



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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A Case for Conservation Education, Part 2

by Ashley Mason, FAS Conservation Educator



Everyone has been sick at our house. After several weeks of colds and flu we are also a little grumpy. Last week we were having “one of those days,” the kind that seem to be on the constant verge of melt down. At about 3:00, I told my kids to get their boots and coats on. “We’re going for a hike.” “A hike?” they asked. “Yes.” I said. “We are going to Owen Sowerwine and we don’t have a lot of time, so get a move on! Momma NEEDS to get out of here and get some REAL nature. NOW!” They are used to my frequent pleas for getting outside, so they got in the car as quickly as they could.

The minute we hit the trail, our irritability disappeared, the way it always does when we embark on an unpressured outdoor exploration. I put them in the lead. This wasn’t about making it to a particular destination; it was about discovering what was going on in the world at that moment in time. We were a harmonious team again, exploring the world together. As we sat on a log eating our granola bars and counting Bohemian Waxwings, I thought, “No wonder there is so much discord in the world. We live inside, behind our screens, being bombarded by negative information. The stress builds, affecting our mental and physical health. We then pour money into cures and solutions, and yet one of the most profound salves for our health and well-being seems to be right outside our back door. Consider these statistics:

The CDC reports that between 2003 and 2007



the number of children in the U.S. diagnosed with ADHD increased 22%. 2.7 million U.S. children are currently receiving medical treatment for ADHD at an annual cost of \$31.6 billion. And yet....The Journal of Environment and Behavior published a study recently revealing that children with ADHD who played in natural settings were better able to focus and concentrate than those who played in indoor or paved areas.

The WHO warns that sedentary lifestyle is a global public health concern. According to the CDC in 2008, more than one third of children and adolescents in the U.S. were overweight or obese and about 30% of adults. And yet...studies conducted in Norway and Sweden compared the fitness level of children who played regularly on uneven, natural surfaces to those who played on flat playgrounds. Those who played in natural areas after one year tested better for overall fitness, balance and agility.

Life is stressful these days. The poor economy has left many people depressed, jobless, homeless, penniless and otherwise in survival mode. And yet.... the results of a study conducted at Texas A & M University show that people recovering from a stressful experience, who are exposed to images of nature, experience an immediate, dramatic drop in muscle tension and pulse rate. In addition, a 2003 report produced at Cornell University concluded that children who live in regular contact with nature fare
(Conservation, continued on page 9 ...)



APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, April 9, 2012: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. 7 PM at The Summit. Blake Passmore presents “Glacier National Park From the Summit.” Details on page 3.

Monday, April 2, 2012: FAS Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN. All are welcome.

Saturday, March 31—Sunday, April 1: Last Chance to participate in FREEZOUT LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA FIELD TRIP! Call Dan Casey to sign up—857-3143.



BIRD OF THE MONTH

Article & Photo By Jeannie Marcure

THE ELUSIVE WILSON'S SNIPE

Because they've only heard about it as the object of a practical joke involving a "snipe hunt," many non-birders think that the snipe is a mythical bird. This rather common prank involves taking a tenderfoot into the woods at night, arming them with a flashlight and a gunny sack and sending them out to "hunt snipe!" Such hunters are usually encouraged to make strange noises and wander aimlessly through woods or marshes in the effort to bag this elusive bird. The snipe was probably chosen as the object of this prank because of its elusive nature and of course, such a hunt is doomed to be unsuccessful allowing much teasing and ridicule of the hunter when he or she finally admits defeat!

I have to confess that although I was never persuaded to go on a snipe hunt, I was surprised, as a beginning birder, to find out that snipes do actually exist. Now a couple of decades later, I find it hard to imagine a spring without the sound of a snipe "winnowing" over a wet area or the sight of a snipe standing on a fencepost making its distinctive "kit kit kit" call. If you're not familiar with these sounds or just want a little touch of spring, listen to them at: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wilsons_snipe/id/ac.

Wilson's Snipe was recently recognized as a species separate from the Common Snipe of Europe and Asia. Although the two species are quite similar, the white edge on the wing is narrower on the Wilson's and it also typically has 16 tail feathers rather than the 14 found on the Common. However, it needs to be noted that these numbers vary and the Common Snipe may have from 12 to 18 tail feathers. If observed in flight, the Wilson's Snipe has a dark underwing and a white belly, while the Common Snipe has distinctive white bars on the under-wing.

Wilson's Snipe is found throughout North America in its preferred habitat of flooded fields, lakes, rivers and marshes, and can be quite hard to spot, except during the spring mating season when their distinctive sounds will alert you to their presence. The "winnowing" sound is not a call but is rather made by the wind rushing through the tail feathers of the male as he defends his territory and attracts mates with spectacular aerial dives. The "kit kit kit" call is made when the snipe is on the ground—atop a fence post near a nest site or slinking through a wet area, almost invisible as it blends perfectly with its habitat.



At 10.5 inches, the snipe is a rather stocky shorebird with an unmistakable long bill. This bill is used to probe in mud and water for their favorite meals of insects, worms, and crustaceans along with some vegetation and seeds. According to Cornell Lab, the snipe's bill is flexible and the tips can be opened and closed with no movements at the base of the bill. Also, the tip of the bill has sensory pits which allow the snipe to feel its prey deep in the mud. Dark brown overall, with cream colored stripes on the back, the snipe has a distinctive brown eye stripe and barred flanks. The eye is set rather far back on the head, which I think gives it a rather inquisitive look. Similar species are the Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitcher, but both lack the back striping of the snipe and in breeding plumage are more reddish in appearance. Dowitchers are typically present in our area only during migration, while snipes commonly nest here.

After a spring courtship during which the male performs amazing aerial displays of dives accompanied by the distinctive "winnowing" sound, a cup shaped nest of woven grasses is built on the ground, usually close to or surrounded by water. According to Cornell, the clutch size is almost always 4 eggs, which the female incubates for approximately 20 days. During this time, it's common to see the male standing guard on a nearby fence post, alerting the female to any dangers with his "kit kit kit" call. Within hours of hatching, the precocial chicks are out of the nest and foraging for food. It is thought that the male takes the first two chicks to hatch and cares for them, while the female takes the last two. Apparently, the parents have no contact after that. The chicks fledge in about 20 days.

Most snipes in our area are migratory and should start arriving and claiming nesting sites in late April or early May. If you want to observe these fascinating birds this spring, learn to recognize their sounds and head to your favorite wetland. My favorite place to see and photograph snipes on posts and also in aerial displays is the Ninepipes area. Stop by any of the small wet areas or flooded fields and listen for the distinctive sounds. If you hear the call of the snipe, look closely at the nearby posts. Perhaps you'll be lucky enough to spot a snipe guarding a nest! Enjoy your "snipe hunt!" I hope you get a great picture!

Last minute Tax Filers! - Remember to check the box on your Montana tax form for a donation to "Watchable Wildlife." All creatures great and small depend on our generosity, either great or small!



April Program

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK FROM THE SUMMIT



Blake Passmore has summited many peaks in Glacier National Park. He is a member of the Glacier Mountaineering Society. He shares his passion for climbing through his passion for writing. Blake has published two volumes of *Climb Glacier National Park*. As a frequent contributor for an on-line climbing community, he has written on 30 peaks, 29 routes and over 20 articles to help others enjoy the place he loves so much.

Climb Glacier National Park grew out of challenges Blake encountered while climbing in Glacier Park. One challenge was locating the correct route and completing climbs. Many route descriptions are difficult to follow, due to changes in climate, topography and even trail locations. The guidebook is a solution to that problem. Blake recently learned that his first volume was used in a rescue of an injured climber in the park.

This year Blake and his climbing buddies are scheduled to climb Kintla Peak and Kinnerly Peak, as well as peaks near Lake McDonald and in the Sperry Basin for *Climb Glacier National Park, Volume Three*. Some of his favorite summit views are from Mount Cleveland, Never Laughs Mountain, Chief Mountain, Rising Wolf Mountain, Heavens Peak and Lone Walker Mountain. He also plans to publish *Explore the Jewel Basin*.

Blake is a mental health professional in the Flathead Valley. He and his wife, Kathleen, are both natives and feel blessed to raise their children, Brendan, Alyssa and Bhavani in the valley. Blake also enjoys fly fishing, soccer, running, mountain biking and photography.

Join us at 7 PM on Monday, April 9, at The Summit and learn what it's like to stand on the summits of Glacier National Park.



MAY POTLUCK!

COME ONE, COME ALL! Flathead Audubon's May General Meeting and Potluck will be held at the **Whitefish Community Center on May 14**. Doors open at 5 PM, Potluck Dinner at 6 PM. Start your spring cleaning right away and gather good nature-related items to donate for the Silent Auction. Successful items from the past include bird houses and feeders, bird books, flowers, growing plants and trees, jewelry, art work, note cards, and many others. Full directions to the center will be printed in the next *Pileated Post*. Mark your Calendar Now!



BEAUTY OF BIRDS

An Invitation from Instructor Ashley Mason



Join us in April for the 2012 Beauty of Birds class at Flathead High School! This year students will learn from some of the Valley's foremost experts on bird biology, behavior, song and identification. The class meets each Wednesday night in April from 6—8PM at Flathead High School. April 4, biologist Bob Lee will discuss the basics of bird classification, anatomy, physiology, and flight. April 11, students will learn

how to identify birds of the Flathead Valley with Neal Brown. Bruce Tannehill will provide a closer look at bird songs and calls on April 18 and the course will wrap up April 25 with a field trip to local birding hotspots lead by Dan Casey. With the delights of spring underfoot, this is a program that you don't want to miss! Register by calling Debbie Newman at Flathead High School at 751-3461. The cost is \$10 per



EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22!

- ◆ **Friday, April 20, 6 PM - 9 PM: Earth Day Evening Event** at FVCC with Crown of Continent Choir followed by presentations.
- ◆ **Saturday, April 21, 9 AM — 11 AM: Cohen Birthday Stroll** (see Field Trips List)
- ◆ **Saturday, April 21, 9 AM – 2 PM: FVCC Family Festival** - events and booths for kids of all ages. These events are a collaborative effort by FVCC Renewable Resources Club and Citizens for a Better Flathead. Call 756-8993 for additional information.





CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From
Bob Lopp, FAS Vice President



ARE YOU A BIRDWATCHER OR A BIRDER?

"But in the early 1970's, we were not birdwatching. We were *birding*, and that made all the difference. We were out to seek, to discover, to chase, to learn, to find as many different kinds of birds as possible – and, in friendly competition, to try to find more of them than the next birder," quoting from Kenn Kaufman in Kingbird Highway, the Biggest Year in the Life of an Extreme Birder, published in 1997. In January 1972 at the age of 18, Kenn Kaufman began his "Big Year!"

Kaufman credits the Peterson's bird guides with capturing his serious interest in birding. In 1953, Peterson and James Fisher made a trek around America and Peterson recorded a total of 572 species seen in a footnote in Wild America. That was followed in 1976 by G. Stuart Keith with 598 species! The race was on!

How do you know where to look for birds? Olin Sewall Pettingill's Guide to Bird Finding published in two volumes, eastern and western editions, has a chapter for each state describing hundreds of good birding spots. Local Audubon chapters and local birders were a great help to Kaufman as he hitchhiked and traveled all around the country in 1972. The American Birding Association, founded in 1970, connected Kaufman with active, intense birders. "They knew things that were not in any of my books," commented Kaufman. He came to rely on long haul truck drivers to cover large distances in a short time. I highly recommend his book for good reading, a boy on a quest!

When "The Big Year" with Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black came to the theaters in Kalispell, Jane and I had to see it! How would they spoof about birding? It was fun to see all of the great bird photos and to laugh about birding groupies we have been with over the years.

But Roger Ebert probably said it best in his movie review, "There is some great bird photography here. I wish there had been more. I think I may have seen Jack Black falling down enough for this lifetime. The Big

Year' is getting the enthusiastic support of the Audubon Society, and has an innocence and charm that will make it appealing for families, especially those who have had enough whales and dolphins for the year." I may have to pick up a copy, "just for the birds!"



bestclipartblog.com

Family Forestry Expo

The Family Forestry Expo is a weekend event for families which gives a hands-on experience to the role forests play in our everyday lives. Expo participants explore how the different parts of a forest are connected to make up a dynamic living system, how people and all parts of the environment are dependent on one another and how each affects the other. The FFX will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Trumbull Creek Educational Forest just north of Kalispell. On Saturday, 12 May, there will be a free "loggers lunch," demonstrations, exhibits, FVCC's Logger Sports competition demonstration and forest walk with many different educational stops ... including one by Flathead Audubon.

Flathead Audubon has had a booth and activities at the Expo for many years. We are looking for volunteers to help. So if you would enjoy being outdoors on a spring day talking to people about the forests and ecosystems, please contact Ashley Mason, FAS Conservation Educator, at AudubonAshley@gmail.net.

Whether you are a volunteer, participant or just want to see what it is all about, everyone is encouraged to come on out on Saturday, 12 May, from 0900 until about 1600.

From Bob Lee



wikiimages

BIRDING

By G. S. Bauman



I hear it I hear it where is that
bird over here no there listen
tweets twitterings there's more
than one that's not a bird those
aren't tweets – listen – tree-bough
squeaks there it is! That's a shaking
leaf see it flit flutter hover it's
a bird, it's upside down – what an
eye catch! - it's a leaf on a
broken branch go get yourself a ladder
bit bigger than a hummingbird
hear the high pitch patter
creaking branches noooo - listen
that's the sound – zeee – zeee, zeee
a high pitch with a warbled end
it's a kinglet has a golden crown
it's a warbler that's a ruby
crowned kinglet where there! –
upside down foraging for budworms
bark beetles, aphids that bird's
all around see – now it's on the
serviceberry bush it's in the maple
no the pine there it goes again
that's not a kinglet that's a warbler
don't move – oh there it goes gone!
no – it's near! over here! sssssh

SPRING/EARLY SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

All FAS field trips are free and open to the public and are geared for all ages and levels of field experience. They are led by area biologists, retired professionals, and some of the best birders in the region. For all Field Trips, dress for the weather, bring binoculars or spotting scope if you have them, wear sturdy footwear, and drive and pull off the road safely. For more information, contact Kathy Ross, 837-3738, or Gael Bissell, 261-2255, or the individual field trip leader listed below.



SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 8 AM: LOWER VALLEY WATERFOWL TOUR. Join FAS for a 3-4 hour guided tour of wetlands in the Somers area and the north shore of Flathead Lake. We will search for resident and migrating waterfowl, but also should see a wide variety of raptors and early songbirds. This a great time to bone up on your ducks, and get into the spirit of spring. Join us for an early morning of spring bird watching. Meet at Park n' Ride at the intersection of Hwys 93 and 82 at 8:00 AM. Contact Leslie Kehoe 837- 4467 for details.

SUNDAYS, APRIL 29 and MAY 6, 13, 20, 27, 8 AM to 10 AM: BIGFORK BIRD CLUB OUTINGS. Join Neal Brown for a morning of birding with emphasis on nesting waterfowl. Park at the east entrance of the Bigfork Nature Trail. (Swan River Road) Follow signs to the Bigfork Bird Club Blind (approximately 400 meters). A spotting scope will be provided. Bring binoculars, water and snacks. Arrive and leave as you please.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 9 AM to 11 AM: FIFTH ANNUAL COHEN STROLL. Meet at the ball fields off Highway 40. Enter through Monterra subdivision and turn right at Youth Ball Fields. The first Cohen Stroll honored Marty's 85th birthday: this is the fifth Cohen Stroll commemorating Marty's 91st birthday as well as Earth Day! We will wander along the pond and river on accessible trails searching for waterfowl, shorebirds, woodpeckers, and corvids. Please come and join us for this two-hour morning stroll.

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 8 AM to 1 PM: FIELD TRIP TO SWAN LAKE AREA AND THE SWAN LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY. Meet at 8 AM at Swan River School, east end of main parking area and then carpool from there to Swan Lake and the refuge. Please bring binoculars, warm clothes if needed, and a snack or lunch. Boots are appropriate in case it is muddy. It is a good time to see and hear American Bitterns, Sandhill Cranes, and Bald Eagles, along with returning warblers, sparrows, swallows, and occasionally flocks of snow geese and swans. Please contact Kathy Ross at 837-3837 to sign up and for more information.

SATURDAY, MAY 12: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AT THE NATIONAL BISON RANGE. The main event is the opening of the splendid Red Sheep Mountain Drive for the summer season, weather and road conditions permitting. This is a wonderful drive through the range which travels through a variety of habitats, a great place to see a broad range of birds. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with many activities for all ages. For more information and to sign up for a beginner's bird walk as well as other events, call the National Bison Range at 406-644-2211.

SATURDAY, MAY 12: SPRING LOON CENSUS DAY and JULY 14th (JULY LOON DAY). Montana Loon Society and the Montana Common Loon Working Group need volunteers to help observe and count loons on lakes throughout northwest Montana on or close to this date. Contact one of the following folks for survey forms and information. For areas west of Kalispell, call Gael Bissell at 751-4580; for Tally/Stillwater, call Laura Holmquist at 758-3501; for southern Flathead Lake and Mission Valley, call Janene Lichtenberg at 883-2888; for the Swan Valley call Mark Ruby at office 837-7531 or cell (207-7015); for Troy, call Mandy Rockwell (295-7463); for Libby, call Jenny Holifield (293-6211); for West Valley and Upper Whitefish Lake, call Chris Forestall (751-2258); for the Eureka area, call Christie Ferruzzi at 882-4451; and for Glacier National Park, call Jamie Belt at 888-7986.

SATURDAY, MAY 12: SPRING LOONS IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. Here is a chance to volunteer in one of Montana's most beautiful places. Volunteers with some bird experience or previous training are needed to look for and count loons in Glacier National Park. Call Jamie Belt at 888-7986 to sign up.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 7 PM: TIPS, TRICKS, AND INEXPENSIVE WAYS TO ADD NATIVE PLANTS TO YOUR LANDSCAPE, AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER IN COLUMBIA FALLS. Flathead Chapter of MT Native Plant Society presents a talk by Laura Law. After a thirty minute presentation, participants are invited to walk a short distance to her house to view the work she has done incorporating native plants into her own small yard. Share the joy of the spring bloomers!

FIELD TRIPS, continued on next page ...

CAN YOU HELP? VOLUNTEER MONITORS FOR OWEN SOWERWINE ARE NEEDED

From Linda Winnie

Our *fifth* season of Volunteer Monitoring at Owen Sowerwine began March 1! Volunteers are needed to make monitoring visits to the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) throughout this coming summer.

There are **2 ways you can help:**

1. Take an OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Form with you *whenever you visit OSNA*.

Record what you see and hear, and mail the form to Richard Kuhl (address on form).

2. Do a scheduled monitoring visit.

Only *3 more volunteers are needed* to fill the summer schedule – one for each of these still -untaken summer monitoring periods:

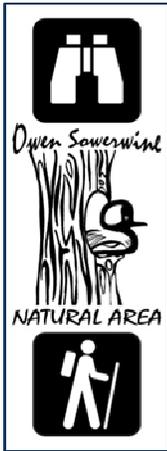
July 1-15

July 16-31

August 1-15

The job is simple. Make one monitoring visit during the period you choose, and mail your report to Richard. For more information or to sign up for one of these periods, please call or email me (755-1406 or lindawin@centurytel.net). Volunteers are provided with a monitoring form and map, and get a reminder call or email shortly before their scheduled monitoring visit.

The OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form can be printed from the FAS website (www.flatheadaudubon.org), and is also available at FAS meetings. A trail map that helps you locate the places referred to on the form can also be obtained from the FAS website, and at FAS meetings.



DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THEM!

As the spring birding season begins, you might want to get hooked up with one of these great citizen science bird data programs



eBird: A real-time, online checklist program that has revolutionized the way birders report and access information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

An international network, eBird shares observations with a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists. In time, these data will become the foundation for a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond.

A birder simply enters online when, where, and how they went birding, then fills out a checklist of all the birds seen and heard during the outing. eBird provides various options for data gathering, including point counts, transects, and area searches.

For more information, go to www.ebird.org.

OspreyWatch: A new project that aims to provide the first global perspective on Ospreys, and the health of the aquatic environments on which they rely. The mission of OspreyWatch is to engage citizens in collecting information on breeding Ospreys, and submitting this data through an internet platform that allows observers to map nests, log observations, upload photos, and interact. Information entered into the platform will be immediately accessible to users and will be summarized following the breeding season.

A project of the Center for Conservation Biology, OspreyWatch combines observations from citizen scientists on a large enough spatial scale to address three of the most pressing issues facing aquatic ecosystems: global climate change, depletion of fish stocks, and environmental contaminants. The Center for Conservation Biology is a research and education organization at the College of William and Mary, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Visit <http://www.osprey-watch.org> to learn more.

FIELD TRIPS, continued from previous page

SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 9:30 AM: NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY WALK AT JOHNSON MOUNTAIN TERRACES. A 2-3 mile, easy, hike along moist, mossy rock terraces with a variety of diminutive plants. Meet at the rest area near the soccer fields across from Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish. Bring lunch, water, and your favorite plant ID book. Call Betty Kuropat (892-0129) for details and to sign up.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM: NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY FIELD TRIP ON COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN. Join Glacier National Park Biologist Tara Carolin on a slow two-hour 2-3 mile evening walk up Columbia Mountain. Enjoy spring and early summer blooms along the forested trail that also offers lovely rock outcrops in the sunshine. We could potentially find nearly 100 plant species. Meet at the Columbia Mountain parking lot and trailhead. Bring a sack supper if you like. Info: Tara at 888-7863, taraywc@yahoo.com.





activerain.com

PLANTING THIS SPRING?



midwestnativeplants.org

Native plants are the way to go. Compared to nursery exotics, native plants are lower maintenance, less invasive, need less water, and have great wildlife value. Native plants have co-evolved with native wildlife, so they provide the kind of food, shelter and nesting sites that native birds and wildlife need, and often require.

The Montana Native Plant Society offers information on the selection and use of native plants, and a list of Sources of Native Plants, which includes sources here in the Flathead. Check out their website, www.mtnativeplants.org under *Other Publications*.

If you want to plant trees and shrubs, note that the Flathead Conservation District takes orders for spring delivery of trees and shrubs from the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery. For more information or to place an order, visit the Conservation District's website, www.flatheadcd.org/programsgrants/landowners and look under Conservation Tree and Shrub Planting, or contact Patti Mason, Watershed Coordinator, 752-4220. The nursery's plant selection can be seen at www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery or obtained from Patti Mason (above). Orders need to be in to Patti by about April 1.

From Linda Winnie



Wings Across the Big Sky **June 8–10, 2012, Kalispell, Montana**

Spotlight on Flathead Audubon's Conservation Education Program

Flathead Audubon seeks to promote awareness and appreciation of the natural world through its Conservation Education Program. This program is the *only* staffed, local independent program in the Flathead Valley that provides nature-based education free of charge. Close to five thousand children, youth and adults have been served during the past year through its community, family and school-related programs. And, it all happens with only one part-time, visionary Education Coordinator.

Flathead Audubon is striving to make the position of Conservation Education Coordinator sustainable for years to come. That's why Montana Audubon will be showing its support for this valuable program by sharing proceeds of the festival raffle, as well as dessert and live auctions at Saturday evening's banquet. And that's why we thank you for joining us in these lively fundraising events!

Friday Evening's Entertainment

Professor Avian Guano's "Migration Magic"

Professor Avian Guano, world-renowned, eccentric German professor of ornithology will instruct and entertain us with his bird-brained slant on our neotropical avian friends. These "snowbirds" spend half their year in the tropics and half their year living with us in Montana. He will also answer some seemingly wacky questions, the answers to which are indispensable for every well-informed birder, including:

- How much food does a tiny kinglet need to stay at its required 111-degree body temperature through the fall, winter and spring?
- How many nests does a male wren make just to get female attention, and why does she then have extra-marital affairs?
- How do happenings in Colombia, Brazil and Mexico affect our quality of life here?

Plus a Bird Calling Contest!

Professor Avian Guano will also share his legendary mimicry of bird songs and be one of three judges for our bird-calling contest. Come prepared to be first to recognize the good professor's imitations, as well as to demonstrate your own bird calling prowess! Prizes will be awarded **on the spot** for the most accurate AND the most "loony" songs.



Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!



"Over the fruitful earth and across the sea goes the bright gleam of noble deeds." –Pindar

We are seeking nominations for 4 awards to be given at the Festival in Kalispell. Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement Award acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, wildlife, and habitat conservation.

To nominate your candidate, call Montana Audubon to request a nomination form, or download the form from <http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards>. To be considered for this year's awards, nominations and all supporting material must be sent to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: (406) 443-7144 and postmarked no later than May 23, 2012. The award ceremony takes place June 9th. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or jellis@mtaudubon.org.



**Business Sponsors of FAS
Conservation Education Program**

Tyler Bebee, Senior Financial Consultant
TBebee@dadco.com
D.A. Davidson & Co.
200 First Ave. E., K-M Building
Kalispell, MT (406) 752-6212

Whitefish Credit Union
www.whitefishcu.com
Box 37
Whitefish, MT (406) 862-3525

Valley Bank
41 Third Street West
Kalispell, MT (406) 752-7123

Great Northern Printing & Sign Inc.
gnpsignco@gmail.com
11 S. Meridian Rd., Ste. C
Kalispell, MT (406) 752-8729

Third Street Market
244 Spokane Ave.
Whitefish, MT (406) (406) 862-5054

SPECIAL GIFTS

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



Dave Menke, USFWS

- 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 _____

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.

Thanks!

...to those below who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon from February 18 through March 18, 2012

Merlin \$100+
Milt and BJ Carlson



merlin-os.co.uk

Supporting Member + donation
Omy Lindsey
Sheila Shapiro



granderie.ca



FENCING THIS SPRING?



Check out **A Landowner Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind**. 2009. C. Paige. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. This publication can be viewed at http://www.mtaudubon.org/birds/documents/wildlifefriendlyfences_FWP_2009.pdf.



KIDZ

Reflections from the Great Backyard Bird Count

O
R
N
E
R

Thank you, Lewis Young, for leading the Backyard Bird Count in the Eureka area!!!

"The thing I enjoyed most about the backyard bird count was looking for birds. Mr. Lewis Young taught us a lot, like: what the birds look like, how they sound and how to use binoculars. We saw mostly Clark's Nutcrackers. Those little thieves love to fly onto my back porch for dog food. We can't wait to do another bird count in the spring." *Cheyenne Ramos (homeschooler from Eureka)*

"When we went to find birds, we all went outside to the woods to find them. We found birds by being very quiet and listening and using binoculars to see them from far away. We learned that you have to be very quiet whenever you're bird watching because you might scare them away. What I like was going outside and roaming around finding birds. To me that was fun. Our guide (Lewis Young) did a very good job of helping us find birds to see. He did a good job because he knew what the birds were and what direction the bird calls were coming from." *Andrew Smith (homeschooler from Eureka)*

"I had a great time at the backyard bird hunt. I learned to identify birds. I learned how to identify them by their song, markings and color. Our guide taught us how to recognize swallows by their split tails. He also taught us how to tell a male from a female mallard duck. It was also interesting to see the birds in cages. I really liked learning about owls because we have a Great Horned Owl living in our back yard. Our guide was great because he explained how to identify birds and watch them." *Eric Smith (homeschooler from Eureka)*



April Unplugged

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."
Rachel Carson

Here are four things you can do this month to get out... do them with your kids or grandkids, do them with a neighbor's kids, or do them by yourself.

- ◆ Read Farley Mowat's book, *Owls in the Family*, then go on an owl-spotting walk.
- ◆ Go on an adventure to look for owl or hawk pellets to collect. Bring them home and dissect them. (For more information on how to do this, contact me at AudubonAshley@gmail.com)
- ◆ Make a nesting materials bag for the birds. Use a mesh bag, like the ones that oranges and avocados come in. Go on a materials-collecting walk. Fill the bag with wool roving, pet hair, bits of wool yarn, cotton, dried grass, tiny sticks and other soft, natural materials. Tie it off and hang it in your yard. Watch daily to see who takes what.



- ◆ Make a suet bag to welcome returning birds. You will need lard, high quality bird seed, wooden skewers and the same kind of mesh bag described above. Melt the lard and mix with the bird seed. Once the mixture cools, you can fill the mesh bags with it. Stick the skewers through the seed ball to make a perch on either side and hang in your yard or on a feeder stand.

From Ashley Mason, FAS Conservation Educator

(A Case for Conservation, continued from page 1 ...) better under stress than their counterparts who do not. There are even studies that have shown that hospital patients whose windows look out onto trees recover more quickly and inmates who have a view of farm fields from their cells suffer from less mental illness than those who see only the prison court yard.

We could all benefit from stress reduction and added physical activity that nature provides, seemingly better than anything else. At the same time we can easily identify sectors in our community who could benefit from an extra dose of the nature antidote!

American writer Mary Austin said, "A man is not himself only...He is all that he sees, all that flows

to him from a thousand sources...He is the land, the lift of its mountain lines, the reach of its valleys." Today she might have added, "the buzz of its computers, the jabber of its televisions and the roar of its motors."

Which do we wish to be more like...the soaring eagle and the mighty pine or the laptop and cell phone? Which has more ability to heal our bodies and make our spirits whole?

If we want the healing properties of nature to "flow to us," we must get out there. We must also be good disciples ourselves – bringing those who need nature the most to the river – so to speak.





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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**

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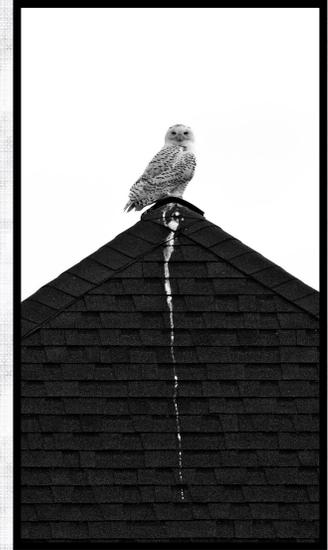
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SNOWY OWL—FACT AND FICTION

The Snowy Owl was first classified in 1758 by Carolus Linnaeus, the Swedish naturalist who developed binomial nomenclature to classify and organise plants and animals. The name "*scandiacas*" is a Latinised word referring to Scandinavia, as the Owl was first observed in the northern parts of Europe. Some other names for the Snowy Owl are Snow Owl, Arctic Owl, Great White Owl, Ghost Owl, Ermine Owl, Tundra Ghost, Ookpik, Scandinavian Nightbird, White Terror of the North, and Highland Tundra Owl. It is the official bird of Quebec.



Snowy Owl Using
Typical Lower Valley Habitat
John Winnie, Sr. Photo

Romania: *the souls of repentant sinners flew to heaven in the guise of a Snowy Owl.*

Ural Mountains: *Snowy Owls were made to stay behind while other birds migrate as a punishment for deception.*



A group of three or more owls is called a parliament.



Jeannie Marcure Photos

U.S.A.: *if you hear an Owl-cry you must return the call, or else take off an item of clothing and put it on again inside-out.*

This is a really good brief video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ufkcx-UqljM&feature=relmfu>



A group of five or more owls is called a wisdom.



Near Glacier HS on Dec 21, 2011 — Ryan Overbeek Photos