

# the **Pileated Post**

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

**VOLUME 37**

**NUMBER 7**

**MARCH 2013**

## **GEORGE DARROW TO RECEIVE FAS CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION AWARD**

Why do we have clean water today and mountains still covered with forests filled with bird song, still populated with grizzly bear and bobcats? Visionaries like George Darrow have more to do with all of that than most of us might realize.

At the March meeting, FAS is honoring long time member George Darrow with the Conservation Achievement Recognition for his many years of conservation-minded service. Using his extensive and knowledgeable background, with degrees in both economics and geology, George has encouraged and supported the idea of a balance between environmental preservation and extractive industries in Montana.

As a member of the Montana State Legislature from 1967 to 1974, both as Representative and Senator, George was the principal author and sponsor of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) in 1971 and chief sponsor of the Montana Water Policy Act in 1967.

George was acknowledged with "Conservation Champion Award" in March 2011, by Montana Conservation Voters, for his work in establishing MEPA. Ryan Busse, MCV board chairman at the time, praised Darrow as being "among the Montanans with foresight to work toward maintaining and restoring the state's natural resources from timber to wildlife," quoted from the Flathead Beacon. George emphasizes that the 1971 Montana Constitution reads

first that "all persons are born free and have certain inalienable rights. They include the right to a clean, healthful environment..." This language in the Declaration of Rights was derived from the previously enacted Montana Environmental Protection Act.

George's work is never done. As well as continuing his support and defending the basic principles set forth by MEPA, he also is involved in historical preservation. He is pictured here, with his partner Ginger, in the yard of his home, an old homestead he has lovingly restored. The 1894 cabin in the forefront serves as his office.



Since moving to the Flathead Valley in 1984, George has supported locally such projects as the protection of the USFS Cougar Canyon Research Natural Area, citing the area as "a habitat rich in wildlife and varied natural vegetation

within a unique geologic feature carved by a Pinedale glacier in the terminal phase of the late Pleistocene Ice Age."

George has recently taken a special interest in Trumpeter Swans and hopes to see Flathead Audubon encourage the work of developing a breeding population of Trumpeter Swans in our area.

Thank you, George, and congratulations on receiving this special recognition from Flathead Audubon Society. And for your years of dedication to maintaining a Montana we can all live and work in and still enjoy for its magnificent landscapes and wildlife, clean water, and healthy environment.

### **MARCH FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR**

**Monday, March 11, 2013: Flathead Audubon General Meeting.** 7 PM at Gateway Community Center, United Way Conference Room. Glacier Park and Mountain Bluebirds featured. See page 3!  
**Monday, March 4, 2013: FAS Board of Directors Meeting.** 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN. All welcome.

**Complete Field Trip List on Page 5!**

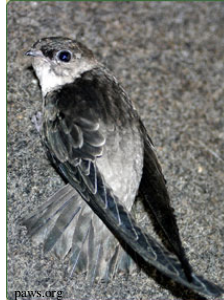


# BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Lisa Bate

## Vaux's Swifts: Hollow Tree Obligates

The Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) is the smallest swift in North America, just slightly smaller than its eastern counterpart, the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). Best described as a "flying cigar," this species is easily recognized by its small, cigar-shaped body with long, pointed wings, and short stubby tail. Typically, they can be seen flying just above the forest canopy or over water. Their flight often appears erratic, as if their wings do not work in unison, yet they are aerodynamic specialists. This visual illusion is thought to occur because of their incredible flight speed (> 200 mph [>300 kph] at times, but more typically between 35 and 80 mph [56 to 128 kph]), and frequent turning.



Compared to Chimney Swifts which are darker below, Vaux's are plain, grayish-brown in color with the upper breast and throat lighter than the rest of their under parts. Weighing less than a penny, their length averages 4.8 inches (11 cm) with a wing span of 12 inches (30 cm). While it may be visually difficult to differentiate between the two species, Vaux's are most easily distinguished from Chimney Swifts by their calls and flight behavior. They have a high pitched, rapid, insect-like twitter, whereas the Chimney Swift has a much louder chattering call. Also Vaux's are less likely to soar. They never perch, as they have small weak feet. Instead they cling vertically at nest and roost sites. They are named for William S. Vaux (1811-1882), a member of Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, by his friend John Townsend, who first described this species. Since the name is English, not French, the 'x' is sounded.

The northern populations of Vaux's are migratory, breeding in western North America from southeast Alaska, east into Montana and south into central California. The southern populations are year-round residents ranging from Mexico to Venezuela. In winter, northern migratory populations overlap with southern residents.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Vaux's Swifts, is their dependency on hollow trees and snags as their primary choice for nesting and roosting (occasionally they use chimneys). Because hollow trees are essential to them for reproduction and survival, they are known as "hollow-tree obligates" in the world of biology. "Obligate" refers to something that is essential or critical to their survival.

Recent declines in Vaux's populations in the Pacific Northwest have been attributed to the loss of mature and/or old growth forests where the number of hollow trees has diminished. Here in northwest Mon-

tana, where we still retain many hollow trees, Vaux's are considered common.

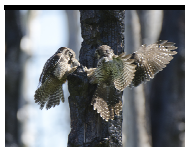
The hollowing process starts when a live tree sustains an injury, such as a broken branch or top, and exposes the heartwood to "heart rot" fungal spores in the air. Once heart rot, or the decay of the heartwood, develops, it spreads until the entire column of heartwood decays, creating a hollow tree. The heartrot fungi do not kill the tree by feeding on sapwood, so trees retain a hard,

protective shell as they continue to grow, providing both thermal and protective cover for the swifts. It takes a long time to hollow a tree and Vaux's select the largest (average 27 in diameter [68 cm]) hollow trees for roosting and nesting. Therefore, it usually takes hundreds of years for a hollow tree to be made suitable for their nesting and roosting needs.

Courtship for Vaux's begins upon their arrival at their breeding grounds. Pairs mate on the wing, coming together for a few seconds, dropping in the air, and then separating before reaching the ground. Both adults build the nest and incubate the eggs. Sometimes one or two nonbreeding birds will also share in the incubation and feeding of the young. Trees are commonly entered by an entrance hole excavated by a Pileated Woodpecker or its broken top. Usually there is only one nest per tree. They build an open cup, half-circle nest out of loosely woven twigs on the inside surface of the hollow tree, holding the nest in place with sticky saliva. The nest, often situated above a branch stub or protrusion, may have 3 to 7 eggs. Young stay in the nest the first 18 days, and then perch vertically inside the tree until day 30 when they fledge. Like other swifts, Vaux's are insectivores. During the nestling season, each parent delivers more than 5,000 insects per day to the young.

Vaux's roost communally by the hundreds or thousands in hollow trees, and sometimes in chimneys. This is especially true prior to and during migration. Just before roosting, the swifts circle in a vertical fashion above the roost as other birds join in. Once a few birds finally take the plunge, the whole flock abruptly follows, giving the impression of birds falling out of the sky.

So this summer, don't forget to watch above the large, broken top grand fir, hemlock, larch and cottonwood trees in your area. Or perhaps join in on a Flathead Audubon Society field trip in the late summer to observe Vaux's flying into chimney roosts. You may just get lucky and witness some of the dazzling aerial displays and unique behaviors of our smallest swift.



# March Program

## GOING LOOPY IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK AND THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS



Chris Peterson Photos

Photo journalist Chris Peterson will take us on photographic journeys in Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness at our general membership meeting on March 11. The program will showcase four loop hikes—two in GNP and two in the Bob. To learn which hikes they are, you need to come to the program!

Chris has tramped around the Montana woods for 15 years. Like Bob Marshall, he also started out in New York. Chris is the photographer for the *Hungry Horse News*. He is also the publisher of *Glacier Park Magazine*. The magazine is now being published as an app exclusively for the iPad and will soon be available for the Kindle Fire.

### MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD TRAILS

The March program will also feature another special guest. Grant Mounter of Eureka is the Lincoln County Area Coordinator for Mountain Bluebird Trails. He will describe the conservation work of the organization.

At the March meeting, Flathead Audubon will present its Conservation Achievement Recognition to George Darrow. We meet at 7 PM on Monday, March 11 in the United Way Conference Room at the Gateway Community Center on US Highway 2 West in Kalispell. The Conference Room is accessed from the parking lot on the west side of the Center. We look forward to seeing you!

### Thanks!

*...to those below who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon from January 18 through February 18, 2013*

#### Kestrel \$50+

Harry Gibson  
Joel & Barbara Vignere

#### Supporting Member + donation

Bob Lee

#### My Own Vision

Jennifer Graham



### Ouch!

Have you done your taxes yet?

Remember two things:

1. Deduct contributions you have made to Flathead Audubon, a 501(c)3 organization.
2. Use your savings from #1 to donate a little at the nongame wildlife checkbox. Your generosity helps critters (like birds) that otherwise get no funding.



### REMINDER: BEAUTY OF BIRDS COMING IN APRIL!

Learn about local birds through a series of workshops and field study. Topics will include: General bird anatomy, habitats and behavior, local bird identification by sounds, marks, and silhouettes. Participants will also receive local birding maps and other information to make them more informed birders. Here's the schedule:

- ◆ April 10: **Introduction to Bird Evolution, Form and Function** taught by Biologist Bob Lee. This class will present the fascinating and sometimes surprising evolutionary history of our feathered friends.
- ◆ April 17: **Identifying Birds in the Field**, co- taught by Audubon's own Linda DeKort and Ben Young. Learn some of the tricks for using field guides and identifying birds in the outdoors.
- ◆ April 24: **The Beauty of Bird Song**, taught by song officianato Bruce Tannehill. Retired physics teacher Bruce Tannehill has made quite a name for himself recording birdsong in Northwest Montana. He is the author of Audubon's Birdsong CD. In this class Bruce will talk about the physics of bird song and how birds use it to communicate.
- ◆ May 1: **Birding Field Trip** lead by Dan Casey. Use all of the skills gained in the previous classes to observe and identify birds in one of the Flathead's premier birding locations.

Classes will be held at Flathead High School on the evenings of April 10, 17 and 24 and May 1 from 6–8 PM. The cost for this month-long adventure is only \$10. What a bargain! Please contact Debbie Newman at (406) 751-3461 to register, or Ashley Mason [AudubonAshley@gmail.com](mailto:AudubonAshley@gmail.com) for more information. Hope you can join us!







## CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From

Kay Mitchell for the Flathead Audubon Board



### Highlights from February 2013 Board Meeting:

- ◆ Studied Treasurer's full report on FAS financial status as of 2/13/2013.
- ◆ Discussed and brainstormed many possible income-producing ideas.
- ◆ Heard Conservation Committee reports on actions regarding whooping cranes, wolf management, wolverine listing, creation of a county park in Kila, and a USFS EA in Tally Lake district.
- ◆ Decided to ask for member opinions and ideas and then hold strategic planning session for FAS programs and activities.
- ◆ Heard short report on removing illegal tree stands at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

Full minutes of every Flathead Audubon Board meeting are printed on 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!

### GIVING FOR GOOD

As a member of the Flathead Audubon Society, your membership supports the good work that FAS does, including its conservation education program and maintaining Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

You can leave a legacy in your name and ensure 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, you may add your bequest as a codicil at the end of your will, without the necessity of redoing the entire document. If you wish, you can specify which FAS program your legacy bequest will support.



### The 14th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

June 7 – 9, 2013, in the geographic center of the state, Lewistown, Montana!

Join Montana Audubon and Lewistown for dynamic birding field trips, great speakers, interesting presentations, and fun festivities as we celebrate efforts to conserve our birds and wildlife in the heart of Montana.

One of only ten cities nationwide selected to receive an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds grant, the Lewistown community and surrounding areas are gearing up to welcome birders to the region. The Urban Bird Treaty program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, brings together private citizens, as well as federal, state, and municipal agencies and non-governmental organizations to conserve migratory birds through education programs, participation in citizen science, conservation and habitat improvement strategies, and reducing hazards to birds in urban/suburban areas.

Keynote speaker Susan Bonfield of the International Migratory Bird Day and Environment for the Americas will share with us a glimpse into the Western Hummingbird Partnership and the world of hummingbirds. [Note the change in schedule for speaker John Marzluff. He will join us for the 15th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival in Bozeman.]

Experience Central Montana and all this landscape has to offer, either through festival field trips or your own exploration. There will be an art workshop, tours of historic Lewistown and its architecture, and other things to do for those who choose to remain at the hotel during field trip outings. Lewistown has wonderful fishing too! Bring your rod and reel along with your binoculars!

- ◆ Lewistown Trail System
- ◆ Snowies, Moccasins, Belts, Judiths, and Highwoods
- ◆ Big Springs Trout Hatchery
- ◆ Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge
- ◆ Big Spring Creek Fishing
- ◆ An official Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBird Trail Tracker, the first and only in the state, will be available in the lobby of the festival hotel, the Yogo Inn, to record your sightings!



**Registration opens March 6, 2013!** Visit [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org) for more information.



## GRAB THOSE BINOCULARS! FAS FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!



### FREEZEOUT LAKE SNOW GOOSE MIGRATION: A Rite of Spring

This year's trip is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, March 23rd and 24, and will be led by Dan Casey. Meet at the west end of the Super 1 parking lot on First Avenue East in downtown Kalispell Saturday morning at 10:00, and caravan/carpool to Choteau. We plan on being at Freezeout in time for the afternoon "fly-out" of the geese. After dinner and a night in Choteau, we head back out before daybreak to again watch the geese leave the lake, leaving to head home around noon, once the geese have flown back in from the fields. We should arrive back in Kalispell by 5:00 PM Sunday. Dan will provide a suggested schedule and route, and will lead the group, but attendees can choose to follow the geese as much or as little as the weather (cold and windy) and the birds allow. You will need to make your own arrangements for lodging. Options include the Bella Vista (466-5711), the Big Sky (466-5318), the Gunther (466-5444), or the Stage Stop (888-466-5900). Contact Dan if you have questions about the trip, at 857-3143 or [danielcasey55@gmail.com](mailto:danielcasey55@gmail.com).

### EARLY SPRING MIGRANTS - FLATHEAD AND/OR SMITH VALLEY

Saturday, March 23

If you can't make it to Freezeout Lake this weekend, you can still see thousands of early migratory waterfowl with Craig Hohenberger, avid birder/science educator from Monterey, California, and now retired to the Flathead Valley. Field trip will focus on birding hot spots in Lower Valley but may go elsewhere depending on conditions. Meet at the Somers Park and Ride, at 8:30 AM. Bring a lunch. Limited to about 25 people. To sign up, contact Craig (755-0140 or [asoleado2003@yahoo.com](mailto:asoleado2003@yahoo.com)).



### GIVE A HOOT (Barred Owls)

Saturday evening, April 13

Pete Fisher will again host an evening of listening and calling for Barred and possibly other owls in the east Flathead Valley. Limited to about 25 individuals. Contact Pete (250-9624 or [fisher-pete88@yahoo.com](mailto:fisher-pete88@yahoo.com)) to pre-register; if there is overwhelming interest again, FAS will try to schedule another night of hooting and owling adventure.

### MARTY COHEN EARTH DAY WALK

Whitefish, Leader Bruce Tannehill. Date in April to be announced in April *Pileated Post*.

### BIRDING IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Late May, limited to 20 participants. This trip will focus on identifying neotropical migrants by sight and ear. We will walk along McDonald Creek listening and looking for birds and stop at the Fish Creek Campground to search for Harlequin Ducks and scan the cottonwoods for vireos and warblers. We may head up the inside North Fork Road or drive along the Camas Road, stopping along the way in search of Black-Backed Woodpeckers, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Northern Hawk Owls. Please sign up for this trip with Steve Gniedek at 892-7406. We will be meeting at the Alberta Visitor Center in West Glacier at 8:00AM and returning by noon. Please note: a Glacier National Park entrance fee or pass is required.

### A TOUR OF THE LAZY CREEK AREA ABOVE THE HEAD OF WHITEFISH LAKE

Late May or June. Join FAS on this three-hour field trip for a tour of this not-often-visited area. This trip provides a great opportunity to observe Warblers, American Redstarts, Northern Water Thrush, Black-Headed Grosbeak, and other birds. Meet at McDonalds in Whitefish 8:00 AM with an 11:00 AM return. If you have questions or to sign up, call Bruce Tannehill at 862-4548.

### WARBLER WEEKEND, TALLY LAKE CAMPGROUND

May 31-June 1. Leaders Dan and Susannah Casey

Details in upcoming *Pileated Post*.



### EXPLORING THE VIKING CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE

June date to be announced in upcoming *Pileated Post*. Trip leader Leo Keane. Viking Creek Preserve now has a completed wheelchair accessible board walk through a rich and diverse riparian area and old growth forest. Viking Creek Preserve is closed from March 15-May 1.

*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.*

**Reprinted Report from  
THE AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY**

**ABC Welcomes “Cats Indoors Program” Officer  
New Study Confirms Cats a Major Threat to Bird Populations**

The American Bird Conservancy welcomes Grant Sizemore as ABC's new “Cats Indoors Program” Officer. Grant will be working to advocate for keeping cats indoors and removing feral and free-ranging domestic cats from outdoor environments. His work is an effort to minimize the risk outdoor cats pose to birds and other wildlife, human health, and the health of individual cats. Prior to joining ABC, Grant has worked for wildlife conservation through field research, public education and outreach, working cooperatively with industry, and engaging policy leaders. Grant can be contacted at [gsizemore@abcbirds.org](mailto:gsizemore@abcbirds.org).

**Outdoor Cats Single Greatest Source of Human-Caused Mortality  
for Birds and Mammals, Says New Study**

A new peer-reviewed study authored by scientists from two of the world's leading science and wildlife organizations – the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – has found that bird and mammal mortality caused by outdoor cats is much higher than has been widely reported, with annual bird mortality now estimated to be 1.4 to 3.7 billion and mammal mortality likely 6.9 to 20.7 billion individuals.

The study, which offers the most comprehensive analysis of information on the issue of outdoor cat predation, was published in the online research journal *Nature Communications* and is based on a review of more than 90 previous studies. The study was authored by Dr. Peter Marra and Scott Loss, research scientists at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and by Tom Will from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory Birds. It is available at [www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/pdf/Loss\\_et\\_al\\_2013.pdf](http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/pdf/Loss_et_al_2013.pdf).

According to Dr. George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy, one of the leading bird conservation organizations in the U.S. and a group that has called for action on this issue for many years, “This study, which employed scientifically rigorous standards for data inclusion, demonstrates that the issue of cat predation on birds and mammals is an even bigger environmental and ecological threat than we thought. No estimates of any other anthropogenic (human-caused) mortality source approach the bird mortality this study calculated for cat predation.”

The study's estimate of bird mortality far exceeds any previously estimated U.S. figure for cats. In fact, this magnitude of mortality may exceed all other direct sources of anthropogenic bird and mammal mortality combined. Other bird mortality sources would include collisions with windows, buildings, communication towers, vehicles and pesticide poisoning.

“The very high credibility of this study should finally put to rest the misguided notions that outdoor cats represent some harmless new component to the natural environment. The carnage that outdoor cats inflict is staggering and can no longer be ignored or dismissed. This is a wake-up call for cat owners and communities to get serious about this problem before even more ecological damage occurs,” Fenwick said.

The study estimated that the median number of birds killed by cats annually is 2.4 billion and the median number of mammals killed is 12.3 billion. About 69 percent of the bird mortality from cat predation and 89 percent of the mammal mortality was from un-owned cats. Un-owned cats are defined to include farm/barn cats, strays that are fed but not granted access to human habitations, cats in subsidized colonies, and cats that are completely feral.

The study charges that, “Despite these harmful effects, policies for management of free-ranging cat populations and regulation of pet ownership behaviors are dictated by animal welfare issues rather than ecological impacts. Projects to manage free-ranging cats, such as Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) colonies, are potentially harmful to wildlife populations, but are implemented across the United States without widespread public knowledge, consideration of scientific evidence or the environmental review processes typically required for actions with harmful environmental consequences.”

**Other downloadable materials:**

[www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/materials.html](http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/materials.html)

**The Wildlife Society Cat Package**

The Wildlife Society has produced an outstanding package of educational materials: <http://issuu.com/the-wildlife-professional/docs/feralcats>

### BAT HOUSES—are they for you?

Ever thought about putting up a bat house to attract some of those flying bug eaters? Bat houses can work if they are properly sized and located. They probably won't be occupied overnight or maybe even for a year or more, but given time they may accommodate sizeable numbers of bats. Little brown bats are the most likely occupant in our area, whether you live in town or in the country. Board member Lewis Young has several hundred bats living in his bat houses and has developed a set of recommendations to increase the likelihood of bats moving into a bat house. Size and configuration of the bat house itself is also vital. A proven bat house design that holds lots of bats can be found on Bat Conservation International's website: [www.batcon.org/pdfs/bathouses/FourChamberNurseryHousePlans.pdf](http://www.batcon.org/pdfs/bathouses/FourChamberNurseryHousePlans.pdf).



### TIPS FOR BAT HOUSE INSTALLATIONS FROM LEWIS YOUNG

- ◆ The key to successful occupancy of bat houses is that the houses provide the appropriate internal temperatures desired by bats for their various roosting needs.
- ◆ Place where they will receive a minimum of 6 hours/day of direct sunlight. 10 hours or more is best. This is for the April-October period when bats are active.
- ◆ Paint black to absorb more heat at these northern latitudes.
- ◆ Place within ¼ mile of water in an area of high habitat diversity. It should be a calm water surface, not fast running, and the calm area may be relatively small if not obstructed by vegetation, fences, etc.
- ◆ Place as high off the ground as possible, 10 feet or more.
- ◆ Avoid placing on trees because bat houses on trees are seldom used. If a tree must be used, select one by itself or at least at the edge of a stand of trees. Try to find a tree with a tall, clean trunk without limbs hanging over or near the bat house.
- ◆ Do not place where the bat house is illuminated by light at night.
- ◆ Poles or posts or pipes are good for bat house support structures. Try to place them 25 feet or more from any tree branches, wires, or other potential perches for aerial predators.
- ◆ Wood, brick, or stone buildings with sufficient direct sunlight and enough height are good locations. Bat houses mounted on metal siding are seldom used. Be aware that if the bat house becomes occupied, guano will build up underneath.
- ◆ Placement of 2 bat houses back-to-back on a pole or other structure out in the open is a good choice because it gives bats more options to move around within them and select the best temperature. If possible, leave a gap between the 2 bat houses similar to the internal chambers and use a roof that covers both houses. Two bat houses placed in the same vicinity on a building or other structure may create the same choices for temperature regulation.
- ◆ Bats may use houses that don't meet all these conditions but the chance of occupancy is higher when all or most are met.
- ◆ Periodic maintenance, such as recaulking and repainting, is required, so give consideration to ease of future access when installing the bat house.
- ◆ If woodpeckers consistently drill holes in the bat houses, patch the holes, then cover the bat house (except the entrance) with small mesh hardware cloth or chicken wire that is supported about 2-3" away from the bat house.

### 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.



## 2013 OWEN SOWERWINE MONITORING BEGINNING VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

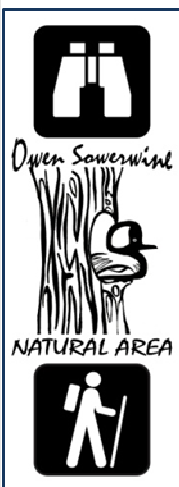
From Linda Winnie, OSNA Co-Chair  
Flathead Audubon needs volunteer monitors to aid in our management of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. **Can you help?**

**If you already know how our Volunteer Monitoring Program works**, then the information in this box is all you need. You don't need to read the next box below.

To volunteer for a **scheduled monitoring visit**, please contact me ([lindawin@centurytel.net](mailto:lindawin@centurytel.net) or 755-1406), or talk to me or Richard Kuhl at an FAS meeting. Tell us which month (March through November) you want to sign up for, and whether you want to cover the first half or the last half of that month. You will get a reminder call or email shortly before your scheduled Monitoring Period.

To help out by **monitoring whenever you happen to visit OSNA**, just print the Monitoring Form from the FAS website ([www.flatheadaudubon.org](http://www.flatheadaudubon.org)) or pick one up at an FAS meeting or contact me. Take it with you to Owen Sowerwine, fill out the parts that apply to your visit, and send it in.

And remember, even though our Volunteer Monitoring Program officially runs March through November, information gathered on a trip to Owen Sowerwine at **any time of year** is valuable. If you forget to take a



### To learn what this Volunteer Monitoring business is all about, read on!

The Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) is a 442-acre State Natural Area located just east of Kalispell and north of Leisure Island, where the Flathead and the Stillwater Rivers begin to merge. The main entrance is at the east end of Treasure Lane; Treasure Lane is the first street that turns east off Willow Glen Drive when driving south from the Willow Glen Montessori School.

OSNA is jointly funded and managed by Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon. Flathead Audubon handles the local, on-the-ground management of the Area. In 2008, the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Program was established to help with this management. Volunteer Monitors in this Program are the eyes and ears of Flathead Audubon's management of Owen Sowerwine. They provide on-site information about management needs as they arise – a trail needs clearing, for example, or the kiosk needs to be repaired, a fence or gate needs fixing, debris and impromptu structures need to be removed, or the kiosk brochure box needs restocking.

Volunteer Monitors also help gather data on visitor use, and as they encounter visitors or OSNA neighbors, they gather comments and suggestions that will help improve our management. In addition, Volunteer Monitors provide information that helps expand our growing knowledge of what bird and other wildlife species are present at OSNA, and what types of vegetation grow there.

**The 2013 Volunteer Monitoring Season begins in March;** we are looking for volunteers to help. *It is easy and fun.*

The fun part is visiting OSNA and walking some of the trails. The easy part is using the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form to give feedback from your visit. The form has spaces and check-off boxes that guide you on what to look for and make it easy to record your observations. The completed form is mailed to Richard Kuhl using the address provided on the form. See the box above for how to get the form. We also provide online and at meetings a trail map that locates the places referred to on the form.

There are **two different ways** you can do volunteer monitoring: fill out a form whenever you visit OSNA or do a scheduled monitoring visit. The scheduled visit option works like this. We try to schedule 2 monitoring visits each month, March through November, to ensure feedback on a regular basis. So we need at least 18 volunteers, one (or more) for each half-month-long Monitoring Period. A scheduled volunteer makes one Monitoring Visit to OSNA sometime during the half-month of his/her choice. Group monitoring visits are also welcome – get your friends together and sign up for your chosen Monitoring Period as a team.

See the box above for instructions on how to volunteer.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**  
**Family Forestry Expo is May 6—11**



## Two Cub Scouts Take On OSNA Volunteer Monitoring



Right to left, Jeremiah (8) and Jacob (7) Jepson  
OSNA Volunteer Monitors

Jeremiah and Jacob Jepson (ages 8 and 7) became our youngest OSNA Volunteer Monitors when they made three monitoring visits to OSNA last fall, in October and November. The visits were made as part of their Leave No Trace Project that they undertook to earn the Cub Scouts Leave No Trace badge.

Jeremiah and Jacob live in Lakeside, where they are home schooled by their Mom, Gina. Jeremiah will be 9 in March. Both boys earned their Cub Scouts Wolf badges last month, and will start working on their Bear rank at the end of the year. They were accompanied on their OSNA monitoring visits by their Mom, and their younger sisters Sacha (5) and Arya (3).

These two Cub Scouts plan on helping out with some more OSNA monitoring visits again this summer. Their Mom says that they hope to learn more about bird ID when they visit this year. If you would like to make an OSNA monitoring visit this summer also, please see page 8 of this newsletter to find out how to volunteer.

By Linda Winnie, Photos by Gina Jepson



Right to left, Jacob (7) and Jeremiah (8) Jepson on an OSNA monitoring visit, accompanied by their sisters Arya (3) and Sacha (5).

## SPECIAL GIFTS

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

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

\* \* \* \*

*The FAS activity which most interests me is:*

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

\* \* \* \*

☐ *I want my gift to recognize another:*

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

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

*Please send a notification of this gift to:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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.**



## Wintertime—and the Living's Not Easy Feeder Maintenance

Except during times when temperatures remain well below freezing, clean your feeders about once every two weeks, and more often during warm weather and times of heavy use. Using a sturdy brush to scrub them with soap and water is usually enough; you may wish to rinse in a weak bleach solution if there is evidence of disease in your yard. Rinse feeders well and allow them to dry thoroughly before refilling them with birdseed. Make sure you also periodically rake up birdseed hulls beneath your feeders. Decomposing hulls may harbor bacteria or mold that could spread diseases to your birds.





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)

MARCH 2013



Non-Profit Org.  
Postage Paid  
Permit No. 115  
Kalispell, MT  
59904-9173

## 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 LOA)	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> (on LOA)	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			



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

[www.MTAudubon.org](http://www.MTAudubon.org)  
Executive Director: Steve Hoffman  
[shoffman@mtaudubon.org](mailto: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