



the Silent Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 37

NUMBER 9

MAY 2013



JEAN ROBOCKER RECEIVES FAS CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION



Flathead Audubon's final Conservation Achievement Recognition for this year will be given to Jean Robocker in recognition of a lifetime of conservation and education efforts. Thirty-five years ago, in 1977, Jean was invited to join the nascent Bigfork Bird Club, which within a few years had enough members to join National Audubon and became the Flathead Audubon Society. She and the early members of FAS had a passion for not only birding but also for education. Jean was one of the early FAS conservation educators who believed it was essential to teach young people the "importance of birds" in their lives and to the world around them. Study skins of local birds were prepared, tapes of bird songs were recorded and Jean drew and colored cardboard cutouts of birds. Armed with the "birds" and their songs, she spent many hours in Flathead Valley schools talking about birds and their importance to our everyday lives, at a time when information was limited and the internet did not yet exist. Many of us still remember her bird ID vignettes at the beginning of each FAS meeting. Even now her questions resonate: How have birds influenced us? Where does this bird live and why? Have you ever thought about why we have striped and spotted cloth...the idea had to have come from somewhere.

Jean came to the Flathead Valley in 1950 to be the Director of the Girl Scouts in Kalispell. She met Eugene Robocker soon thereafter and they married.



Both wanted to settle on a farm, so they bought 160 acres of land on a bend of the Flathead River. Eugene built the house and they established a dairy farm that ran for over 25 years. The land was farmed, but a section was left in pristine condition for native plants and animals to continue to thrive. In 1973 Jean and Eugene put a Conservation Easement on the land with the help of The Nature Conservancy; it was one

of the very first of its kind in the Flathead Valley. They had the foresight to protect for the future a small portion of what makes the Flathead Valley the special place that it is. The easement protects all 160 acres, including over half of a mile of Flathead River frontage, productive farmland, forest and wetlands. A few years later, an additional 90 acres of farm land were placed in another Conservation Easement, with the assistance of the Montana Land Reliance. These two easements permanently protect over 250 acres of prime river bottom lands from development, and a wonderful riparian area is preserved for wildlife and birds for the future. Both easements allow for farming and portions of the land are still working farmland.

The land is vibrant with the coming of spring and as Jean and I talk, finches and chickadees flock to her feeders, a beautiful male Ring-necked Pheasant saunters in to glean a few seeds, a brazen Sharp-shinned Hawk makes a pass, a serene pair of Canada Geese... (Jean Robocker, continued on page 4)



MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, May 13, 2013: Flathead Audubon Potluck Business Meeting. Whitefish Community Center. Interesting program, Great Food! See page 3 for full details, directions and activities listing!

Monday, May 6, 2013: FAS Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN. All welcome.

Saturday, May 11, 2013: Flathead Forestry Expo. Trumble Creek Experimental Forest. See page 7!

Saturday, May 11, 2013: International Migratory Bird Day. See article on page 5.

Thursday, May 23, 2013: Community Bird Day. See article on page 7.

Complete Field Trip and Events List on Pages 6 & 7!



museum.gov.ns.ca

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Photo and Article By Jeannie Marcure

A TEAPOT OF TOWHEES



For the past several years we've been lucky to have a family of Spotted Towhees make their home in our yard and garden area. Although migratory, Towhees are one of the first spring yard birds to arrive (March 9 this year) and one of the last to leave in late October. Within a few days after the arrival of the male this spring, our yard was

filled with the cheerful buzzy trill, and plaintive catlike meow calls as he waited for the arrival of the female. You can listen to the sounds of the Spotted Towhee at Cornell Lab: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Spotted Towhee/sounds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Spotted_Towhee/sounds).

A large member of the sparrow family, the male Spotted Towhee with his shiny black hood, red eye, white belly, rufous flanks and black and white spotted wings is a truly a striking bird. Towhees have thick pointed bills, short necks and a long rounded tail edged in white. This last feature is especially noticeable in flight. The female is very similar in appearance but has a grayish head and back. Juveniles are a dull grayish brown with very faint spotting. At 8 inches, Towhees are just slightly smaller than Robins.

The Spotted Towhee and the Eastern Towhee were formerly considered to be a single species called the Rufous-sided Towhee. The Eastern Towhee lacks the spotting on the wings, but otherwise the appearance and size is very similar.

Towhees prefer an open, shrubby habitat with thick undercover. In our yard, they seem especially attracted to the leaf litter under a small stand of aspens but are also frequently seen cleaning up spillage under both our suet and seed feeders. Interestingly, they hop backwards as they double-scratch with both feet, searching for small insects, berries and seeds. Sometimes Towhees can be located by listening for the rustling sound they make as they scratch in the dry leaves. The male Towhee is extremely protective of "his" territory and we've frequently observed him ag-



gressively chasing other birds away from "his" aspen area.

After the male courts the female with his buzzy singing and by displaying with wings and tail spread, the female builds a nest on or near the ground. Made of leaves, twigs, strips of bark and grasses, this nest is lined with pine needles, grasses and shredded

bark. Typically, two broods of 3 to 5 eggs are laid per season. The eggs are creamy with brown spots and are incubated for 12 to 14 days by the female alone. Young leave the nest at 10 to 12 days after being tended by both parents. Because the nests are so low, I have worried that our Fox Terrier who shares the yard with the Towhees will disrupt the nest, but to my knowledge this has never happened. I have read that rather than flying when disturbed, the female typically runs away like a mouse, so perhaps he doesn't even notice her.

Although my reading tells me that Towhees are secretive and hard to spot, "our" Towhees make full use of all the amenities of our yard and can be seen several times a day using the bird bath or cleaning up under the feeders. They also seem to enjoy our rather untidy and chemical free lawn and we often see them bathing in the dew on the morning grass. They are one of the most vocal birds that frequent our yard and I hear their plaintive "meow" almost every time I go outside! When the juveniles have fledged, I see the adults showing them the "ropes" of the area by bringing them to the bird bath and to favorite feeding spots.

A group of Towhees is collectively known as a "teapot" or a "tangle." If you'd like to attract a TEAPOT of Towhees to your yard, I'd suggest that you consider leaving things just a bit more untidy—perhaps not raking the leaves in the fall! After all, the leaves are good mulch and why rake leaves when you could be out birding! If you'd like to observe the family of Towhees who live with us, just give me a call!



Ten Ways You Can Protect Birds This Spring

As temperatures start to climb, birds begin their annual spring migration and also begin breeding. American Bird Conservancy (ABC) often gets asked, particularly during the spring, "How can I help the birds?" Here are the top ten things ABC recommends people do to aid or protect birds in their homes and yards. See: <http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/130410.html>.





May Program

WARM SPRINGS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA A WELL KEPT SECRET!



Gary Swant will introduce FAS to a rich birding area at our Annual Meeting on May 13. Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area, 17 miles south of Deer Lodge, is an outstanding birding area that few have birded or notice driving down I-90 at Warm Springs. Gary, though, has documented 206 species of birds on the 21 ponds of the 6,400 acre site!

Gary has been monitoring the WMA for spring, fall and breeding waterfowl and shorebird species since 2009. He has documented 50 water-related species such as geese, ducks, loons, grebes, pelican, cormorant, bittern, heron and egret, and 30 species of shorebirds.

"The Ponds" were originally developed in 1911 by the Anaconda Company to treat mine waste water that flowed down Silver Bow Creek, before it joined Warm Springs Creek and formed the headwaters of the Clark Fork River. In 1975, additional ponds, called the Job Corps Ponds, were added and in 1990, the Ducks Unlimited Ponds were added, thus completing the WMA, which is managed by ARCO and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Currently, a superfund cleanup of the Clark Fork River is taking place above and below the WMA.

Gary will discuss the history, physical fea-

tures and operation of the WMA. He will show that the WMA should be classified as an Important Bird Area and maintained, after it is no longer needed to treat heavy metal pollutants from Silver Bow Creek, when it is officially clean in 2015.

Gary has a Master's Degree in Education and Environmental Education from the University of Montana. He taught biology and field ecology in Deer Lodge for 25 years. Upon retirement, he formed GoBirdMontana as a guide and consultant service in avian concerns. He has also acted as a consultant with MT FWP, ARCO, Montana Aeronautics Administration, Powell County and the city of Deer Lodge on bird-related issues. He has the distinction of holding the record for the most birds seen in a single year in Montana. In 2007 he did a "Big Year" and observed 328 species of birds in Montana. That record still holds today.

We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting, potluck and silent auction on Monday, May 13 at the Whitefish Community Center. Doors open at 5 PM, potluck at 6 PM and meeting at 7 PM. At that meeting, we will also present Flathead Audubon's final Conservation Achievement Recognition to Jean Robocker (see page 1). See you there!



MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING



Bring Your Own Tableware!

Date: Monday, May 13, 2013

Location: Whitefish Community Center

Address: 121 Second Street, Whitefish

Directions: In Whitefish, turn west on Highway 93, the Community Center is at the southwest corner of the bridge over the Whitefish River

Times: Doors Open 5:00 PM, Potluck Dinner 6:00 PM, Meeting Begins 7:00 PM

Be sure to arrive early enough to look over and bid on silent auction items!

Business Meeting: We will elect officers and Board members (see page 8)

Silent Auction Request: Of course, one of the most exciting parts of the evening will be the Silent Auction. Everyone is encouraged to bring any bird or nature related items to donate and to shop till you drop at the Silent Auction tables. Nowhere else will you find such a diverse, eclectic mixture of interesting things that you really do need!

Program: Gary Swant will entertain us with an interesting program about birds at the Warm Springs WMA.

Gardener Special: Rod McIver will again have plants and trees for sale, so start planning your new yard and garden now. Flathead Audubon is very grateful to Rod for this donation of time, plants and hard work in raising, potting, and transporting all of the plants. And he donates all of the proceeds of his sale to Flathead Audubon - what a generous guy! So buy liberally, plant gently and thank Rod for this wonderful way of brightening of our May meeting!

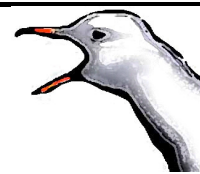




CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From

Kay Mitchell for the Flathead Audubon Board



Highlights from April 2013 Board Meeting:

- ♦ Accepted budget of \$37,474 for FY 2013-2014
 - ♦ Heard report on the many end-of-year activities of the Conservation Educator
 - ♦ Voted to contribute \$750 to MT Audubon for the current year
 - ♦ Voted to contribute \$100 to United Way for facility use in the current year
 - ♦ Voted to support MT Chapter of The Wildlife Society Position Statement on Exurban Residential Impacts on Wildlife
 - ♦ Learned that over half of FAS local members are now Supporting Members
- Full minutes of every Flathead Audubon Board meeting are printed on Flathead Audubon's website, 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!



GRATEFUL FOR AN EARLY SPRING MORNING... AND TWO YEARS

By Paula Smith, FAS Outgoing President

Before even stepping out the door of our home this morning, I glance in the direction of the cottonwoods that line the Flathead River corridor. Sure enough, I see two Bald Eagles that dependably may be found in the treetops. I open the door and the morning is filled with birdsong. I walk across an open field to the river and a Killdeer calls and makes its presence known. As I approach the river, there is a wonderful surprise—a beautiful Wood Duck pair swims along the shoreline.

As the day goes on, it just gets better. While working outside, I observe a pair of swans flying upriver. I hear Sandhill Cranes somewhere on the north shore of Flathead Lake. A Northern Shoveler swims into the canal from the river. A Mallard pair visits the spilled seeds under the backyard feeder. Before I retreat indoors in late afternoon to make dinner, two Canada Geese and their goslings are the most recent visitors to the canal.

To live in this area is wonderful. And, being

a birder in the Flathead Valley is to be truly blessed. We not only may observe a large number of bird species, but through Flathead Audubon field trips and programs, learn where birds are and how to observe them. Consider this: It wasn't until moving to the Flathead Valley that two new members experienced Ninepipe and Lost Trail Wildlife Management Areas and witnessed the spectacle of migrating Snow Geese at Freezout Lake. And the connection was made through Flathead Audubon.

Flathead Audubon supports birders of all ages and abilities. Our Conservation Education Program was especially created to foster understanding and appreciation of the natural world in young people. Raptor Day focuses on families. Beauty of Birds (on a school night) attracts mostly adults. Flathead Audubon is able to effectively and efficiently sponsor different tours, natural history programs and special events that appeal to many different people in different places. We are able to accomplish this because our generous members and volunteer board members work together to make things happen. This has made it a pleasure to serve as Flathead Audubon President during the last two years. Thank you for the privilege.

Conservation Achievement Recognition to Jean Robocker, continued from page 1...

sit in the greening grass and the leaves on the Black Cottonwood trees by the river are just starting to bud. Jean speaks of the changes she has seen along the river and worries about how people will care for the land in the years to come. The Robocker lands will be safeguarded long into the future, thanks to Jean and Eugene's forethought.

Jean has long advocated for education and conservation. She served on the Board of Directors for Flathead Valley Community College for seven years, was appointed to a three year term on the State Board of Education and spent a few years serving on the Flathead County Planning Board. She is especially famous for her tiny chickens and is known around the world for her knowledge and breeding of Dutch Bantams.

Jean is a woman I have known and very much admired since I was a young girl. It is a great pleasure to honor her lifetime commitment to conservation and stewardship efforts with this Recognition.

Written by Leslie Kehoe





IT'S A CONTEST!

AND WE ALL GET TO PLAY!



FLATHEAD AUDUBON BIRDATHON

Who will have the most fun?

Who will find the most birds?

Which team will have the most fun? The one finding the most species of birds on a single day in June, of course. Flathead Audubon invites you to join in supporting one of its teams in a Birdathon.

The Birdathon works like any other "athon," where teams seek donations, either per-bird-species-seen, or as a pre-pledged amount. Contributors can expect a given team to find from 75 to 100+ species. Each team must stay within Northwest Montana and complete the count within 24 hours. At this point, we have two teams, headed by John Hughes and Bruce Tannehill. Each team will have some "backyard birders" adding to their count while other participants will

be in the field from early morning to the evening hours. The friendly competition will end in a tallying of species as well as discussion of favorite sightings.

Our hope is that this will become our chapter's annual fund-raising event. Funds from pledges received will be applied to our education efforts: our education trunks, workshops and Beauty of Birds classes, as well as our conservation efforts, for example, the licensing and maintenance of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

If you would like to help with the Birdathon or if you do not wish to be contacted, email Bruce Tannehill at tanneland@bresnan.net.

Patronize Our Local Farmers Markets!

Bigfork, Masonic Lodge Parking Lot, 8098 Highway 35 (across from Harvest Foods Grocery); 755-0650

Saturday, 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM, May 4–October 12

Wednesday, 3 – 6 PM, May 8 – October 16

Columbia Falls, Pinewood Park (Pool), Highway 2 & 4th Avenue; 892-0318

Thursday, 5 - 7:30 PM, June 13 - September 12

(home gardeners with extra produce are encouraged to participate; call by Wednesday to sign up)

Kalispell, at printing time, details were unavailable; please watch local newspapers for times/location.

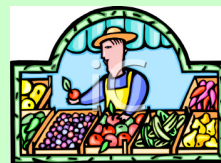
Whitefish, Depot Park, North End of Central Avenue; 871-9744

Tuesday, 5 – 7:30 PM, May 28 – September 4



For schedules and locations of other Farmers Markets in Montana, see www.aeromt.org/food-ag/farmers-market/.

Compiled by Linda Winnie



clutterwide.com

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF OUR MIGRATORY BIRDS



May 11, 2011, is the day set aside this year to recognize and focus our attention on the incredible journey birds make between summer and winter homes. Migratory birds are some of the most beautiful, observable and remarkable wildlife that share our world. Many of us know migratory birds as symbolic harbingers of spring and melodious songsters of the woods. Migratory birds are also an important economic resource, controlling insect pests and generating billions in recreational dollars.

Unfortunately, research has shown that many migratory bird species are in decline, facing a growing number of threats on their migration routes. Thus, IMBD, in addition to being a day to foster appreciation, is a call to action. Join the celebration May 11! Keep your "eyes to the sky" and your ears to the wind. Every day is a good day to appreciate the beauty, marvels, magic and voices of our feathered friends.

Learn more about IMBD at these websites: <http://www.birds.fws.gov/imbd> or <http://www.BirdDay.org>.

By Kathy Ross



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. Also, a free brochure, "Birding Hotspots of the Flathead" is available at the FAS May meeting (see page 3) and on www.FlatheadAudubon.org.



TENTH ANNUAL WILD MILE WILDFLOWER AND BIRD WALKS

Tuesdays of May and June

Please join Anne Morley of Montana Native Plant Society and Neal Brown of Flathead Audubon for an informative stroll along the Wild Mile of the Swan River. This is an easy, level trail accessible to all. Walk distance is approximately two miles. Meet at 10:00 AM at the Bigfork Summer Playhouse in downtown Bigfork. We try to be back to downtown Bigfork by noon. Bring binoculars for bird watching! Questions? Call Neal Brown 837-5018 or Anne Morley 886-2242.

BIRDING IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Saturday, May 25, 8 AM—Noon



Jeannie Marcure Photo

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 we may also walk along the road to the Quarter Circle Bridge at the mouth of McDonald Creek. We'll stop at the Fish Creek Picnic Area to search for Harlequin Ducks and scan the cottonwoods for vireos and warblers. Then we'll either 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. Sign up for this trip with Steve Gniadek at 892-7406. Meet at the Alberta Visitor Center in West Glacier at 8:00AM and return 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

Sunday, May 26, 8 - 11 AM

Join FAS on this three-hour field trip for a tour of a 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 at 8:00 AM with an 11:00 AM return. If you have questions or to sign up, call Bruce Tannehill at 862-4548.



Gerrit Vyn

EXPLORING VIKING CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE

Saturday, June 8, 8—11 AM



Viking Creek Preserve now has a completed wheelchair-accessible boardwalk through a rich and diverse riparian area and old growth forest filled with warblers, sparrows, woodpeckers and many other species this time of year. Meet at 8 AM; park in the east parking lot across from the Whitefish Lake Lodge (located on Wisconsin Avenue) and walk over to the boardwalk entrance. This field trip will last no longer than 3 hours and is limited to 20 people. Please call to sign up; trip leader is Leo Keane, 885-3999. Viking Creek Preserve is closed between March 15-May 1.

COMMON LOONS AND LOON CHICKS

Saturday, June 22, 8:30 AM—2:30 PM (maximum)

Meet Nicole Montgomery, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Kalispell West Loon Ranger, at 8:30 AM Saturday morning, June 22, at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks office (490 North Meridian Road in Kalispell) to see recently-hatched common loon chicks and adults on several local nesting lakes. Actual destinations will depend on this year's loon nesting timing and hatching success. This trip is ideal for all ages, including young families. Walking short distances down hills or along trails to observation points may be required. Nicole will provide an excellent spotting scope and tons of information about our northwest Montana loons, loon behavior and loon interactions with each other and humans, the results of years of banding efforts, and other little known facts about our local loons. The return time will be between 12:30 and 2:30 PM, depending on selected lakes. Bring lunch, binoculars, warm clothes, boots, and rain gear (just in case). Contact Nicole Montgomery to sign up for this field trip (406-581-2447 or nikkireemontgomery@gmail.com) or Gael Bissell at FWP (751-4580) for more information. Field trip limited to about 20 people. FWP will provide one 6-passenger van for carpooling, which is encouraged.



EXCITING SUMMER EVENTS!



Family Forestry Expo Saturday, May 11, 9 AM—3:30 PM



Family Forestry Expo is a weekend event for families that gives real, hands-on experience to the role that forests perform 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 FFE will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Trumbull Creek Educational Forest north of Columbia Falls on Tamarack Lane. On Saturday, 11 May, there is a free "loggers lunch," demonstrations, exhibits, FVCC's Logger Sports competition demonstration and forest walk with many different educational stops ... including a popular one from Flathead Audubon.

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

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, 11 May from 9 AM until about 3:30 PM. From Bob Lee



Community Bird Day Festival

Thursday, May 23, 5—8 PM

Salish Kootenai College: Joe McDonald Health and Athletic Center
Johnny Arlee/Victor Charlo Theater

Refreshments provided



All community members are welcome! Please come help us celebrate birds by learning more about their life cycles and yearly migrations. Information stations, vendors, games & crafts to learn about birds.

Bird Film Showing! Various short films will be shown with birds as the topic.

Sponsored by the CSKT Wildlife Management Program and SKC Environmental Studies Program

Visit our website at www.cskt.org/birdday.htm



THE WARBLER WEEKEND AT TALLY LAKE

Friday & Saturday, May 31—June 1



Jeannie Marcure Photo

Come join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary weekend of birding and relaxing. The group campsite at the campground has been reserved for the weekend. Throughout the weekend, we will be focusing on warbler identification, birding by ear, and photography. This is an ideal time of year to find a wide variety of migrant and resident birds; most notable is that all of the warbler species which can be found in NW Montana are found here. Plenty of other activities can be enjoyed at Tally Lake as well: you can bring canoes and kayaks, play volleyball or horseshoes, or go hiking on one of the numerous trails found close to the campground. There is a covered pavilion for foul weather. The cost is \$15.00 per camper unit (trailer, tent, van) per night. Please contact Dan or Susannah Casey at 857-3143 if you have questions about this outstanding adventure into the world of birds.

Special Guest

On Saturday afternoon at 3 PM, Mike Koopal from the Whitefish Lake Institute will come to the campground to talk to us about some of the amazing and unique features of Tally Lake, as well as general water quality issues and the recent septic leachate investigations of Whitefish Lake.

You can come at three to hear Mike and stay for potluck picnic and evening birding, or plan to camp the whole weekend for the full joy of being surrounded by breeding songbirds. A day use fee of \$5 is collected at the gate.



"Hummingbirds at Home" has fledged!

Audubon's first all-digital, mobile citizen science program will build a continent-wide network of citizen scientists to help uncover how hummingbirds are affected by climate change. Using a mobile-optimized web portal and smart phone apps, people from across the U.S. can report their hummingbird sightings. The data collected will guide Audubon in devising actions to help hummingbirds thrive despite climate change and other threats. Please visit www.hummingbirdsathome.org for more information and to start logging your sightings!



NOMINATIONS FOR FAS 2013–2014 POSITIONS



The Nominations Committee is delighted to present a number of excellent nominees for election in 2013. The election of new officers and board members will take place at the Annual Meeting following the Potluck on 13 May. Additional nominations will be taken from the floor. We are grateful that several current board members and officers have agreed to continue on the FAS Board. Be sure to attend the potluck and vote. Below are some brief statements from each nominee.

Nominee for PRESIDENT – Bob Lopp –

In 2005 Flathead Audubon hosted the Montana Audubon Bird Festival in Bigfork. I was FAS President and worked with a wonderful FAS Board to put on a very successful Festival. As we prepared for the 2012 Montana Audubon Bird Festival in Kalispell, I was asked to be the Vice President in part because of my experience putting on a Festival. With the leadership of Paula Smith and the dedication of the Board, it was an outstanding success.

The role of a president is to listen, suggest, moderate, encourage, bring consensus, watch the budget, and support the mission of the organization. All of these, I have done in the past and will continue to do in the future. I am passionate about Flathead Audubon and all it does, from fascinating programs and field trips to the outreach program for kids that will draw them into the wonderful world of birds that we as adults enjoy. It is no ego trip for me to be president again, but I am convinced I have much to offer to Flathead Audubon and I will continue with the same passion for our mission.

Nominee for VICE PRESIDENT – Kay Mitchell –

Most Audubon members know me as a behind-the-scenes worker, someone who takes articles written by many people and puts them together into a coherent, interesting newsletter each month. I love that job; in fact, it was my "retirement gift" to myself (along with a new computer!) when I left my career as a counselor at the MT Job Service. I've done a lot of other things, like driving a truck, teaching instrumental music and math in public schools, operating an income tax service and teaching income taxation at FVCC. So far, *The Pileated Post* gig is my favorite! But I'm also up for the next challenge...

I'm a bird lover, of course, but I'm equally as committed to quality habitat. I have been involved with the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area since FAS's first presence there and have helped organize the Work Days. My husband Brent and I operate a certified tree farm outside of Kalispell, producing logs for SFI lumber, Christmas trees and an occasional Christmas wreath for the FAS raffles. We have put a conservation easement on our property, to keep the land in forestry and wildlife habitat and to prevent the willy-nilly subdivision we see all around us. We live in a 100-year-old house that we bought for \$1 and try to live as efficiently and lightly as possible on the land. One of my strongest beliefs is that you have to "walk the talk."

I'm an ideas, organization and teamwork person, have high respect for the science that drives Audubon's positions and am amazed at the volume of top quality work produced by our very diverse FAS Board of Directors. I'm pleased to be able to help and support Bob Lopp in his role as President.

Nominee for 3-YEAR BOARD – Jan Wassink –

Jan Wassink has agreed to serve another 3-year term on the FAS Board; in fact, he thinks he is just now becoming comfortable with how the Board operates. Seriously, with his quiet insight, Jan has been a valuable contributor on the Board and also manages the FAS website. He grew up in Iowa and has a strong background in avian biology, even though he does not work in the wildlife field. Jan is an accomplished photographer and author among his many talents. Jan would like to continue to serve on the Board to promote his strong conservation values. Jan and his wife Dar raised three sons and he would like to leave a positive heritage for them and his grandkids. Be sure to ask him about llamas!

Nominee for 1-YEAR BOARD – Ben Young –

Ben Young is a teacher at Glacier High School where he teaches biology and anatomy. Prior to coming to the Flathead in the summer of 2007, Ben taught and coached in Salem, OR, while leading local birding excursions for community groups/schools and running a banding station in association with George Fox University. He also spent time in Costa Rica conducting research on hummingbirds. Ben, wife Chau, and three kids live in Kalispell. Ben has accepted a nomination for a one year position on the FAS board. We look forward to learning from his fresh ideas.

Bob Lee, Nominations Chair

REWARD Being Offered For Observations of MONTANA'S LOONS!

The Montana Loon Society is offering cash prizes for the greatest number of 2013 observations of Common Loons in Montana – either banded loons or confirmed unbanded breeding loons!

One \$200 award will be given for the most observations of banded and unbanded breeding loons reported by May 31. A second \$200 award will be given for the most observations (cumulatively) reported by July 22. The third is a \$100 award; the recipient will be chosen by a random drawing from all individuals who submitted at least one observation. This contest is generously funded by Plum Creek Timber Company. Federal and State government employees are not eligible for a cash reward if they observe loons as part of their jobs.

Send band observations to Chris Hammond of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (chammond@mt.gov) before these dates. The most useful band reports are those that come to Chris very shortly after the observation, so send them in as you see them. And send them even if you are not 100% sure of your observation. Chris may be able to send someone out to take a look.

Qualified observations will be determined and counted solely by Chris. Winners will be announced at the summer meeting of the Montana Common Loon Working Group on July 24 - 25.

Note that bands are **always** recorded in order as: 1. Left leg closest to body, 2. Left leg closest to foot, 3. Right leg closest to body, 4. Right leg closest to foot. The format of a band observation is:

(LL) _____ / _____ (RL) _____ / _____,

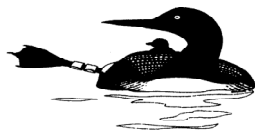
signifying Left Leg (closest to body)/(closest to foot) Right Leg (closest to body)/(closest to foot).

Use a good scope to check a loon for the presence of color leg band combinations. You can usually see a band, if one is present, within 10 minutes, but it could take up to an hour. If you see a band and your scope is not adequate or your time is limited, report this to Chris Hammond immediately (406-751-4582). He might be able to provide a high power quality scope or send someone out to your location to get the band combinations.

For details about observing loons and their bands, see Appendix C of the Montana Loon Plan (<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon/>); for background on loon banding in Montana, see Appendix D of this plan.

Some helpful tips:

When you observe loons, you may catch them raising a leg out of the water to stretch or scratch, exposing its leg bands above the water surface. This is most common when a loon is loafing or preening. Each leg will have a band; sometimes two on each. Some bands have stripes or dots. Record the color of each band plus whether any stripe or dot is present on the band, and if so, the color of the stripe or dot. Be sure to figure out correctly which color band is closest to the body and which is closest to the foot (not always intuitive when the bird is facing you and moving around).



Band colors will be blue, red, white, orange, yellow, green, silver, or pink.

Silver on right leg means banded as an adult.

Silver on left leg means banded as juvenile.

Blue, green, and red bands have a white base, so etched markings on those bands show as white. Orange, white, and yellow bands have a black base so etched markings on them show as black.

Loons are very sensitive. Please enjoy them at a distance.

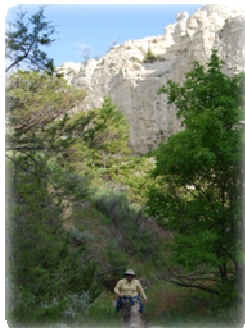
From Linda Winnie

Please remember to take an OSNA Monitoring Checklist with you when you visit Owen Sowerwine this summer. Use the checklist to tell us what parts of Owen Sowerwine you visited, and what you saw and heard while you were there. The information provided by our Volunteer Monitors helps Flathead Audubon do a better job of managing Owen Sowerwine. The checklist and a map of the OSNA trails can be downloaded from www.flatheadaudubon.org or obtained by email from Linda Winnie (lindawin@centurytel.net).

THANKS to ALL who are helping with OSNA Monitoring!

This will be your last *Pileated Post* until early September. Until then, we wish everyone a Happy Summer, filled with birds of every hue! Give yourself a gift this summer—help someone else discover the Beauty of Birds here in our northwest Montana back yard!

Editors Linda and Kay



Wings Across the Big Sky | Lewistown, MT, June 7—9

See wonderful birds, wildlife, and habitat in Central Montana! **Wings Across the Big Sky** still has many exciting field trip options from which to choose. Join fellow birders in the heart of the state for field trips, a visit from live raptor ambassador birds, and presentations on state and world-wide conservation efforts.

Owl bet this trip will be amazing! (15SU American Prairie Reserve) Join a guided tour of the American Prairie Reserve and hear firsthand about this ambitious conservation project. The tour will weave through the Reserve as we learn about the project's progress and the area's wildlife, focusing on birds. We'll see migrating shorebirds taking up residence alongside birds that stay year-round. We'll explore sagebrush grasslands and riparian corridors. Stops will include a conservation bison herd, an active prairie dog town with Burrowing Owls and raptors, and ponds with shorebirds and ducks.

Not interested in worms? Not an early bird? (11SA Carters Pond) Later morning trip! Carters Ponds are prairie reservoirs between the Moccasin and Judith Mountains, north of Lewistown. Common waterfowl include American Wigeon, Ruddy Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler and grebes. Falcons, eagles, Savannah Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, and shorebirds are also seen.

Fishing for a good catch? (2SA/2SU Big Springs State Fish Hatchery) Big Springs State Fish Hatchery is 7 miles south of Lewistown. Springs bubble up, supporting greenery and giant willows. A leisurely walk takes you through grassy hills and shade trees. Watch for Belted Kingfishers, woodpeckers, crossbills, grosbeaks, sparrows and warblers, and duck and goose families. Tour the hatchery and feed the fish!

Wing your way to an oasis! (16SU Zortman Area) You'll find yourself in a different setting from the prairie as you travel to Zortman, located in a mountain range surrounded by an ocean of grass. The Little Rockies are called the Island Mountains by local tribes. Quaking aspen, pine and fir provide habitat for Cooper's Hawks, Western Tanagers, Dusky Flycatchers, Red Crossbills and Saw-whet Owls. The cliffs attract White-throated Swifts. You'll see how a mountain oasis can attract birds and bird-watchers!

We hope to see you in the center of Montana June 7—9!



**Learn much more online at the Wings Across the Big Sky website!
Visit Mtaudubon.org.**

Call for Award Nominations

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories:

- ◆ **Lifetime Achievement Award.** For an Audubon volunteer who has dedicated extraordinary effort, time and energy to shape the activities and successes of a local Audubon Chapter and/or Montana Audubon.
- ◆ **Educator of the Year.** For a person who has shown outstanding achievement in educating others about birds, other wildlife, and conservation of habitat.
- ◆ **Conservationist of the Year.** For an individual who has provided significant wildlife conservation achievement in Montana.
- ◆ **Citizen Scientist of the Year.** For a person contributing significantly to our knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats through monitoring and observations.
- ◆ **Special Achievement Award.** For a person who has shown an extraordinary commitment to birds, other wildlife, and the conservation of habitat on a special project or through special activities.

Download a nomination form from <http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html>. Nominations are due at the MA office by May 22, 2013. Award winners will be announced at the Bird Festival banquet in Lewistown on June 7. Thanks for your help in our search for this year's award winners!

Thanks!

...to the following generous people who have made special donations to Flathead Audubon through April 18, 2013

Eagle

Roy Dimond



NCTC Image Library, USFWS

Merlin

Leslie Kehoe



avifauna.org

Kestrel

Dorothy and Henry Jorgensen

Charles McCarty

Mary Nelesen

In Honor of Joan Margaret Dyer



nhnature.org

SPECIAL GIFTS

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

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

* * * *

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

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

* * * *

☐ I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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.



KAJ18.com

Thank You, Roy Dimond!

Flathead Audubon extends a big THANK YOU to Roy Dimond for generously donating his lifetime stamp collection to the Chapter, with funds from its sale going to support both the Owen Sowerwine Project and the Conservation Education Program.

Roy was a founding member of Flathead Audubon when the Chapter formed in 1977, and has been an energetic participant in FAS activities. His diligence and humor at OSNA Work Days lighten everyone's work load. Roy's enthusiastic and often amazing reports of his bird sightings are a highlight of FAS meetings.

Thank You, Roy, for your generous donation and for your many years of support for Flathead Audubon! Thanks also to Kathy Ross, FAS Board Member, and to Don Blais, Polson, for arranging for the sale of Roy's stamp collection. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Lois Drobish has a friend who is looking for a large bird cage (perhaps 5' X 5'). If you can help with this request, please phone Lois at 756-7405. Thank you!

SAVE THESE DATES! MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

September 7 (Saturday): RAPTOR DAY in Memory of ROD ASH. Start your new Audubon year out the right way - learning all about birds at Lone Pine State Park! A family-friendly schedule of activities will be detailed in the September *Pileated Post*.

September 28 (Saturday): OWEN SOWERWINE WORK DAY. Meet at Montessori School at 9 AM. Details on what to bring and what we will be doing will be announced in the September *Pileated Post*.

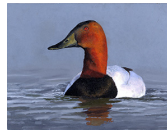


Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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

MAY 2013



2013 Federal Junior Duck
Stamp winning art by Madison
Grimm of Burbank, S.D.

Non-Profit Org.
Postage Paid
Permit No. 115
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. **Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month.** Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

FlockMaster - John Kyle: jkyle@fastmail.us

Conservation Educator - Ashley Mason: AudubonAshley@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--|----------|
| 2012-2015 | Dennis Hester | kiyotee@bresnan.net | 755-4964 |
| 2012-2015 | Steve Gniadek | grayjavbro@yahoo.com | 892-7406 |
| 2012-2015 | Lewis Young | 68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917 | 889-3492 |
| 2012-2013 | Ben Young | youngb@sd5.k12.mt.us | 257-2286 |
| 2010-2013 | Jan Wassink | janwassink51@gmail.com | 249-6590 |
| 2011-2014 | Richard Kuhl | kuhlpan@cyberport.net | 257-5793 |
| 2011-2014 | John Hughes | birdwatcher.hughes@gmail.com | 261-2506 |
| 2011-2014 | Gael Bissell | gbissell535@gmail.com | 755-8709 |
| 2011-2014 | Denny Olson | docwild@centurytel.net | 249-3987 |
| 2012-2013 | Kathy Ross | mtkat@montanaport.net | 837-3837 |
| 2012-2013 | Mike Fanning | shrdlu@centurytel.net | 862-8070 |
| 2012-2013 | Jill Fanning | shrdlu@centurytel.net | 862-8070 |
| 2012-2013 | Kay Mitchell | kbmitch@centurytel.net | 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
Executive Director: Steve Hoffman
shoffman@mtaudubon.org
Board President: Dan Sullivan
443-4229



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

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

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

Additional Donation of \$ _____
to Education Fund ☐
Owen Sowerwine Fund ☐
Wherever needed ☐

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____ - _____

Email _____

How do you wish to receive the Pileated Post?
Electronic copy/email ☐ Paper copy/U.S. mail ☐

Mail this form with your check to:
Flathead Audubon Society Membership
20 Hanson Doyle Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937