeKort

### DECEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

**Monday, December 13, 2010: Flathead Audubon General Meeting.** 7 PM, Conference Room 3, The Summit. Dan Casey presents bird slide show to prepare for Christmas Bird Counts. See page 3 for details.

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

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS!

#### Saturday, December 18:

Bigfork	Dan Casey	<a href="mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com">danielcasey55@gmail.com</a> , 857-3143 or <a href="mailto:dcasey@abcbirds.org">dcasey@abcbirds.org</a> , 756-2681
Upper Swan	Jody Wolff	<a href="mailto:jmw4002@blackfoot.net">jmw4002@blackfoot.net</a> , 754-400
Eureka	Lynda or Lewis Young	<a href="mailto:llyoung@interbel.net">llyoung@interbel.net</a> , 889-3492
Libby	Sandra Gerber	<a href="mailto:slariver@frontiernet.net">slariver@frontiernet.net</a> , 293-4948

#### Sunday, December 19:

Ninepipe NWR	Brian Williams	<a href="mailto:btwilliams111@hotmail.com">btwilliams111@hotmail.com</a> , 721-1467 or 327-0405
Troy	Don Jones	<a href="mailto:gr8gray@frontiernet.net">gr8gray@frontiernet.net</a> , 295-4291
Glacier NP	Susan Sindt	<a href="mailto:sjsindt@hotmail.com">sjsindt@hotmail.com</a> or Steve Gniadek <a href="mailto:grayjaybro@yahoo.com">grayjaybro@yahoo.com</a> , 892-7406

#### Sunday, January 2:

Kalispell	Dan Casey	contact information above
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# BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Gail Cleveland

## The Cold Climate Rough-legged Hawk

During the winter, if you see a large hawk soaring or hovering over grasslands, chances are you have spotted a Rough-legged Hawk. They are the most common winter soaring hawk of the Genus *Buteo* and the only one that prefers cold climates all year. It nests in the Arctic, mostly in cliffs in tundra regions north of boreal forests; the entire population migrates south, wintering in southern Canada and the United States with few moving farther south than central US.

The Rough-legged Hawk gets its name from the feathering that extends down the legs to the base of the toes, an adaptation which may be helpful for staying warm in its preferred frigid weather.

Identification would be easy if there weren't a few Red-Tailed Hawks that do not migrate south for the winter. About the size and shape of a Red-Tail, Rough-legged Hawks appear slightly longer and less rotund in profile when perched on power poles. In this position and in flight, look for a pale head in contrast to the Red-Tail's dark one. Another telling feature of a perched Rough-legged is the lack of whitish scapulars on folded wings that form a pale V across the bird's back. This is characteristic of a Red-Tail. Thus, pale head from the front and no pale V on the back are good indicators of a Rough-Legged Hawk.

A pale chest with a bold dark swath across the belly is another sign of an immature or female Rough-Legged. Most of the birds that you will see will be females, which are larger than the males. "The tendency for females to winter farther north than males is consistent with the body-size hypothesis, which states that individuals of the larger sex (females, in this case) are better able to withstand cold temperatures than are individuals of the small-bodied sex" (*Birds of Montana* by Marks, Hendricks and Casey). In California and Nevada, males outnumber females.

In flight the white or pale tail with a single or several narrow dark bands as well as black patches on the wrists and black wing tips can help in identifica-



Photo by Josh Covill

tion. There are light and dark morphs and immature birds, but these general diagnostic tools should be helpful. The number of Rough-legged Hawks in western Montana can vary dramatically year to year and is dependent on their food source. When breeding in the north, they dine on lemmings; here in western Montana, voles become their primary target. Both these rodent populations tend to have wild

fluctuations in numbers from year to year.

How do these hawks know where the dining will be good? A recent experimental study shows that the vision of many daylight feeding birds extends into the ultraviolet. Voles mark their runways with urine and feces that are visible in ultraviolet light. Consequently, "they probably can assess vole numbers across large areas simply by flying over and looking for scent marks" (*Birds of Montana*).

The Mission Valley is one of the prime locations to see these beauties from mid-October through mid-April. Thanks to Chad Olson's research work there from 1994-2000, we know a great deal about the roosting behavior of this winter *Buteo*. Olson discovered a roost that housed as many as 300 Rough-legged Hawks during peak vole years, making it the largest communal roost known for the species. In the foothills of the Mission Mountains, the roost was warmer and less windy than the grassland foraging grounds. Olson suggested that the roost was used because of this favorable climate. Hawks commuted up to 15 miles from their foraging grounds to roost in this area at night. Because of his discoveries, the Christmas Bird Counts of Rough-legged Hawks in the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge count area have been the highest in the state, and in 1998 it boasted an all-time high for the species in any CBC in North America at 253.

Don't let the winter pass by without a trip to the Mission Valley or the Lower Flathead in order to identify that perched or soaring hawk, that lover of cold climates and small rodents, the stunning Rough-legged Hawk.



### CORRECTION

Our November article on the rollout of the Flathead Watershed Resource book cut short the list of sponsors. It should have read: "FH Stoltze Land & Lumber, Flathead Audubon, Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead Conservation District, Flathead County River Commission, Flathead Lakers, Flathead National Forest Resource Advisory Committee, Glacier Association, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, River Design Group, The Sustainability Fund, and Whitefish Lake Institute." You can access the book at [www.flatheadwatershed.org](http://www.flatheadwatershed.org).



## December 2010 Program Winter Birds of Montana



In preparation for this year's Christmas Bird Count season, Dan Casey will once again offer our December program **Monday, December 13**. Dan will share some insight into what CBC data tell us about bird distribution and populations, with an emphasis on entertainment and wonderful photos of birds. We have come to expect some ID tips, anecdotes, a few laughs

and maybe a bit of the "virtual birding" from these annual talks. The presentation will conclude with preparations for the upcoming Flathead Valley counts.

Also at this meeting, FAS will present our first Conservation Achievement Recognition of this year to our local Target store. Please join us on Monday, December 13 at 7 PM at The Summit in Kalispell.



### Bigfork CBC: 36 and Counting

This year's **Bigfork Christmas Bird Count** will be held **Saturday, December 18**. This count is always one of the most productive in Montana, as it includes a wide variety of habitats from Flathead Lake to Foothills Road, the Swan and Flathead Rivers, and the Lower Valley. Last year, temperatures were 50 degrees warmer than during the 2008 count (-16F and snow up to 2 ft deep). Let's hope this year brings "average" weather! We have seen nearly 150 species on this count since it was first run in 1974. Recent highlights have included Gyrfalcon, Wood Duck, Snowy Owl, record numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, and an out-of-season Yellow-headed Blackbird. We typically rely on veteran group leaders to scour their usual areas, and are always looking for additional participants to join in to help us gain a better understanding of our early winter bird populations. We will begin preparation for the count at the December 13 meeting, and will finalize groups before the count day. Contact Dan at [danielcasey55@gmail.com](mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com) or at 857-3143.



### December SALES Items:

- |                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Bird Feeders</u></b>  | Made by Trevis Harlen, an 8th grader |
| <b><u>Calendars</u></b>     | Birds, butterflies, nature and more  |
| <b><u>Books</u></b>         | Assorted, new and used               |
| <b><u>Window decals</u></b> | To prevent bird collisions           |

**Visit our Sales Table at the December 13 Meeting!**



### Sign up for Action Alerts from Montana Audubon

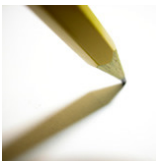
The 2011 Montana Legislature will convene in January in Helena. Many important issues impacting wildlife, wildlife habitat, and our environment are at stake. Please consider assisting us with this effort by signing up for our action alert program, Armchair Activist, at your local Audubon Chapter meeting or at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org).

As the legislature faces tough problems concerning wildlife and the environment, it is important to have as many conservationists as possible calling their Representatives and/or Senators to encourage them to vote responsibly about critical issues. We will try to limit use of the action alert program to just the most critical times!

Montana Audubon has made the following bills their priority for the 2011 Montana Legislature:

- ♦ **Protection of Montana's Streams and Rivers** ~ Several bills will be introduced to encourage local governments to protect our streams and rivers from the impacts from new buildings.
- ♦ **Wind Farms and Wildlife** ~ Wildlife-friendly Best Management Practices need to be established for new wind projects.
- ♦ **Defending Current Environmental Laws** ~ There are lots of rumors of legislation that will attack our fundamental laws, from repealing the Montana Environmental Policy Act (which requires a review of environmental impacts before they develop new mines, large subdivisions, oil and gas wells, timber sales, etc.), to allowing gravel pits to be located anywhere, to prohibiting the purchase of any new public land.

Local Audubon Chapter members can help by making their voices heard on these and other crucial issues. When local input is needed, Montana Audubon will contact interested members by phone or email, explain the issue and why action is needed, and then ask members to contact their legislators. Alerts will be sent out only a handful of times during the session, but they provide a powerful way to lobby legislators on crucial bills and issues.





## BOARD MEMBER CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From Jill Fanning, Membership Co-Chair & Sales Chairwoman



### Preparing for Winter

As winter comes down around us, I would like to share with you some teachings of native people from the northwest coast, and also from the Seneca. Winter is a hard time for people living close to outdoors. We have our heat and electric light to drive away the darkness and the cold. Maybe we don't need to be strong anymore, or to understand what nature is doing; or maybe we do ...

"As the leaves slip from the trees, fall to the ground and decay, we too will pass away. We have only borrowed this body for this lifetime. We will return it to Mother Earth when we are done with it. What we do with it, we do to the earth. That which we respect becomes sacred."

Grandfather Johnny Moses used to say, regarding material possessions, "We came into this world with nothing, and we take nothing with us when we leave."

Another teaching from the coast: As the tree lets go its leaves and withdraws into its roots, so we must be willing to let things go. We let the busy world retreat as we go to within, into this introspective phase of the seasonal transition. These many leaves, the things in life that pull us in all directions, these fall away and leave us here, bare, empty, ready for a time of quiet during the days of darkness. Too soon will the longer days return, and the stirring of new life. Now, in the stillness, we can hear the snow fall.

As winter deepens, we humans have a need to come together in community. Native people in the northwest come together in the Big House, the house of sacred dancing, to share with each other their spirit songs. These songs and dances are born in the soli-

tary silence of autumn and early winter. Traveling into our deep roots, we find our true spirit and strength. This is what we bring to community. Sharing this strength is what makes community strong.

For the Seneca, in the Northeastern US, winter brings the north wind and the spirit of the North: strength and fortitude, the power of the mind, and mystery. The North is the still point amidst change. Facing north, we face the Polestar, the unmoving pivot of the constellations.

The following poem/prayer is by Bear Hawk, Seneca:

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* WINTER PRAYER \*  
\* I am grateful to you Snowy Owl \*  
\* Take me from the West, where the sun sets, \*  
\* Here my mind sinks into its depths, \*  
\* To your home in the North, \*  
\* Cold northern winds that test and strengthen. \*  
\* And on the East, place of new light. \*  
\* May I have the courage to make this journey \*  
\* To face my tests with dignity and grace, \*  
\* And release what is old and unneeded. \*  
\* Snowy Owl, you are beautiful! \*  
\* Fly by me with still, silent wings, \*  
\* I know that you bring, not death, \*  
\* But spiritual rebirth – \*  
\* May I be renewed, as a child, \*  
\* From moment to moment \*  
\* Winter is, after all, only a point \*  
\* On the Great Circle of Life. \*  
\* And whether it be difficult or easy \*  
\* I know that it is good. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*



SCIENCE

### A CONFIDENTIAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN FEMALES (PART I)

Inspired by *THE PRIVATE LIVES OF BIRDS*, by Bridget Stutchbury

One cold and rainy night Mrs. Yellow Warbler and Ms. Yellow Warbler just happened to roost in the same bush. Seeking some advice on the coming breeding season, Ms. Y Warbler nervously asks Mrs. Y Warbler about how to get a mate.

"Why, that is not the problem," Mrs. Y Warbler replies. "The problem is finding the **right** mate, one that is strong enough to pass on good genes and healthy enough to support your children when they come."

"So how can you tell?" asks Ms. Y Warbler. "I don't have access to CSI to do the DNA analysis, and I can't tell if he has parasites or not."

"Ah, it's easy," says Mrs. Y Warbler proudly, "just look at his breast. The brighter the red color of his breast strips, the better father he will make."

"But why?" Ms. Y Warbler asks.

Mrs. Y Warbler replies tiredly, "I have a long way to fly tomorrow, so I will have to explain that to you at tomorrow night's roost; in the meantime, study your Biochemistry."

See Part II in next month's *Pileated Post* for the climax of this confidential conversation.

From Bruce Tannehill

TIDBIT





### TAKE A SURVEY!

Dr. Jeff Rudski in the Department of Psychology at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA is doing a research project on "people's perceptions of human-made hazards to birds." And he would like members of various ornithological and environmental groups, including Flathead Audubon, to help out by responding to a survey questionnaire. All answers will be confidential. The information will be used to develop ways to raise awareness of the different kinds of threats to birds. The online survey should take about 25 minutes to complete and is found at the following link: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BDFEUJWXT>. If you are interested in helping him out, please log on and answer some questions.

From FAS President Bob Lee

### 41st River & Wildlife Celebration—March 17-20, 2011

Gather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through the heart of the Central Flyway. The [Nebraska Bird Partnership](#) is proud to co-host the nation's longest running wildlife festival with [Audubon Nebraska](#). Here are a few highlights of what we have planned for the 2011 Celebration:



- ♦ Photography workshop with **Michael Forsberg**
- ♦ Friday night keynote address by **Rick Wright**, "Oops My Mistake: Ten Big Birding Boobos and How I Survived Them"
- ♦ Saturday night keynote address by **Dr. Richard Beilfuss**, President of the International Crane Foundation
- ♦ Expanded "Wild Experience Room," with live animal shows return from **Raptor Recovery Nebraska** and Dan Fogell with Nebraska snakes
- ♦ A variety of field trips to choose from; see cranes, waterfowl, prairie chickens, and other birds and wildlife



### Become a Peregrine Watcher!

At Flathead Audubon's November program, Kate Davis mentioned the Peregrine Watch program.

This program started last year, and Montana Peregrine Institute is continuing to look for volunteers to monitor Peregrine territories throughout the state. Watchers will be recording whether a territory is active or inactive and the number of young fledging from the territory. If anyone is interested, please contact Jay Sumner of the Montana Peregrine Institute by email at [peregrine@blackfoot.net](mailto:peregrine@blackfoot.net).

There are a few requirements of participating in the program. You can observe up to three territories that are located close to your home. These will be determined by the number and location of the volunteers. You have to visit each territory at least twice (once each during April and July) although you are welcome to visit more often. There is some paperwork to fill out at each visit and submit to the Montana Peregrine Institute. More detailed information can be found at <http://montanaperegrine.org/Peregrine-Watch.html>. Sign up now and start learning about peregrines!

### Count Birds in Your Backyard!

The 14th annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC) is coming up February 18-21, 2011. The four-day event is free and is open to bird watchers of all ages and skill levels. Visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for lots of bird photos, results of last year's GBBC, details of a photo contest and instructions on how to participate. Be a Citizen Scientist!



### GO ON A CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Kalispell CBC Kicks Off 2011

The **Kalispell Christmas Bird Count**, centered at Reserve and Highway 93, has proven to be a popular New Year's tradition. Last year a record 52 people participated in the count. This year's (12<sup>th</sup> annual) count will be on Sunday, **January 2**.



The list of rarities among the 109 species we have found over 11 years includes Glaucous, Iceland and Thayer's Gulls; Long-eared and Great Gray Owls, and Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows. On at least one occasion, we also had the highest Bohemian Waxwing count for all North America (more than 11,000!). Our traditional start to this count is a group breakfast at 7 AM; **this year, we will meet at a new location, the Montana Club on Highway 93 South**. It is here that we will assign circle segments (like Lawrence Park, Owen Sowerwine, West Valley, Evergreen) and set up teams for the day's efforts. If you are interested in participating, please sign up and leave your contact information at the December general meeting, or contact Dan Casey at his home [danielcasey55@gmail.com](mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com) (857-3143) or his office [dcasey@abcbirds.org](mailto:dcasey@abcbirds.org) (756-2681).



## 2010 Raptor Migration Monitoring in the Jewel Basin

From Dan Casey



**Background.** At an elevation of 7,100 feet on the northwest flank of Mount Aeneas in the Flathead Forest northeast of Bigfork, the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch site is uniquely situated for stunning views of passing migrant raptors. This has been borne out by season-long fall migration survey data from 2008 and 2009, with more than 2,000 birds of 17 species counted each year by volunteers and paid technicians supervised by Dan Casey of American Bird Conservancy (see Table). Using funds from Plum Creek (2008), the US Forest Service and Flathead Audubon, this effort is contributing valuable data regarding hawk migration, particular Accipiters, to the network of such sites across the western states.

**2010.** American Bird Conservancy initiated this fall's survey effort 28 August. The effort was heavily reliant on volunteer participation early in the season. For the latter half of the season, the Jewel Basin Road was closed to the public for upgrades, and we relied heavily on the efforts of technician Pete Motyka, who had also worked on the project in 2009. We had a stellar year, and finished the season with a new season high of **2,742** birds counted during 40 days (243hr) of surveys, including more than 1,500 Sharp-shinned Hawks (see Table). For the season, we averaged 11.3 birds/hr, or about a bird every five minutes over the course of the season. But a remarkable 82 birds passed in one hour Sept. 27, and we had a new single day high as well, with 367 birds on September 25. Our quest for our first 3,000-bird season was ended when deep snows fell during the last week of October, ending our survey efforts. Thanks to all who came to the ridge for another fine season in the Jewel Basin!

Species	2010 Total	2009 Total	2008 Total	Highest Daily Count 2010	Date
Turkey Vulture	0	6	5	-	-
Osprey	7	19	8	1	13 Oct
Bald Eagle	30	25	41	5	19 Oct
Northern Harrier	35	62	46	5	29 Sep
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1541	812	779	258	27 Sep
Cooper's Hawk	321	388	302	62	25 Sep
Northern Goshawk	35	30	50	3	14 Oct
Unidentified Accipiter	66	79	50	-	-
Broad-winged Hawk	6	22	2	3	11 Sep
Swainson's Hawk	2	1	1	1	15 Sep
Red-tailed Hawk	178	152	173	18	15 Sep
Ferruginous Hawk	1	1	1	1	3 Oct
Rough-legged Hawk	17	1	41	3	14 Oct
Unidentified Buteo	11	8	11	-	-
Golden Eagle	390	241	474	75	12 Oct
American Kestrel	38	100	35	7	12 Sep
Merlin	24	31	21	3	25 Sep
Peregrine Falcon	13	6	16	5	25 Sep
Prairie Falcon	1	9	7	1	3 Sep
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	-	-
Unidentified Falcon	2	3	1	-	-
Unidentified Eagle	1	1	3	-	-
Unidentified Raptor	23	24	46	-	-
Totals	2742	2011	2113	367	25 Sep

### ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

To All of our Readers: Whichever holidays you do or don't observe, your newsletter editors wish you the Very Best of the Season—Friends, Love, Happiness and Birds of Every Feather! Happy Holidays and Peace on Earth!

Linda and Kay



## A Year of the TogetherGreen Fellowship

By Nancy Zapotocki, Conservation Educator



I was fortunate to be awarded one of forty *TogetherGreen* 2009 Fellowships by National Audubon and Toyota, which begin wrapping up in December. This Conservation Leadership Program recognizes both proven and promising leaders who are committed to empowering others and to creating positive environmental change in their communities. Being part of this nationwide program was exciting! It included funding for a conservation project and professional development focusing on leadership, innovation, communications, conservation planning, outreach to diverse audiences and evaluation.

You may have followed some of the article updates on the project as it progressed. Locally, I worked on a Watershed Education and Youth Peer Mentoring project for "Finding the Flathead: Discovering the Watershed in Our Backyard." I worked on this project with partners, students and teachers in town and at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) and State Important Bird Area. My goal for the program was increased knowledge and stewardship of our local watershed through experiential study, cooperation, and a connection with nature in our own "backyard," as well as allowing space for personal growth and discovery.

The Fellowship project united habitat restoration, conservation education and peer mentoring through 1) a unit of study for use in the classroom, 2) habitat enhancement by removing non-native plants, and 3) education on and application of peer mentoring techniques. The restoration part of the project with a Cross-Age Youth Peer Mentoring component provided an opportunity for the students to get outside, share learning about their local watershed, and foster a personal connection with the environment.

My partners included Northwest Montana Educational Cooperative, Flathead Conservation District and four local schools: Fairmont Egan, Kalispell Montessori, Kalispell Middle School and Flathead High School Orion Program. In the Spring, teachers attended a workshop for the program and in May and June 200 students from these schools applied knowledge acquired in classrooms about watersheds, habitat and wildlife to field studies at OSNA. Flathead High School Orion students mentored, instructed and assisted the younger students as they worked in pairs through three stations: Bird Identification, Weeds, and Nature Journaling. In the Fall we revisited the site on OSNA Work Day with adult volunteers and teachers to continue the weed-

ing work. The positive results from the students' efforts in the Spring were notable. There were very few non-native Common Hounds Tongue flowering plants, which demonstrates that the students were successful at pulling the second-year plants before they could produce flowers and seeds.

As I look back on the year, the greatest success was getting kids outside and connected to nature and themselves, through the field visits and with the Cross-Age Youth Peer Mentoring, all the while helping the habitat at OSNA in the Flathead Watershed. Rob Ford, the Flathead High School teacher reflected on this, "My students commented again and again about how they enjoyed teaching and helping the younger students, helping them pull weeds, identify birds and share their thoughts and drawings in nature journals. Receiving thoughtful "thank-you's" from the elementary students was empowering for my students in understanding they have positive influence over the young. In addition to boosting self-esteem, the *Together Green* project helped my students realize the importance of being in tune with nature."

One sophomore wrote about Owen Sowerwine as the most influential highlight of her school year: "Owen Sowerwine was the trip that made me think. I used to be outside everyday when I was little. Just like the elementary kids we worked with, I loved just playing outside, enjoying whatever weather it was. As I got older, the computer and TV became more important. Going to Owen Sowerwine really made a difference to me. I realized there is so much to see outside. It impacted me so much that I have made a goal for myself to be outside as much as I can this summer. I even want to continue nature journaling. I never knew that going into the woods on a rainy day could impact me so much."

Thanks to the *TogetherGreen* Fellowship, partners and teachers for helping to provide for this personal, outdoor learning experience and growth for the students. We hope to continue this work of mentoring, watershed education and getting kids outside to learn with nature!

**NOTE:** *TogetherGreen* is a five-year initiative, launched in 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. It is funded by a \$20 million Toyota gift to National Audubon and is the largest in the conservation group's long history. The Leadership Program is one component. Check out the website at [www.togethergreen.org](http://www.togethergreen.org).





## Seasonal Giving

Many years ago when our children were 7, 9, and 11 years old, Jill and I became dissatisfied with the Christmas present orgy. Inevitably, after all the gifts had been unwrapped in a frenzy, we had 3 children who unhappy because there were no more presents. That year we changed our approach. Our one family present was a ski trip (skiing was cheaper then!). This maintained until the kids grew up and had obligations which made a family trip impossible. We still spent Christmas together but, since we didn't do presents, we needed an alternative. We settled on having a discussion on Christmas morning to choose an organization to support jointly with money we would have spent on presents. We then made a joint gift to that organization. We found that satisfying.

So, what does this have to do with Flathead Audubon? I would not propose that our approach would work for other families, but I do think that charitable giving is satisfying to most of us. I would like to suggest that FAS members consider giving either FAS memberships or donations in honor of persons to whom they would otherwise give material gifts. We will ensure that all such memberships and donations are acknowledged by a card which will recognize the donor.

Mike Fanning, Finance Committee Chairman



**In this special season, we are reminded that we are caretakers of the Earth and all that it holds.**

## UP FROM THE EGG

By Ogden Nash

*Bird watchers top my honors list.  
I aimed to be one, but I missed.  
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,  
My aim turned out to be erratic,  
And I, bespectacled and binocular,  
Exposed myself to comment jocular.  
We don't need too much birdlore, do we,  
To tell a flamingo from a towhee?  
Yet I cannot, and never will,  
Unless the silly birds stand still.  
And there's no enlightenment so obscure  
As ornithological literature.  
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,  
Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?  
You rush to consult your Nature guide  
And inspect the gallery inside,  
But a bird in the open never looks  
Like its picture in the birdie books —  
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage.  
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,  
Watching the clock instead of finches,  
But I sometimes visualize in my gin  
The Audubon that I audibin.*



## Thanks!

...to those below who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon from October 17 to November 16

**Eagle** Tom and Theresa Quinn Fund  
**My Own Vision**

June Ash in Memory of Ferne Cohen



Napco.org

## SPECIAL GIFTS

I wish to help make Flathead Audubon's vision a reality. Here is my contribution to the continued success of our chapter.

- ☐ Eagle Donation, \$1000+
- ☐ Osprey Donation, \$500+
- ☐ Snowy Owl Donation, \$250+
- ☐ Merlin Donation, \$100+
- ☐ Kestrel Donation, \$50+
- ☐ My Own Vision, amount of my choice

\* \* \* \*

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

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

\* \* \* \*

☐ I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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# KIDZ



## Let's Learn More About .... My First Hunt

By: Marisa Wenum, 12 years old, 7th Grade, Helena Flats School  
Parents: Eric and Teresa Wenum

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Have you ever gone out into the woods to hike, hunt, or just hang out? I love the woods, it's a great place to just relax or walk around. I like listening to the birds and enjoy seeing animals as I walk down a trail. This fall I was old enough to hunt. To hunt, you need to pass a hunter's education class with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. I did that last spring. If you pass, you will get a hunting license. This year, if you passed hunters education, you could hunt two days before the general hunting season. My dad and I went grouse hunting and if we saw a deer, I would think about shooting it, too.

The spruce grouse is a medium-sized grouse. Adults have a long black tail. Males are mainly grey with a black breast and white bars. The grouse has a black throat and a red patch over the eye. Females are brown with dark and white bars on their chest. They eat pine and spruce tree buds. They also eat pebbles to help them digest their food.

During my first two days of hunting I didn't get anything, but I was still satisfied because I was spending time with my dad. On my third day out, we saw a spruce grouse. I relaxed and shot. That night we went home and had grouse for dinner.

White-tailed deer have a reddish-brown coat in the spring and summer and a grayish-brown coat in the fall and winter. The underside of their tail is white. When they think there's something alarming in the area, they will lift their tails and run away. Males can weigh between 250 and 275 pounds and females between 160 and 180 pounds. Bucks shed their antlers from December to January. They eat plants, grasses, leaves and fruits.

On Sunday, November 15, I got up at 5:30 in the morning to hunt with my dad. We just started walking to Dad's secret spot when about 30 yards from us was a deer, it was a buck. I was excited! I relaxed, put the gun up to my shoulder and shot the deer, it collapsed. My legs were shaking, I had done it. I helped my dad gut the buck, and then hauled the deer out on the game cart. I thanked the deer before we left. I looked around the woods. The snow was starting to fall again and the trees were covered in white. My heart just swelled, it was beautiful. I said thank you again and we left. As we drove away, I looked behind us, the snow was covering all evidence that we had been there.

I knew hunting was a sport you could do, but I learned it also was a sport to respect and never take for granted. I was glad to be with my dad and see him smile - a smile big enough to light up the world.

\*\*For information about hunter's education, grouse, deer and other Montana animals, go to the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks website: <http://fwp.mt.gov/>.

*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](mailto: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!"*

**QUESTION:** How do birds find their way when migrating?

**ANSWER:** Studies have shown that birds find their way between wintering and breeding grounds by using a complex set of cues. Birds obtain directional information from five known sources: topographic features, stars, the sun, Earth's magnetic field, and odors.

Use of the cues generally follows a hierarchal pattern, but the sequence varies among bird species. Wind direction is also used, but not always correctly.

From Dr. Jim Story, UM and Bitterroot Audubon



# Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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DECEMBER 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](mailto: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](mailto:pileatedpost@flatheadaudubon.org)

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