



the Flathead Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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SEPTEMBER 2011



benziejo.com

FAS HONORS FISHERIES BIOLOGIST FOR EXTRAORDINARY CONSERVATION WORK



Flathead Audubon Society is proud to recognize Brian Marotz of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for his skills, determination and effectiveness in native fish conservation over the last two decades.

Brian became the Special Projects Manager for FWP in 1990 and in that position, he was able to coordinate many projects dealing with fisheries losses due to the operations of hydropower facilities. At the time, our dams were operated using outdated flood control models that gave little consideration to the effect of dam releases on fish and aquatic insect populations. For example, Hungry Horse was drafted down 20 feet every summer resulting in a drastic loss of spawning habitat in the river and the reservoir. Brian conducted research and developed computer models that resulted in, among other things, the development of procedures that better emulated natural flows from Hungry Horse and Libby Dams. His work also led directly to the installation in 1995 of a selective withdrawal system on Hungry Horse Dam to create a more natural temperature regime in the South Fork and Mainstream of the Flathead River that has been of substantial benefit to its westslope cutthroat and bull trout populations.

Brian helped to initiate the ongoing Westslope Conservation Project in the South Fork of the Flathead River. For decades the upstream lakes of the region, originally barren, had been stocked with rainbow and Yellowstone cutthroat trout to provide fishing opportu-

nities. Unfortunately, in many cases these fish leaked downstream, and bred with the pure westslopes downstream. The result was hybrids in sections of these streams, pure westslopes in other sections. But there's more. The remaining pure westslope populations significantly differ genetically from stream to stream. Over ten thousand years of evolution has produced dozens of these South Fork aboriginal westslope cutthroat populations that have managed to survive by solving their life problems in a variety of different ways.

With a view to preserving some of this genetic diversity, Brian has shepherded the development of the Sekokini Springs Westslope Cutthroat Isolation Facility near Coram. This facility will be used to conserve some of this genetic diversity between these pure westslope cutthroat trout populations by growing up to four pure strains at a time. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists have identified about 50 genetically pure strains in the wild, most of them in the South Fork Flathead River drainages. Some of these will be brought to the hatchery and grown in isolation from each other to preserve their unique genetic heritages. This is truly a pioneering conservation project, the only one of its kind in the State of Montana. Brian has worked tirelessly with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and the Bonneville Power Administration to bring Sekokini Springs Hatchery to fruition. The conservation community owes him their heartfelt gratitude.

SEPTEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, September 12, 2011: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. 7 PM at The Summit. Ashley Mason describes and discusses the FAS Conservation Education Program. Details on page 5.

Monday, September 6, 2011: Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 Third Ave. E.N. All are welcome.

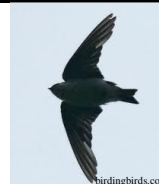
Saturday, September 10, 2011: Raptor Day in Memory of Rod Ash. 8 AM to 4 PM at Lone Pine State Park. See page 5 for schedule of events!



BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Ben Young

THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK SWIFT



"Enigmatic." "Unknown." Take a glance at the species account for the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) in your field guide and you'll see such descriptors associated with aspects of its life history. How else can one describe a non-perching bird that is seen only as it flies (Sibley 2000) (often foraging high enough in the sky to escape detection with binoculars (Rathbun 1925), nests in dark crevices or on ledges near or behind waterfalls that receive little to no direct sunlight, and for which only 124 nest sites have been confirmed worldwide (Levad 2010)? To add to the intrigue, the wintering range for North American breeding birds remains unknown.

The detection of Black Swifts in Montana began in the 1940's with observations of the birds at Glacier National Park, the Mission Mountains, Coram, Flathead Lake, and the National Bison Range. The species continues to be observed at these locations and more during the summer months, frequently in overcast conditions preceding rainstorms, which tend to bring the birds' foraging altitude lower, thus allowing for easier detection. Mid-June reports of Black Swift sightings from the Flathead Valley have occurred with regularity in recent years, namely from the north end of Flathead Lake.

Identification of Black Swifts, as with any bird, includes recognizing characteristic body shape, size, and colors, behavior, habitat, and voice. The first clues to identifying a mysterious fly-by bird as a swift are sickle-shaped wings and stiff-winged, somewhat erratic, flight style. Despite superficial resemblance to swallows in their aerial insectivory and general shape, the two groups are not closely related. Rather, taxonomists have classified swifts in the same order as hummingbirds (Apodiformes) primarily as a result of the similarities in wing structure (Sibley 2008).

Once you have identified your mystery bird as a swift, consider the following features to distinguish Black Swift from the common Vaux's Swift: size (Black Swifts dwarf Vaux's with a mass (45 g) more than twice that of Vaux's and a wingspan that is a half-foot longer; color (Black Swifts are much darker); flight style (Black Swifts tend to intersperse quick wingbeats with periods of gliding that are more pronounced than Vaux's); tail (Black Swift males show distinct notched tail, unlike Vaux's); voice (Black Swift gives bursts of low chirping or clicking notes that bear resemblance to Red Crossbills, compared to the sharp chips and buzzy trills of the Vaux's) (Alderfer 2006).

Despite their annual occurrence in the region and the relative ease in identifying Black Swifts, find-

ing nest sites has proved a daunting challenge since the discovery of the species in 1857 in coastal Washington. The rarity of known Black Swift nests was such that toward the end of the 60-yr period of intense egg-collecting in the U.S., the price of a single Black Swift egg in 1922, \$75, according to *The American Oologist's Exchange Price List of North American Bird's Eggs*, was eclipsed only by the California Condor (\$750), Ivory-billed Woodpecker (\$100), and Passenger Pigeon (\$100) (Levad 2010). In fact, the first documented discovery of nesting birds in Montana did not occur until 1961, when high school science teacher William F. Hunter, working at the Montana State University Biological Station under his advising professor of ornithology, Paul H. Baldwin, published their findings of the state's first confirmed colony of Black Swifts, found in the Mission Mountains outside of St. Ignatius (Hunter and Baldwin 1962).

Subsequent searches for nests by Hunter and Baldwin in the summer of 1962 revealed active Black Swift nests in Glacier National Park (Hunter and Baldwin 1972). Organized Black Swift nest surveys in Montana did not occur again until 2004, when Dan Casey, Northern Rocky Mountain Bird Conservation Region Coordinator, spearheaded a team of researchers in resurrecting Hunter and Baldwin's nest-locating efforts. The team prospected 32 sites in northwest Montana that exhibited the five key physical requirements of Black Swift nest sites (Knorr 1961): (1) water; (2) high relief; (3) inaccessibility to terrestrial predators; (4) shaded; (5) unobstructed approach. Their explorations yielded one new nest site on Haystack Creek, visible from Going-to-the-Sun Road.

Given the relatively scant information on the breeding and nonbreeding locations, as well as population trends of these birds, the status of the Black Swift remains uncertain (S. Gniadek, personal communication, August 15, 2011). Recent declines in its British Columbia breeding range have led to its classification as a species of concern on the U.S. WatchList of Birds. Longitudinal monitoring of established nesting sites may further elucidate how Black Swift populations are responding to various environmental stressors. Of particular significance to the birds nesting in our region is the potential for reduced stream flows that climate change models predict for the long-term. As studies continue to reveal the melting of glaciers in Glacier National Park (Hall and Fagre 2003), concern exists over the subsequent impacts of the net loss of waterfalls on Black Swift nesting habitat. (*Mysterious Black Swifts, continued on next page ...*)



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JOIN OUR LOCAL CHAPTER!!



Eight years ago we announced a new category of membership, a membership in Flathead Audubon Society. 215 families are current members of FAS. Our membership fee covers the basic expenses of the chapter: newsletter, monthly meetings, field trips, etc. The finance committee has decided upon a basic membership fee of \$20. This amount will still not cover special programs such as Owen Sowerwine and our education program. To begin to meet these expenses, we decided to offer a supporting membership at \$35. We encourage all who are able to subscribe to the supporting membership.

You can still join National Audubon, of course. Your membership fee will support National's many excellent nation-wide education and conservation programs, **but you will not be supporting your**

local chapter. With a National membership you receive both the Audubon magazine and the Flathead Audubon monthly newsletter. The National Audubon fee is \$20 for first-time members (\$15 for Seniors and Students), and then \$35 to renew your membership after that.

We strongly suggest that you join Flathead Audubon and then choose either to join National Audubon or not. Without local members the chapter will have to reduce its programs in the future.

Over the years, Flathead Audubon has been well supported by valley residents through donations and activities such as our annual seed sale and auctions. We hope this support will continue in the future and be supplemented by a large group of local chapter members.

Use the form on the last page to join now!

Our memberships all renew in October, rather than on the month the membership started. All memberships except those made after April 2011 must be renewed now. Without renewal, October will be the last month you receive *The Pileated Post*. We really need support this year, especially for our education activities.

Please include your e-mail address so we can contact you when special events come up, especially during the summer. And please consider signing up for the e-mail (color) version of the Newsletter. It's a good way to save your chapter \$20 a year and receive The Pileated Post conveniently straight to your computer. And we never rent or sell our e-mailing list to ANYONE.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ◆ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ◆ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ◆ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ◆ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.

Mysterious Black Swifts, continued from page 2 ...

One of the most perplexing matters in the life history of the Black Swift is its whereabouts in the winter. Work by Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, U.S. Forest Service, and Colorado Division of Wildlife personnel over the past two years may soon solve this mystery. In the summer of 2009 in Colorado, four Black Swifts were captured and outfitted with geolocator devices used to track movements. Last summer, three of the four birds were recaptured, and geolocators were obtained. As researchers interpret the data from these devices, there is much anticipation for the revelation of this great mystery of North American bird migration. Stay tuned.

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PRESIDENTIAL CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From
FAS President, Paula Smith



A WARM WELCOME TO A NEW PROGRAM YEAR

I am so privileged to serve as the President of Flathead Audubon during the coming year. I joined the FAS Board of Directors in September 2005. It turned out to be such a collegial group of people working together for a common purpose that I continued to stick around. During the intervening years, I have not only enjoyed the wonderful programs and field trips that FAS offers and served on the Publicity and Website committees, but I have also seen important developments within the chapter. During that time, FAS partnered with the Sustainability Fund to create the Conservation Education Program and hire a half-time professional Conservation Educator to implement it. A Strategic Plan was created with the Conservation Education Program at its core. You will hear a lot more about the program at our general membership meeting on September 12. During the coming months, you will also hear about continuing efforts to fund this valuable program.

This year we welcome three new board members to the FAS Board of Directors. Gael Bissell, Denny Olson and John Hughes are already involved members of the great FAS team.

In addition to our regular menu of monthly programs and field trips, we're looking forward to seeing you at the 5th Annual Raptor Day in Memory of Rod Ash on September 10, later that evening at Vaux's Happening, and on October 1 at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Work Day.

The 2011-2012 program year will also involve FAS in a very special event. Flathead Audubon will host the Montana Audubon *Wings Over the Big Sky* State Bird Festival in Kalispell on June 8-10, 2012. The Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell was selected as the venue for festival activities, which will include speakers, field trips and workshops. In addition to attending the festival, you may wish to volunteer with the Bird Festival Committee to help with various festival events. As festival planning evolves, you'll be hearing a lot more about volunteer opportunities. In the meantime, please share any ideas you have about festival activities, such as, speakers, workshops and field trips with a FAS board member or committee chair. Specific contacts are: Speakers and Workshop Presenters--Dan Casey and Denny Olson; Field Trips--Leslie Kehoe; and Volunteer Coordinators--Kay Mitchell, Gail Sullivan and Kathy Ross. We hope you will join in the fun, especially if this will be your first bird festival!

Together we Flathead Audubon members can look forward to a memorable 2011-12 program year!

River to Lake Initiative partners receive the Montana Wetland Stewardship Award Flathead Audubon among the Organizations Honored



The *Flathead River to Lake Initiative* was selected by the Montana Wetland Council to receive its 2011 Montana Wetland Stewardship Award. As one of the partners of the *Initiative*, Flathead Audubon is among the organizations receiving the Award, which recognizes the *Initiative* partners for outstanding achievement in building a diverse partnership and working with private landowners to protect and restore critical wetlands, riparian habitat and productive farm land along the Flathead River and the North Shore of Flathead Lake. The partnership has protected over 5,000 acres of critical lands, including 1,200 wetland acres, and restored over 5,000 feet of river banks.

The Montana Wetland Stewardship Award was presented on Thursday, May 26, at the State Capitol in Helena. Janet Ellis, Program Director of Montana Audubon, attended the ceremony on behalf of Flathead Audubon.

From Linda Winnie

Remember Your Flathead Audubon Society



Remember the Flathead Audubon Society with a bequest in your will.

You are a member of the Flathead Audubon Society and, in addition to enjoying *The Pileated Post*, the presentations at the monthly meetings, bird outings and activities, your membership supports the good work that FAS does, including its conservation education program and maintaining the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

You can leave a legacy in your name and insure that these programs continue by including Flathead Audubon Society in your will. You can include a bequest in the body of your will, or if you already have a will, it is as simple as adding your bequest as a codicil at the end of your will, without the necessity of redoing the entire document. And, if you wish, you can specify which FAS program your legacy bequest will support.





CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAM SHOWCASED



Did you know...Flathead Audubon Society has a Conservation Education Program that reaches nearly 5,000 Flathead kids and adults every year? Our general membership meeting on September 12 will showcase our Conservation Education Program and feature Ashley Mason, FAS Conservation Educator. Ashley will talk about what FAS offers in its educational programs and to whom. She will even demonstrate how she does it!

The Conservation Education Program began in 2007. The FAS vision was to create and implement an innovative education and community outreach program involving adults, families, youth and children that fosters knowledge and appreciation of the ecology and natural history of the Flathead Valley watershed and region. FAS also wanted to implement the program through cooperative partnerships with schools, diverse citizen groups and agencies. Program goals and objectives are expressed in FAS's Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The three primary goals identified are:

- * Understanding and experiencing the natural world
- * Increasing learning and appreciation of Northwest Montana
- * Fostering independent inquiry and conservation action



Today, this conservation education outreach is the **only** staffed program offered by a non-profit in the Flathead Valley that provides nature education free of charge. Each year, demand for the program increases. Among the accomplishments of which we are most proud is the scope of the program implemented by Flathead Audubon's Conservation Educator.

Ashley Mason comes with nearly 20 years of experience designing and providing conservation education programs in Northwest Montana. She has worked with such organizations as The Glacier Institute, Upward Bound, Glacier National Park, Swan Ecosystem Center, Elderhostel and the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium. She offers an exciting array of educational presentations about birds and our ecosystem to school classrooms, libraries, local organizations and civic groups, for young kids, at-risk youth, adults and elders. Flathead Audubon's educational services also offer 11 educational trunks that can be checked out. Ashley lives in Kalispell with her husband Doug and daughters Annika and Brynn.

Also at the September 12 meeting, Brian Marotz will be honored with Flathead Audubon's first Conservation Achievement Recognition of the new program year. Please join us on Monday, September 12 at 7 PM in the Community Room of The Summit, 205 Sunnyview Lane in Kalispell.



RAPTOR DAY 2011!



The 5th Annual Raptor Day will be held on Saturday, September 10, 8 AM - 4 PM at Lone Pine State Park Visitor's Center. This event is a memorial celebration for long-time conservationist Rod Ash and his life-time contribution to conservation. Events include two Field Trips, plus speakers and exhibits. Field Trips meet outside of the Visitor Center, and all programs are held in the meeting room inside the Visitor Center.

Field Trips

8 AM - Early Risers Bird Walk

10 AM - Family Bird Walk

Programs

11 AM - Tribute to Rod Ash

11:20 AM - Family Program Featuring Denny "Critterman" Olson

1:30 PM - Dan Casey of The American Bird Conservancy: "Raptors in the Northern Rockies"

2:30 PM - Byron Crow of The Montana Raptor Institute: "Raptors in the Mission Valley"



There will also be educational booths, including live birds with Wildlife Return, kids' activities and food. Co-sponsored by Flathead Audubon Society and Lone Pine State Park, with funding from the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, admission is free for Montana residents. For more information please contact Lone Pine State Park at 755-2706.

A Note from the FAS Conservation Educator

With the onset of fall, Flathead Audubon Society Educational Programs ramp up again. We offer an exciting and varied selection of conservation education programs and can even custom build them for your needs. Our programs are available to schools, home school groups, libraries, civic and other community organizations and community events. There are 11 educational trunks available for check out, including: Snowy Owls, Wetlands and Riparian Areas, Common Birds of the Flathead, Maggie the Magpie, Cavity Nesters, Hummingbirds, Binoculars and Field Guides. If you are interested in one of our educational programs, please contact the FAS Conservation Educator, Ashley Mason, at AudubonAshley@gmail.com.





MARK YOUR CALENDAR! OCTOBER 1 – OWEN SOWERWINE WORK DAY

This year's annual Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Work Day will be Saturday, October 1. We will be tackling several different types of projects: trail and bridge maintenance on the existing Owen Sowerwine trails, updating materials on the kiosk, continuing weed control along initial sections of the Greenridge Trail, and some still in the planning stage.

Please join us on October 1 to help with these projects. Work Day is a terrific opportunity to spend a Saturday morning outdoors with a great bunch of people and to help out with Flathead Audubon's management of Owen Sowerwine – and the refreshments at the close of the work session are always delicious!

We will meet at 9 AM at the Montessori School on Willow Glen Drive for a short orientation session, then break into small groups and head out into various parts of Owen Sowerwine to work under team leaders. Bring heavy work gloves, wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather – we will work rain or shine. Hand clip-pers and brush loppers will be useful – please bring them if you can. Some tools will also be available for those who can't bring their own, and other necessary equipment will be provided. Work will finish by noon.

As in previous years, our local Jane Lopp & Associates will be submitting an application for Flathead Audubon for a \$1000 Prudential Global Volunteer Day grant in recognition of our efforts on this Work Day. We need 30 participants on October 1 in order to qualify for this grant, so please plan on coming to help – and bring a friend. With the backing of Jane and Bob Lopp and all the volunteers who have turned out for past Owen Sowerwine Work Days, Flathead Audubon has received several Prudential Global Volunteer Day grants in the last few years. Please help us do it again this year!

Flathead Audubon sends a huge Thank You to all who have participated in past Owen Sowerwine Work Days, and a special *Thank You* to Jane Lopp & Associates for their ongoing support.
Linda Winnie, Co-Chair OSNA Committee



BEAR WITH US...

While we remind you that the birds still have plenty to eat naturally, so keep your bird feeder empty until our black and grizzly friends start their long winter's nap. Make sure your dog and cat keep their food cleaned up and pick up fruit that has dropped from your trees. Being a good citizen in these parts requires a little extra effort!



AUDUBON SPRING & SUMMER FIELD TRIPS VERY POPULAR (THIS PAGE AND NEXT)



CELEBRATING MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2011 IN SWAN LAKE



On a very wet, cold May 7, 2011, thirteen hardy birders joined in celebrating, despite the weather, our migratory birds, with a field trip to the Swan Lake area. Folks met at the parking area outside of the Swan

area campground where field trip leader Kathy Ross talked about the amazing journeys of many of our migratory birds, the increased obstacles they are encountering each year on their winter and spring journeys and emphasized the importance of keeping these magnificent feathered friends in our awareness. Birders had a walking tour of the still-closed campground where Varied Thrush sang in the distance while Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Dark-eyed Juncos and Chestnut-back Chickadees made up-close guest

appearances.

The group then walked across to the Swan Lake boat launch where they were able to see Horned Grebes, Red-necked Grebes and migrating Loons all at the same time on the lake.

After the excitement at the lake, the group then carpooled to the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge, a favored area of Wilson's Snipes, Northern Harriers and nesting Sandhill Cranes. The cool drizzly morning ended with the sun peeking through a heavy cloud layer and the appearance of an American Kestrel, Vesper Sparrow and Red-naped Sapsucker, making the total number of species for the day 26.

Kathy Ross,
Trip Leader & Photographer



THE ANNUAL COHEN STROLL

Photo kindly taken by Thomas M. Brown, Ph.D., President of GeneCTAr.Com, LLC, who accompanied us on our Fifth Annual Cohen Stroll. Others joined after this initial photo was taken, for a total of 16 (ages 10-90) joining us on this rare sunny morning, to honor Marty Cohen on his 90th birthday. The Yellow-headed Blackbird males had just returned to the Ball Field Pond and we watched beautiful displays from them as well as Red-winged Blackbirds. Common Golden-eyes, Hooded Mergansers and Red-necked



Grebes were also showing off their courtship plumage and postures on the pond. Along the Whitefish River we were treated to eagles and ospreys soaring overhead and grouse and Dark-eyed Juncos scratching in the duff. Song Sparrows were singing and Tree Swallows were swooping. Corvids, primarily magpies and ravens, were well represented. 19 bird species were heard or spotted in all. We look forward to Marty's 91st! The photo shows Marty Cohen, in white hat, and his son Richard, with beard, surrounded by birding friends. Linda deKort, Trip Leader

LAZY CREEK FIELD TRIP



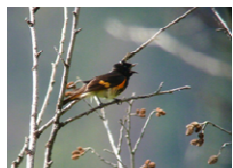
There were about 25 people on the field trip. We had great views of singing Northern Waterthrush, Hammond's Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Grey Catbird,

Song Sparrow, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, American Robin, Violet-green Swallow, and Tree Swallow.

Bruce Tannehill, Trip Leader

(Photo by Ed Folkwein)

TALLY LAKE WARBLER WEEKEND



About 20 people attended the group campout the weekend of June 10 - 12. Birding was already in progress Friday afternoon as people began to arrive. All species seen or heard were posted on a board. As the weekend progressed, the list grew to 49 species!

In spite of the cold and rain, we charged around in the wet grass, the forest, the willows, and the slightly flooded open spaces with big grins and "oh my" of delight from all. The weather had no dampening effect on the frenzy of the breeding birds either.

Susannah Casey kept a fire going through the various downpours. When it stopped raining, chairs would appear around the fire as wet feet were raised for toasting. In the nearby willows, Yellow Warblers and Yellowthroats glowed like Christmas ornaments. A Warbling Vireo and a Yellow-rumped Warbler kept up continual song all day, along with Western Tanagers, Black-headed

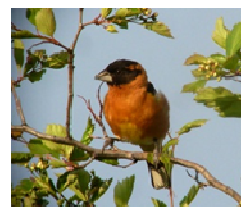
Grosbeaks, and Swainson's Thrushes. You could bird from your chair!

On our walks from camp we pished for Redstarts, saw wild orchids, watched osprey, mergansers and a dipper on the river, and took many digiscope pictures as small birds flew back and forth with twigs in their beaks.

On Saturday afternoon, the Whitefish Institute people came and presented information about the interesting geological history and the hydrology of Tally Lake. It is a very deep carbon-sequestering lake unique among all our lakes in Montana.

Thanks especially to Dan Casey for keeping the list and sharing his knowledge. It was a weekend of learning for all levels of birding ability, and a great time for friendship and community.

Jill Fanning, Enthusiastic Participant
(Photos by Dan Casey)



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK IN THE RAIN



Out of 40 people who expressed an interest in the field trip, 24 participated in the Flathead Audubon birding trip to Glacier National Park led by Steve Gniadek on May 28, 2011. Beginning at 8 AM, rather than 6 or 7 AM, probably encouraged some who travel longer distances to participate, but the cool, rainy weather discouraged others. Despite the light drizzle that persisted nearly all morning, we found 27 bird species in the Lower McDonald Creek, Lake McDonald, and Fish Creek areas. Highlights included 4 Western Grebes, a pair of Harlequin Ducks, a pair of American Dippers, and 5 species of warblers – Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, and Townsend's Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, and Common Yellowthroat. Most of the group disbanded by 11:30 AM, but the few who remained saw an Osprey and a Pileated Woodpecker.



MANY THANKS!



Note of Thanks: To everyone who brought items to sell in the Flathead Audubon Silent Auction at the May 2011 Potluck, and especially to Rod McIver, who brought his whole trailer full of plants and donated his proceeds. After 3 years of providing us with his healthy hardy trees, shrubs, and perennials, just imagine how many yards and gardens around the Flathead Valley have Rod McIver plants growing in them!

Editor's Note: At the February 11, 2011 FAS General Meeting, Flathead Audubon presented a Conservation Achievement Recognition to the Bigfork High School Cave Club and their sponsor, Hans Bodenhamer for their work mapping caves of the Flathead Valley and Glacier National Park. Following the presentation, Cave Club members gave a program showing photos of their work and talked of the invitation they had received to map caves in the Grand Canyon. Flathead Audubon and individual members donated to their trip fund. The Club did take their trip to the Grand Canyon this past spring. This summer, past president Bob Lee received the following update and thank you from Club Sponsor, Hans Bodenhamer. Photos of the trip are the subject of "For E-Your Eyes Only" this month. All other photos received for the E-Page are being held for next month's issue.

"The trip was an incredible success and would not have been possible without support from the Kalispell Audubon Society and its members.

The work was fun, but exhausting. Five members of the cave club participated in the work trip. We worked closely with Steve Rice, park hydrologist. We walked over 30 miles to access caves in two areas, worked in 11 caves, which involved traveling through over 2 miles of cave passes. We established and repeated photomonitoring, taking nearly 500 in-cave photos and relocating and retaking views of nearly 100 photos that had been taken in the 1960's and 1980's. We also established descriptive (VIP) monitoring for macroscopic biology (scat, bones, etc.), bat sign, mineral features, archeology, and cave climate (temperature and humidity). The fieldwork we completed in one week in the Grand Canyon was equivalent to what took us five years to complete in Glacier National Park. We are just now starting to input the data into GIS. Hopefully, we will finish that part of the project in early summer.

Please share this note with your membership. We truly would not have been able to undertake this project without the support of the Audubon and its members."

Thank you.

Hans Bodenhamer

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:

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**22ND TRUMPETER SWAN
SOCIETY CONFERENCE**

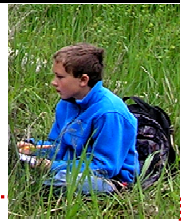
OCT. 10-14, 2011, POLSON, MONTANA

For conference information, contact John Cornely (303) 933-9861; johncornely@msn.com or Madeleine Linck (763) 694-7851; ttss@threeriversparkdistrict.org



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KIDZ

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“GET OUT!” INSPIRES STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

Each spring Flathead Audubon Society coordinates, in conjunction with the Flathead Conservation District, a spring peer mentoring program. This year the students coined it the “GET OUT!” Program. One of the Flathead High School students designed a beautiful t-shirt that all of the high school students wore to distinguish them as mentors.

This is a cross-age youth mentoring project in which high school students who are at risk of dropping out become mentors to elementary school students. Students travel to Owen Sowerwine Natural Area where the high school mentors lead the younger students through a series of stations teaching watershed science, habitat restoration and bird identification. This year, high school students from the Flathead Orion Program worked with students from Fair-Mont-Egan and Kalispell Montessori.

This program has been extremely popular with the teachers and students involved. We are seeking funding to improve

upon and expand the program.

It's one way to get the conservation message and experience out to students who might not get it otherwise. Flathead Audubon is one of the few conservation organizations that is getting conservation education out to underserved populations.

Here is a poem that was written by Tyler Hong (Kalispell Montessori School grade 5) while he was participating in this program.

The sun is shining.
The breeze is slightly blowing.
The forest is so peaceful.

Today is so warm.
Insects are buzzing softly.
Many birds are flying around.

Leaves are crackling.
A lot of sticks are snapping.
While I'm walking through the woods.

If you would like more information about this program or any of Flathead Audubon Society's education programs, please contact Ashley Mason, FAS Conservation Educator, at AudubonAshley@gmail.com.

The FAS board needs help in finding sponsorships for our conservation educator program. This outreach is the only staffed program offered by a non-profit in the Flathead Valley that provides nature education free of charge. We believe, to paraphrase Jane Goodall, “Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help, shall this last best place remain.”

Through our community and family programs and our school-related programs, close to 5,000 members of our community were served this past year. One of the very successful programs initiated was matching high school students with elementary students. The high school students mentored the younger kids in bird and native plant identification and pulling of noxious weeds on state lands. The high school students intentionally selected for this program were at high risk of dropping out of school. The teacher of the high school students wrote, “In addition to boosting self-esteem, the FAS project helped my students realize the importance of being in tune with nature...I sincerely hope that we can make this project fly again. It was a success beyond what we can easily measure.”

We are able to accomplish all this with a dedicated Conservation Educator and much support from our volunteer board and membership.

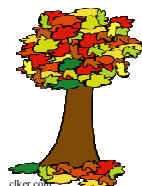
In order to sustain our healthy outreach program in the future, we need to raise \$20,000 to pay for the valuable services of our Conservation Educator. We are asking local businesses to help in this endeavor. Their contribution will be listed in our printed and electronic newsletter (readership 500) and will remain on our website, which received over 136,000 hits last year. If \$200 or more is contributed, it will be listed on the “Supporting Members” page of the Flathead Audubon website with a link to the business website if requested. As our newsletter goes to press, we have a challenge grant from The Cinnabar Foundation for \$1000, for which we need a match of \$1000 in order to qualify.

If you would like to help with this endeavor or have suggestions for other fund raising activities please contact a board member or, better yet, attend our next board meeting which is Tuesday, September 6 in the conference room at Jane Lopp and Associates, 295 Third Ave E.N. Potluck at 5:30 and board meeting at 6:00. You are always welcome.

From Linda DeKort, Education Committee



SEPTEMBER 2011



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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: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

FlockMaster - John Kyle: jkyle@fastmail.us

Conservation Educator - Ashley Mason: AudubonAshley@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Paula Smith	(paulabobsmith@centurytel.net)	837-0181
Vice-President	Bob Lopp	(boblopp@bresnan.net)	752-7026
Secretary	Gail Sullivan	932 Columbia Ave., Whitefish 59937	862-5775
Treasurer	Bruce Tannehill	(tanneland@bresnan.net)	862-4548
Past-President	Bob Lee	(rml3@centurytel.net)	837-4467

DIRECTORS

2009-2012	Dennis Hester	(kiyotee@bresnan.net)	755-4964
2009-2012	Steve Gniadek	(grayjaybro@yahoo.com)	892-7406
2009-2012	Lewis Young	68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917	889-3492
2011-2012	Ben Young	(youngb@sd5.k12.mt.us)	257-2286
2010-2013	Ansley Ford	(aew333@yahoo.com)	857-6788
2010-2013	Jan Wassink	(jan@lamaregistry.com)	257-3014
2011-2014	John Hughes	(johnhughes@bresnan.net)	261-2506
2011-2014	Gael Bissell	(rickandgael@montanasky.us)	755-8709
2011-2014	Denny Olson	(docwild@centurytel.net)	249-3987
2011-2014	Richard Kuhl	867 North Main, Kalispell 59901	257-5793

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Christmas Bird Count	Dan Casey	857-3143	Sales	Jill Fanning	862-8070
Conservation	Lewis Young	889-3492	Refuges	Kathy Ross	837-3837
	Steve Gniadek	892-7406		(mtkat@montanaport.net)	
Education	Ansley Ford	857-6788	Website	Jan Wassink	257-3014
Field Trips	VACANT		Wetlands	Donna Pridmore	257-7077
Finance	Mike Fanning	862-8070		(djpridmore@gmail.com)	
Donations	Mary Nelesen	755-7678			
Hospitality	Lois Drobish	756-7405			
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	Jill Fanning	862-8070			
Owen Sowerwine	Richard Kuhl	257-5793			
Natural Area	Linda Winnie	755-1406			
Newsletter	Linda Winnie	755-1406			
	Kay Mitchell	756-8130			
Nominations	Linda deKort	755-3704			
Program	Richard Kuhl	257-5793			
Publicity	Paula Smith	837-0181			

MONTANA AUDUBON

P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
443-3949

www.MTAudubon.org

Executive Director: Steve Hoffman

shoffman@mtaudubon.org

Board President: Dan Sullivan
443-4229



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

Basic Membership \$20
(Pays for newsletter and operating costs)

Supporting Membership \$35
(Extra \$15 funds local projects such as grants, scholarships, meetings, and Christmas Bird Count)

Additional Donation of \$ _____

to Education Fund ☐
Owen Sowerwine Fund ☐
Wherever needed ☐

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____ - _____

Email _____

How do you wish to receive the Pileated Post?

Electronic copy/email ☐ Paper copy/U.S. mail ☐

Mail this form with your check to:

Flathead Audubon Society Membership
20 Hanson Doyle Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937

FOR E-YOUR EYES ONLY

(SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FOR READERS OF THE ELECTRONIC POST)

BIGFORK CAVE CLUB MONITORS CAVES AT THE GRAND CANYON A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY



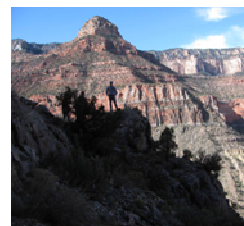
Hiking In



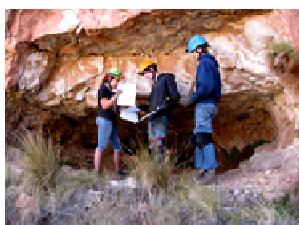
Starting Down Day



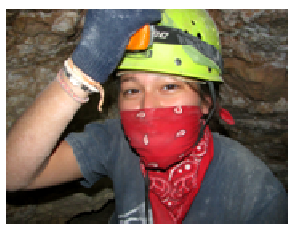
Jeanie Off the Edge



Nick



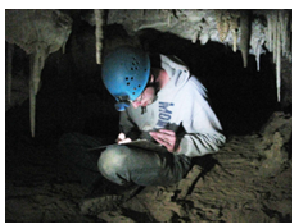
Starting Monitoring



Hard at Work



Crawl



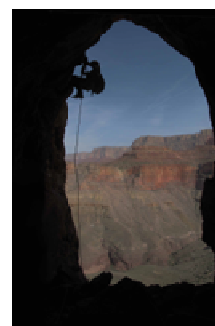
Nick Helping with
Photo Monitoring



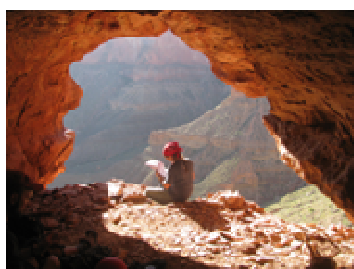
Measuring Temp
& Humidity



Matching Photo View
from 1984



Looking Out



Unique Outdoor Classroom



The Team



Hero Shot