



# the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 37

NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 2012

## NORTHWEST MONTANA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

All Bird ID Abilities Welcome!

| Count                        | Date                  | Contact Information                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bigfork</b>               | Saturday, December 15 | Dan Casey, Home: <a href="mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com">danielcasey55@gmail.com</a> , 857-3143<br>Work: <a href="mailto:dcasey@abcbirds.org">dcasey@abcbirds.org</a> , 756-2681 Cell: 270-5941 |
| <b>Eureka</b>                | Saturday, December 15 | Lewis & Linda Young, <a href="mailto:llyoung@interbel.net">llyoung@interbel.net</a> , 889-3492                                                                                                   |
| <b>Libby</b>                 | Saturday, December 15 | Sandra Gerber, <a href="mailto:skariver@frontiernet.net">skariver@frontiernet.net</a> , 293-4948                                                                                                 |
| <b>Ninepipe</b>              | Sunday, December 16   | Brian Williams, <a href="mailto:bwilliams@montananaturalist.org">bwilliams@montananaturalist.org</a> ,<br>Home: 721-1467 Work: 327-0405                                                          |
| <b>Glacier National Park</b> | Sunday, December 16   | Susan Sindt, Home: <a href="mailto:sjsindt@hotmail.com">sjsindt@hotmail.com</a> , 892-7406<br>Cell: 249-7355<br>Will meet at Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center.                    |
| <b>Upper Swan</b>            | Sunday, December 16   | Jody Wolff, <a href="mailto:jmw4002@blackfoot.net">jmw4002@blackfoot.net</a> , 754-4002                                                                                                          |
| <b>Troy</b>                  | Saturday, December 22 | Donald Jones, <a href="mailto:gr8gray@frontiernet.net">gr8gray@frontiernet.net</a> , 295-4291                                                                                                    |
| <b>Kalispell</b>             | Sunday, December 30   | Dan Casey, H: <a href="mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com">danielcasey55@gmail.com</a> , 857-3143<br>W: <a href="mailto:dcasey@abcbirds.org">dcasey@abcbirds.org</a> , 756-2681<br>Cell: 270-5941    |

Compiled by John Hughes



### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS ARE NOW FREE!

After nearly two years of internal discussions, budget modeling, head-scratching, and intense decision-making, three major changes will come to the Christmas Bird Count program effective with the upcoming 113th Count in December, 2012.

- ◆ The CBC is now a free program. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5.00 fee of field participants.
- ◆ To minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, American Birds will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants, and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the CBC.
- ◆ To continue to fund the Christmas Bird Count program in the long term, Audubon will be moving to a voluntary donation model for the CBC.

### DECEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

- Monday, December 10, 2012: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. 7 PM at Gateway Community Center, United Way Conference Room. Dan Casey presents bird count program. See page 3 for details.
- Monday, December 3, 2012: FAS Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN. All welcome.
- Christmas Bird Counts: See Full Listing Above

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

By John Hughes

## THE GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*)



Have you ever been walking in a riparian area and heard what sounded like a cat mewing in the thick understory? Every time this happens to my wife and me, we turn and look at each other, smile like kids, and say

“catbird.” The Gray Catbird is one of many birds whose names are derived from their songs or call notes. In the case of the Gray Catbird, the mewing sound is a call note, and while it doesn't really sound like a cat, barring perhaps a sick cat, it certainly reminds you of one.

The Gray Catbird is easily identified due to its coloration. Its overall slate gray appearance is not found in any other species. It has a black cap and tail with rufous-colored undertail coverts. For those familiar with its relative the Northern Mockingbird, they share a very similar profile. The Gray Catbird is 8.5 inches long with a wingspan of 11 inches, making it a bit smaller than the N. Mockingbird. Its wings are short and its tail is long; both are rounded in appearance.

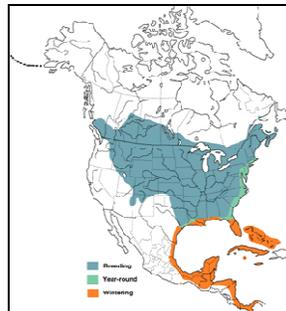
The Gray Catbird is classified in the Order Passeriformes; Family Mimidae; Genus *Dumetella*; Species *carolinensis*. There are 11 species in 4 genera in the United States found in the family Mimidae. With the Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbirds share this family with the thrashers, most notably in Montana, the Brown Thrasher and Sage Thrasher.

Like many birds in the Family Mimidae, the Catbird has a large repertoire of songs and calls due to the structure of its syrinx (bird voice box). The syrinx is shaped like an upside-down Y located at the base of the trachea where it splits to form the bronchi. Membranes controlled by muscles vibrate to produce sound much the way human vocal cords do. Catbirds can produce sounds from the left and right side of the syrinx simultaneously, or use each side individually. This versatility produces a song described by David Sibley as “a rambling, halting warble with slow temp; distinctive mewing quality of low, hoarse notes with high, sharp chips and squeaks interspersed with little repetition and little mimicry.” Catbirds also use a Quiet Song, its normal song but lower in volume. The song is performed with the beak closed (or nearly so) during courtship, near the nest, or during territorial defense

when an intruder is close. The Gray Catbird has three distinct call notes: the most common Mew Call, used year round during courtship, nest defense, and territorial chases; the Quirt Call, also used year round, which is a soft, low-pitched *quirt*, *whurt*, or *quitt* used as a low intensity alarm call and in flight during migration; and the Ratchet Call, also used year round, a high intensity alarm call (*chek-chek-chek*) used when chasing predators or intruders from a territory.

*Dumetella* means “dense thicket” and that's where you will find the Gray Catbird. In Northwestern Montana, they are typically found in low-elevation, dense, shrubby riparian habitats. Flight is characterized by constant wingbeats, and is typically short and low, just above the tops of shrubs or through small openings in the vegetation. They avoid flying across open spaces, traveling through shrubs using a combination of hops and short flights. They frequently flick their tails up and down and in a circular pattern.

Diet consists of insects and small fruits, shifting with the season, with fruits being more prevalent in fall and winter. They forage mainly on the ground using their beaks to knock leaf and ground litter aside in search of insects. They also forage in the vegetation, gleaning insects from leaves, and rarely will “fly catch.”



Courtship and breeding begins in early spring. Catbirds are monogamous and produce a three-layered bulky stick nest situated about 6 feet off the ground in the densest part of the vegetation. The female is mostly responsible for nest construction. Three or four turquoise green eggs are laid in the nest and incubated by

the female. The male does not incubate eggs but occasionally brings food to the female. Both sexes take part in feeding the young and protecting the nest. Nest parasitism is attempted, primarily by Brown Cowbirds, but rarely successful. The Gray Catbird is one of only about a dozen species that can recognize an alien egg in its nest, an ability that is learned, not innate. Catbirds promptly remove Cowbird eggs from their nest, using their beaks to roll them from the nest or to skewer them. Breeding Bird Surveys conducted in the northeast indicate a decline in the number of breeding pairs while numbers of breeding pairs in other areas are stable or increasing.

*Gray Catbird, continued on page 5 ...*





# December Program



## Early Winter Birds in Montana

Our December program will be an entertaining presentation by Dan Casey to set the stage for this year's Christmas Bird Count season. As the statewide editor of Christmas count data, Dan will offer his unique insight into what we have learned from the annual counts across Montana. He will also summarize the history of the Bigfork and Kalispell counts, using his extensive bird photo collection and stories from the

field, to illustrate and prepare us for this year's counts. In keeping with his annual tradition, you can expect some "virtual birding" to be incorporated into the talk!

Please join us at 7 PM Monday, December 10 for this exciting program at our new location, Gateway Community Center, United Way Conference Room. Come early to shop the sales table! Coffee, tea and holiday treats, too!

### Bigfork CBC: Our 39<sup>th</sup> Year

This year's **Bigfork Christmas Bird Count** will be held **Saturday, December 15**. Always one of the most productive and diverse counts in the state, last year we set a new benchmark by becoming the first Montana count to report 90 species! Established in 1974, the Bigfork count circle is centered at the "Little Brown Church" north of Bigfork, and includes >30 miles of the Swan and Flathead Rivers, the north end of Flathead Lake, and very diverse habitats. We have seen nearly 150 species over the history of the count. Although none of last year's 90 species was new, we did find record numbers of Horned Grebes (145), Tundra Swans (272), American Coots (5,090), Herring Gulls (72), Eurasian Collared-Doves (18) and Black-billed Magpies (211). Other highlights included 2 Trumpeter Swans, 3 Snowy Owls, and 2 White-throated Sparrows. This count depends on veteran group leaders to scour their usual areas; we are always looking for additional participants to join in to help us gain a better understanding of our early winter bird populations. We begin preparation for the count at the December 10 meeting, and finalize groups before count day. See page 1 for contact info.



### Kalispell CBC turns 14

The **Kalispell Christmas Bird Count** is centered at Reserve and Highway 93, and the count circle includes Evergreen, much of the Flathead River corridor including the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, Happy Valley, Herron Park, and the Kuhn's Wildlife Area. This count is always run two weeks and one day after the Bigfork count, and has proven to be a popular New Year's tradition. We had a new high of 76 species last year, including our first-ever Turkey Vultures (2), Ferruginous Hawk, and Glaucous-winged Gull. We also had new high counts for another 10 species, including a remarkable 409 Eurasian Collared-Doves. This year's count, **Sunday, December 30**, starts with a group breakfast at 7:00 AM; **meet at the Montana Club on Highway 93 South**, to finish assigning circle segments and field 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 (info on page 1).



### FIELD TRIPS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

As we look forward to the holidays, snowfalls, and bundling up a little tighter against winter's chill, we make preparations for Christmas Bird Counts starting in mid-December. Everyone is invited to sign up and participate in one of several counts in our area. It is a great way to be out with your feathered friends, as well as the enjoyment of being with fellow bird enthusiasts as you explore our local area for wintering birds and adding valuable Citizen Science Data about what is happening in our local bird world.

And of course everyone is excited to see if the magnificent Snowy Owls will grace the valley with their magical presence this winter. With that in mind, the field trip committee is planning two January trips to Ninepipes and/or the Mission Valley areas in January and February. Even if the Snowies are not around this year, the raptors, owls and unusual winter visitors make for great birding in this wintery landscape.

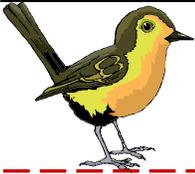
Also, there will be a field trip for The Great Backyard Bird Count in mid-February. Watch for details in the January *Pileated Post* and on our website. The world is now our backyard, so although we do count at our feeders, we will also explore other local areas for winter avian residents.

If snow conditions cooperate, we will once again arrange a ski/snowshoe trip to the Swan Refuge. So if you want to get on the list for one of these more spontaneous field trips, email Kathy Ross at [mtkat@montanaport.net](mailto:mtkat@montanaport.net).



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR PILEATED POST EDITORS!**





# CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From

Kay Mitchell for the Flathead Audubon Board



## Highlights from November 2012 Board Meeting:

- ◆ Received report that fundraising appeal letters have gone out to businesses and individuals
- ◆ Voted to accept Ashley Mason's proposal to partner with Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) program to present field trips in Glacier National Park next summer, pending clarification from MT Audubon regarding use of our legal name in promotion and advertising

Full minutes of every Flathead Audubon Board meeting are printed on the Flathead Audubon's website, [www.flatheadaudubon.org](http://www.flatheadaudubon.org), after they are officially accepted at the following month's meeting. Click on "About Us," then "Board Meeting Minute Archives." Take a look!



## FROM BOB LOPP, FAS VICE PRESIDENT

Honking in the sky and I look up. So does my neighbor retrieving his newspaper. Canadian Geese flying out to the fields. All of the little birds at the feeder scramble with two hitting the window and falling to the deck even though the blinds are down. A sharp-shinned Hawk is sitting in the Aspen tree 50 feet away. Thirty minutes later both have recovered and flown to the Spruce. No catch today. I take notes and add it to my database.

The U.S. Forest Service writes a new operational plan for the Kootenai National Forest and there is a period for public comment. Who reviews it for Flathead Audubon? Lewis Young, now retired from the Forest Service will review the document and write a response to be reviewed by the FAS Board. The new plan does not have measureable outcomes. It is time to object.

The Cinnabar Foundation announces a grant opportunity with specific criteria – finding matching funds. Mike Fanning goes to work to parse the grant application, gather documentation and write the application. Bruce Tannahill begins to identify donations that match the funding requirements. The grant is awarded and added to the education fund.

Ashley Mason, our Education Coordinator, goes to Helena Flats School to help build the native plant garden with students and faculty. This is part of a larger conservation program that begins with a native plant garden at Glacier High School and expands to other schools combining high school students as mentors to elementary students. It is time to get kids

outdoors and back to nature. Turn off the games and cell phones and touch nature!

Volunteers arduously climb every day in September and October to Mt. Aeneas to count hawks for the Hawk Watch coordinated by Dan Casey. The count is expanded to Bad Rock Canyon and coordinated by cell phone.

Tom Ulrich presents photos of the Pantanal in Brazil to more than 100 people at the November 2012 meeting of Flathead Audubon. Traveling over a 120 mile long road at 5 miles per hour and crossing 120 bridges no one should cross gives viewers an experience they will probably never forget. The diversity of color and form are beyond belief. If we could only... goes through our minds.

Cars gather at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks parking lot. Soon they depart for the lower Flathead Valley. The Split Ponds are loaded with Coots. The Flathead River has Tundra Swans, Mergansers and various duck species. Rough-legged Hawks and Harlan's Hawks fly from power pole to power pole as the group advances.

This is all part of Flathead Audubon and much more. Teddy Roosevelt said, "What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for our communities lives long after we are gone." We enjoy much for ourselves as individuals while bird watching but even more for our communities through the FAS Education program. When you receive the end of year request for a special donation, I hope you will generously respond. That is what we are – doing for our community.

## OF INTEREST TO YOU!

- ◆ Great holiday gifts! Visit the FAS Sale Table and pick up Audubon calendars, window decals, note cards, books, etc. at low prices for the important people on your list.
- ◆ Jan Wassink asks that anyone who has photos of Audubon activities contact him to have those photos stored in our archives. 249-6590 or [janwassink51@gmail.com](mailto:janwassink51@gmail.com).
- ◆ At Rich Baginski's request, Flathead County Library has purchased Cristina Eisenberg's book, "The Wolf's Tooth—Keystone Predators, Trophic Cascades and Biodiversity." It is available for checkout now.





## FLATHEAD AUDUBON REPORTS 2011-2012 ACTIVITIES TO NATIONAL AUDUBON

From FAS President Paula Smith



Take a guess: How many volunteers helped with at least one FAS activity during the past year? How many total hours did FAS volunteers provide? Take a guess.

Each year Flathead Audubon actually estimates and reports these and other numbers to National Audubon for the prior fiscal year. (FAS's fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.) These reports are required of affiliates in order to receive "Baseline Funding" from National Audubon. In the last fiscal year, for example, FAS received \$1,255 in Baseline Funding to support chapter operations.

During a normal program year, FAS volunteers participate in various ways in meetings, field trips and events, such as Raptor Day. But FY 2011-12 was different. It was the year an amazing volunteer turnout made it possible for FAS to co-host Montana Audubon's annual bird festival. A significant volunteer involvement was also required to realize the completion of the Owen Sowerwine Accessible Trail. So...the numbers FAS recently submitted to National Audubon for FY 2011-2012 reflect those very special occasions. And the following shows just how active this chapter is:

- ◆ Volunteers, including board, helping with at least one FAS activity over the year = **167**
- ◆ Total hours provided by volunteers = **5,002**
- ◆ Field trips conducted = **38** (27 were bird festival)
- ◆ Total participants attending all field trips over the year = **841**
- ◆ Programs or classes for adults or families offered = **15**
- ◆ Total participants attending all programs or classes = **1,146**
- ◆ Newsletter issues published = **9**



Further, the above numbers **do not** include the work of our half-time Conservation Educator who also conducts field trips for school classes, teacher training activities and youth programs.

Volunteers make Flathead Audubon possible!



## Montana's Wildlife Needs Your Voice

With the 2013 Montana Legislature starting in January, many important issues impacting wildlife, wildlife habitat, and our environment are at stake. The passionate and reasoned voices of Auduboners across the state can make such a difference. We anticipate that most of our work at Legislature will be defensive. Our priorities are:

- ◆ **Fighting for Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat** by supporting wildlife program budgets—and fighting legislation that prohibits the purchase of any new public land, including for wildlife habitat.
- ◆ **Advocating for Climate Change Solutions** by ensuring that Montana's energy development remains as wildlife-friendly as possible—and that the state continues to make progress on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other climate change solutions.
- ◆ **Defending our Environmental Laws**, including the Montana Environmental Policy Act (which requires a review of environmental impacts before the development of new mines, large subdivisions, oil and gas wells, timber sales, etc.), land use laws designed to regulate uncontrolled development (from subdivisions to gravel pits), and laws that protect our clean air and water.

Please lend your voice to help Audubon in Helena! You can do this by signing up for our action alert program at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). We limit the use of our action alert program to the most critical times!

If you are already our action alert list, you do not need to sign up again. If you are not sure if you are signed up, just sign up again—we make sure that duplicate email addresses are weeded out.

From Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon

*Gray Catbird, continued from page 2 ...*

In fall, Catbirds flock up and head for their wintering grounds in the southeastern United States and Neotropics. The majority of migration is at night. The Mew Call is given frequently during stopovers, especially during the early morning and at dusk. The Quirt Call is often used during flight, perhaps to maintain contact with fellow travelers. Migrants flying over the Gulf of Mexico often lay on extra fat to fuel them on their journey, while those migrating over land increase their lean body mass up to 150% for their trip.

My favorite places to observe Gray Catbirds are the shrubs along Tally Lake at the campground, and along the Stillwater River at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. As the days get shorter and nights get longer, I look forward to spring when I will hear the familiar mew and smile and say, "CATBIRD!"



# Thank You!

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

**Kestrel \$50+**  
Leslie Kehoe



Darrin Ziegler

## Supporting Member + donation

Ms. Dorothy A. Jorgenson  
P.T. McClelland  
Mr. Franklin E. Schroeter  
Dawn Walker  
Linda Winnie



granderie.ca

## My Own Vision

Jim and Nancy Barrus  
Don Snow



Nqcc.org

## The GBBC is Going Global!

In 2013, people anywhere in the world will be able to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count Friday, February 15 through Monday, February 18, 2013!

The GBBC will be integrated with eBird, a citizen-science project created by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society in 2002. Our partner, Bird Studies Canada, administers the eBird Canada portal.

Benefits to the new and improved GBBC:

**Global access:** participants will be able to submit checklists from any location and in four languages!

**Precise locations:** More accurate GBBC location data make your observations more useful and easier to track over time.



**Year-round access:** Although the GBBC is a four-day project, you will be able to track your bird sightings year round in eBird.

**Better visualization:** Interactive maps allow you to explore bird observations in greater detail than before.

**Corrections:** You can go to your reports anytime to make corrections or changes.

**No dual-entry:** eBird users can simply enter their GBBC counts once via eBird.



**PEACE is not a season.  
It is a way of life.**



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Donor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

## Record Season at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch

Dan Casey and BJ Worth counted 15 eagles in just under three hours on November 3, to wrap up a successful hawk migration monitoring season in the Jewel Basin. We conducted surveys on 48 days this year, totaling more than 325 hours. Our total raptor count for the season was the second highest in our five full years of surveys, with 2,723 birds of 17 raptor species counted. We counted record numbers of Cooper's Hawks (427), Red-tailed Hawks (225), Golden Eagles (504) and Peregrine Falcons (22).



Thank you to all fifty-three (!) people who volunteered time to participate in the surveys. A more detailed summary of the 2012 effort in the Jewel will appear in the next issue of *The Pileated Post*.

## Glacier Institute Wins \$20,000 Award in Tom's Of Maine "50 States for Good" Program

KALISPELL, MONTANA, NOVEMBER 8, 2012 – Thanks to all your support, the Glacier Institute has been voted as a winner in the Tom's of Maine "50 States for Good" program and will now receive a gift of \$20,000 to teach students about alternative energy concepts and to install solar and wind systems at the Big Creek Outdoor Education Center, a historic Forest Service Ranger Station in the North Fork of the Flathead River.

Working in partnership with Sunelco, Inc., [www.sunelco.com](http://www.sunelco.com), which provides renewable energy systems, funding will support the 'Alternative Energy Surrounds Us!' project. The project will add a solar and wind powered demonstration system and a battery bank to the Big Creek facility's energy system and create a curriculum to share alternative energy concepts to youth and adults participating in Glacier Institute courses. "Our goal was to provide education and practice ways to conserve and better sustain the natural resources found in this relatively undisturbed mountain environment in and around Glacier National Park and Flathead National Forest," remarked Glacier Institute's Executive Director, Joyce Baltz, "The public clearly loved the project and voted for it. We are thrilled to have won this nationwide promotion and to bring the gift of \$20,000 to our youth programs."

A nationwide vote chose six winning organizations to share \$150,000 in funding. The Glacier Institute encourages everyone to follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/glacrinstitute](http://facebook.com/glacrinstitute). For more information and opportunities to volunteer, please call (406) 755-1211.



## Wintertime—and the Living's Not Easy Make it Yourself

As an alternative to commercial bird food mixtures, which may have a high percentage of "filler seeds," you can create a low-cost mixture yourself. Pour a 25-pound bag of black-oil sunflower seed, a 10-pound bag of white proso millet, and a 10-pound bag of cracked corn into a clean trash barrel. Mix with a broomstick, and replace the lid tightly. Always store birdseed in tight, waterproof containers. Metal containers prevent rodents from gnawing their way into your food supply.

### Leftovers: For the Birds?

You don't have to limit your offerings to commercial birdseed. Some people save the seeds from squash and melons. This is a great way to put the seeds from Halloween pumpkins to good use. Some birds relish these seeds even more than black-oil sunflower. Spread them out on trays to air dry before placing them in your feeders or on the ground. If the seeds are sufficiently dry and free of mold, you can save them to use through the winter. Smaller birds may have a tough time breaking open vegetable seeds, but if you run the seeds through a food processor first, little birds will be able to eat them with ease.

Some people throw out scraps of stale bread, cake, or doughnuts for their feathered visitors. Be sure the food is not moldy or it may harm the birds. Another caveat: table scraps may attract less-welcome visitors such as European Starlings, House Sparrows, rats, or raccoons. Attracting nuisance species can be a real problem in urban and suburban areas, so be considerate of your neighbors before feeding leftovers.

### High-Energy Foods

You can attract insect-eating birds such as chickadees, woodpeckers, and nuthatches to your yard by offering peanut butter or suet (beef fat). Birds in cold climates especially appreciate these high-energy foods. Some people worry that birds will choke on sticky peanut butter. There's no evidence that they do, but you can eliminate any risk by mixing peanut butter with corn meal or oatmeal. The plain beef suet available at most supermarket meat departments is an excellent high-energy food. Suet can quickly become rancid in warm weather, but some commercial suet cakes and doughs, available in most stores that sell bird-feeding supplies, can be used year-round. Suet cakes often contain a mix of birdseeds or other ingredients. They're useful to have on hand when your local supermarket is out of suet. Suet is most easily and safely offered in plastic-coated wire cages.

### Fruity Favorites

Birds such as robins, thrushes, bluebirds, and waxwings don't usually show up at feeders because seeds are not a major component of their diet. But you can sometimes tempt them to dine at your feeder by offering fruit. Soften dried raisins and currants by soaking them in water first. Mockingbirds, catbirds, tanagers, and orioles may also enjoy sliced apples, oranges, and other fresh fruit, or frozen berries. You can offer fruit from a plate or shallow bowl set on a platform feeder or on the ground.





DECEMBER 2012



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59904-9173

P.O. Box 9173  
Kalispell, MT 59904-9173

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: [lindawin@centurytel.net](mailto:lindawin@centurytel.net)**

Website: [www.FlatheadAudubon.org](http://www.FlatheadAudubon.org)

FlockMaster - John Kyle: [jkyle@fastmail.us](mailto:jkyle@fastmail.us)

Conservation Educator - Ashley Mason: [AudubonAshley@gmail.com](mailto:AudubonAshley@gmail.com)

**FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY**

**OFFICERS**

|                |                  |                                                                                |          |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| President      | Paula Smith      | <a href="mailto:paulabobsmith@centurytel.net">paulabobsmith@centurytel.net</a> | 837-0181 |
| Vice-President | Bob Lopp         | <a href="mailto:boblopp@bresnan.net">boblopp@bresnan.net</a>                   | 752-7026 |
| Secretary      | Marylane Pannell | <a href="mailto:kuhlpan@cyberport.net">kuhlpan@cyberport.net</a>               | 257-5793 |
| Treasurer      | Bruce Tannehill  | <a href="mailto:tanneland@bresnan.net">tanneland@bresnan.net</a>               | 862-4548 |
| Past-President | Bob Lee          | <a href="mailto:rml3@centurytel.net">rml3@centurytel.net</a>                   | 837-4467 |

**DIRECTORS**

|           |               |                                                                                    |          |
|-----------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 2012-2015 | Dennis Hester | <a href="mailto:kivotee@bresnan.net">kivotee@bresnan.net</a> (on leave of absence) | 755-4964 |
| 2012-2015 | Steve Gniadek | <a href="mailto:grayjavbro@yahoo.com">grayjavbro@yahoo.com</a>                     | 892-7406 |
| 2012-2015 | Lewis Young   | 68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917                                                      | 889-3492 |
| 2012-2013 | Ben Young     | <a href="mailto:youngb@sd5.k12.mt.us">youngb@sd5.k12.mt.us</a>                     | 257-2286 |
| 2010-2013 | Jan Wassink   | <a href="mailto:janwassink51@gmail.com">janwassink51@gmail.com</a>                 | 249-6590 |
| 2011-2014 | Richard Kuhl  | <a href="mailto:kuhlpan@cyberport.net">kuhlpan@cyberport.net</a>                   | 257-5793 |
| 2011-2014 | John Hughes   | <a href="mailto:birdwatcher.hughes@gmail.com">birdwatcher.hughes@gmail.com</a>     | 261-2506 |
| 2011-2014 | Gael Bissell  | <a href="mailto:gbissell535@gmail.com">gbissell535@gmail.com</a>                   | 755-8709 |
| 2011-2014 | Denny Olson   | <a href="mailto:docwild@centurytel.net">docwild@centurytel.net</a>                 | 249-3987 |
| 2012-2013 | Kathy Ross    | <a href="mailto:mtkat@montanaport.net">mtkat@montanaport.net</a>                   | 837-3837 |
| 2012-2013 | Mike Fanning  | <a href="mailto:shrdlu@centurytel.net">shrdlu@centurytel.net</a>                   | 862-8070 |
| 2012-2013 | Jill Fanning  | <a href="mailto:shrdlu@centurytel.net">shrdlu@centurytel.net</a>                   | 862-8070 |
| 2012-2013 | Kay Mitchell  | <a href="mailto:kbmitch@centurytel.net">kbmitch@centurytel.net</a>                 | 756-8130 |

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

|                      |               |          |          |             |          |
|----------------------|---------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Christmas Bird Count | Dan Casey     | 857-3143 | Website  | Jan Wassink | 249-6590 |
| Conservation         | Lewis Young   | 889-3492 | Wetlands | John Hughes | 261-2506 |
|                      | Steve Gniadek | 892-7406 |          |             |          |
| Education            | Denny Olson   | 249-3987 |          |             |          |
| Field Trips          | Kathy Ross    | 837-3837 |          |             |          |
|                      | Gael Bissell  | 755-8709 |          |             |          |
| Finance              | Mike Fanning  | 862-8070 |          |             |          |
| Donations            | Mary Nelesen  | 755-7678 |          |             |          |
| Hospitality          | Lois Drobish  | 756-7405 |          |             |          |
| Membership           | Mike Fanning  | 862-8070 |          |             |          |
|                      | 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 |          |             |          |
| Sales                | Jill Fanning  | 862-8070 |          |             |          |
| Refuges              | Kathy Ross    | 837-3837 |          |             |          |



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Executive Director: Steve Hoffman  
[shoffman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:shoffman@mtaudubon.org)  
Board President: Dan Sullivan  
443-4229



**FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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- Additional Donation of ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Owen Sowerwine Fund
- Wherever needed

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