

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!

See page 3

John Frederick Receives Flathead Audubon's Conservation Achievement Recognition

In the 50th anniversary year of the federal Wilderness Act, it is fitting that Flathead Audubon presents John Frederick with a Conservation Achievement Recognition to honor his 35 year long effort to keep the North Fork of the Flathead wild.

In the 1970s, John won an Ohio Achievement Award for his efforts in recycling as president of Waste Watchers, Inc. Seeking wilder country, he moved to the North Fork in 1978 and began operating the North Fork Hostel in 1979. Coalmine and road paving proposals in the North Fork sparked him to help form the North Fork Preservation Association in 1982. He still serves as president and has for 24 years of its 34 years.

During the battle over the coal mine proposal, John bought 10 shares of Rio Algam stock. He traveled to Toronto six times to protest the mine at the annual stockholders meeting. His action generated national awareness of the issue in Canada and helped in getting the International Boundary Commission involved, an action that eventually led to Rio Algam losing interest in the project.

John has also been involved in local land

planning issues as Chair of the North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee and a member of the North Fork Improvement Association. North Fork subdivisions are now required to have 20-acre sized lots.

John continues to be involved in Flathead National Forest planning issues, including the current effort. As a board member of Headwaters Montana, he is involved in supporting the goals of the Whitefish Range Partnership and an expansion of Waterton National Park into the Canadian side of the North Fork, as well as new wilderness areas on the U.S. side of the border.

John sold his hostel a few years ago but continues to live in the North Fork from May to November. He winters in Costa Rica, soaking up the warmth his many winters in Polebridge failed to provide. Keeping joints limber allows John, along with others, to clear abandoned trails in the North Fork for the public's use.

Flathead Audubon is happy to honor John's efforts to protect the natural values of the North Fork and to hold him up as an example of what a dedicated person can accomplish.



OCTOBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, October 13, 2014. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. Dr. Frank Tyro presents "THE POLAR BEAR CAPITOL OF THE WORLD."

Monday, October 8, 2014. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Sunday October 5, 2014. Noon to 4 PM, Hawk Watch, Bad Rock Canyon, see page 6.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

by Mary Nelesen

MARTHA, THE LAST OF HER KIND

It has been a little over a year since I first learned of Martha, the last known Passenger Pigeon.

While attending the National Audubon Society Convention in July 2013, I happened upon an exhibit where people were encouraged to fold an origami pigeon to help commemorate the great flocks of Passenger Pigeons that once flew across the sky.

This exhibit was the initiative of The Lost Bird Project organized and developed by Scott Anger, Todd McGrain and Andy Stern. Their objective was to tell the story of the extinction of a species, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Passenger Pigeon's extinction.

I would like to share what I learned at that session and additional research I have done over the past year in regard to the Passenger Pigeon.



Carl Hansen

The Passenger Pigeon is an extinct North American bird. Named after the French word passage for "passing by," it was once the most abundant bird in the world. It accounted for more than a quarter of all birds in North America. Some estimate three to five billion Passenger Pigeons were in the United States when Europeans arrived. The species went from being one of the most abundant birds in the world during the 19th century to extinction early in the 20th century.

By 1900, there were no Passenger Pigeons left in the wild. By 1914, there was just 29-year old (some accounts report 18-year old) Martha, named after Martha Washington, at the Cincinnati Zoo. People lined up to see her. She was a star.

Then on September 1, 1914, Martha's body was found lying on the bottom of her cage. The Passenger Pigeon had gone from billions of birds to zero in about a century.

The Passenger Pigeon was found across most of North America east of the Rocky Mountains. Its primary habitat was in eastern deciduous forests. Beeches and oaks produced the mast needed to support nesting and roosting flocks. It was one of the most social of land birds. It lived in colonies stretching over hundreds of square miles, was nomadic, and often chose to nest in a different location each year. Pigeon migration, in flocks numbering billions, was a spectacle to behold.

The Passenger Pigeon was an excellent flyer and is estimated to have averaged 62 mph during migration. Its diet consisted of beechnuts, acorns and chestnuts in fall, winter and spring. In summer it ate berries, earthworms, caterpillars and snails. It foraged in flocks of tens or hundreds of thousands. A foraging flock was capable of removing nearly all fruits and nuts in its path.

According to naturalist Alexander Wilson, when he was traveling in Kentucky in the early 1800s, the sky suddenly became dark. He initially thought it was a tornado but then realized the sun had been blotted out by Passenger Pigeons. Wilson guessed that it contained over 2.2 billion birds – "an almost inconceivable multitude and yet probably far below the actual amount," he wrote.

This is not to say the true population size was always this abundant. As with many species, it fluctuated depending on climate and food source.

So what happened to bring about their extinction? The major cause was commercial exploitation of pigeon meat on a massive scale, along with the rapid expansion of railroads that allowed the barrels of pigeons to be shipped to distant markets. Loss of habitat was also an important factor.

In the early 19th century, commercial hunters began netting and shooting birds to sell in city markets as food, as live targets for trap shooting, and even as food for pigs. This was easily done due to the Passenger Pigeons social behavior pattern of flocking and nesting together. In addition, the cutting down of Eastern forests severely affected their nesting sites and food sources.

By the time people realized the Passenger Pigeon was drastically declining in numbers, it was too late.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Passenger Pigeon's extinction. For the entire year, bird groups and museums have been and will be commemorating the last Passenger Pigeon in a series of conferences, lectures, and exhibits.

The Lost Bird Project has placed a bronze sculpture of the Passenger Pigeon in Columbus, Ohio, the last known place... *Continued on page 6*



Todd McGrain



October Program

POLAR BEAR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD



An autumn chill in the air and snow-dusted mountain tops remind us of the return of winter. October's program by Arctic traveler Dr. Frank Tyro is about Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Churchill is known as the "Polar Bear Capital of the World" but also hosts many other interesting animals, plants and features. Frank's presentation will include polar bear numbers, distribution and metabolism, as well as the cultural and military history of the Churchill area.

Dr. Tyro became involved with the Great Bear Foundation in 1984, accompanying Dr. Charles Jonkel on the first Arctic Ecology Field Trip to Churchill to learn about and observe polar bears, other mammals and the ecology and geology of the Arctic. He has since visited the Churchill area over 34 times, and also traveled to Baffin Island, Svalbard, Iceland, Australia and Alaska.

Frank met his wife, Dr. Lori Lambert, in Churchill. They now live in Pablo with their rescued sled dogs. Frank loves the Arctic and the Great Bear Foundation and has shared the Churchill adventure with children and grandchildren. All his grandchildren know they have a trip to Churchill in their future whenever they decide to take advantage of it!

Dr. Tyro has been with Salish Kootenai College in Pablo since 1984. He administers the SKC Media/Public TV Department. He brought local public television to the Flathead Reservation in 1988. During his 46 years in radio and television broadcasting, he has produced several dozen television documentaries and won numerous national and international awards. He has also judged the International Wildlife Film Festival, International Cultural Film Symposium and the Aurora awards. Dr. Tyro received the Distinguished Service Award in 2002 from Salish Kootenai College and his 30-year blanket and plaque in 2014.

Adventure as an "armchair Arctic traveler" to the "Polar Bear Capital of the World" at 7 PM on Monday, October 13. We will meet in the United Way Conference Room at the Gateway Community Center, off US Highway 2 West in Kalispell. Also at the meeting, John Frederick will receive Flathead Audubon's Conservation Achievement Recognition.

Help Flathead Land Trust Plan for the Future!

Flathead Land Trust solicits your input on the update of their Conservation Plan. Come learn about new conservation opportunities and help plan future conservation work in Northwest Montana.

What: Conservation Plan Update Public Meeting

When: Wednesday, October 15 at 7PM

Where: Central School Museum, 124 2nd Avenue East, Kalispell

Please RSVP by October 8
with Ryan at 752-8293 or
rhunter@bigsky.net.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW TO ENJOY ANOTHER EXCITING YEAR OF FLATHEAD AUDUBON!

It's that time again! Your membership in Flathead Audubon Society gives you a partner role in maintaining, improving and enjoying the exceptional natural surroundings of our Valley. We are the standard-bearers for local birds and their healthy habitat. Our activities all year are directed toward helping our feathered friends thrive. We invite you to join us in these worthwhile efforts!

Flathead Audubon's membership year starts October 1. FAS offers two types of memberships. A Basic membership is \$20 and covers the costs of production of *The Pileated Post* monthly newsletter and speakers at our monthly general meetings. A Sustaining membership of \$35 helps us pay our yearly license fee for Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and supports the costs of Flathead Audubon's Conservation Education Program. About half of our annual budget is committed to the Conservation Education Program, which reaches literally thousands of people each year. And

Flathead Audubon is always proud to mention that 100% of members' dues stay in the Flathead Valley, to benefit local children, teens, adults and senior citizens. We keep bird watching local!

National Audubon offers its own very good programs and has its own dues structure. We recommend that you first join and enjoy your own local chapter, Flathead Audubon, and then decide whether to also join National Audubon.

The very short membership renewal form can be clipped from the back page of *The Pileated Post* and is also available on the refreshments table at our general meetings. We never sell, rent, trade or give away your contact information, including email addresses.

So come on board with us for a fascinating and fun year!



CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from September 2014 Board Meeting:

- appointed one-year board members – Kathy Ross, Jill Fanning, Mike Fanning and Bob Lee.
- discussed and finalized distribution and sales of new calendars.
- heard report on Owen Sowerwine weed treatment and work day plans.
- discussed condition of the new website and work still to be done on it.
- heard report from Steve Gniadek on Flathead National Forest revision process, Wilderness Celebration, and Steve's testimony at the Wolf Stamp hearing.

JOIN PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Help the birds and yourself; it's as easy as one, two, three. Put up a feeder, count the birds, and enter your data. Already have one or more bird feeders in place, good you're well on your way!

Project FeederWatch is a citizen science project that began in Ontario, Canada, in the mid-1970s and partnered with Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology ten years later in the USA. It is a winter-long project starting in November and ending mid-April, in which participants periodically count birds at backyard feeders and other local areas. Designed to help scientists track broad-scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance, this is the perfect project for anyone who likes birds.

No particular skill level or background is necessary to participate in the project. Participants will receive a research kit and resources to help attract and identify common winter species including an interactive tool that allows participants to learn about the food and feeder preference of nearly 100 species



Illustration by J L Hirsten

and how to predict what birds can be attracted to an area. All you have to do is watch your feeder or area as much or as little as you want over two consecutive days as often as once a week, record what you see, and send your data in. There is a \$15 fee necessary to analyze the data. The fee is scheduled to increase, so join now at the bargain rate.

The data gathered by people like you will become more important as predicted changes in climate continue to occur. Check out www.FeederWatch.org where you will find an amazing amount of information including how to sign up for the project, a list of the 25 most common winter birds, tips on tricky bird identification, participant stories and photos, and much more. Oh, did I say you could help yourself with this project? Aside from the satisfaction you will get from knowing you are helping the birds by providing them with winter

sustenance and the joy from watching them, many studies show that time spent watching nature can reduce stress.

SAGE-GROUSE NEWS

September 9 was a huge day for Audubon and its mission-related work in the news! Montana's Sage-Grouse Executive Order was issued yesterday. During the Governor's Press Conference, Montana Audubon's Janet Ellis did an excellent job, and her comments were widely quoted by the media:

"Science shows that business-as-usual will have a devastating effect on sage-grouse over the long-term. We applaud the Governor's willingness to step up to the plate to launch this important conservation program. We all need to follow the emerging science and work closely together if our conservation efforts for this iconic species are going to succeed. And what's good for sage-grouse and sagebrush is good for a whole host of at-risk wildlife species—making this an important conservation program for the state of Montana and our wildlife. We look forward to continuing to work with the Governor and others to make sage-grouse conservation a successful story in the state of Montana."

Steve Hoffman, MT Audubon Executive Director

JEWEL BASIN HAWK WATCH OFF TO GREAT START

Favorable winds and primarily sunny conditions through the first half of September, along with the dedicated efforts of a handful of experienced counters, led to record numbers of raptors counted at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch through the first half of September. A total of 884 birds were counted over the course of 18 days (124 hours) of surveys from August 26 through September 17. A Sharp-shinned Hawk seen by Diane Lundgren on the morning of September 14 was the 15,000th raptor counted at this site since our preliminary surveys in 2007. It looks like a good year for Northern Goshawks, Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels in particular. If favorable conditions persist through October, we expect our best year yet, once the Golden Eagle migration starts in earnest. Here are the species totals through September 17:

Turkey Vulture: 1	Accipiter, species: 20	Peregrine Falcon: 5
Osprey: 1	Broad-winged Hawk: 1	Prairie Falcon: 4
Northern Harrier: 21	Buteo, species: 3	Falcon, species: 2
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 416	Golden Eagle: 25	Raptor, species: 2
Cooper's Hawk: 192	American Kestrel: 40	
Northern Goshawk: 24	Merlin: 8	

If you would like to participate in the Hawk Watch (viewers of all skill levels are welcome), or want more information, contact Dan Casey at 406-270-5941.

Biggest Raptor Day Yet!

Lone Pine State Park in early September must be a little bit like what heaven will be like. Especially when you are surrounded by 270 smiling faces from the community enjoying educational booths and Montana Wildwings Recovery Center's 11 live Raptors. That's right, 270 people attended Raptor Day this year - 60 more than 2013 and 100 more than 2011! Wow!!!

The event got off to an inspirational start with June Ash and daughter Ellen Sullivan's opening address and their plea to families to get outside and get involved. June and late husband Rod are examples of how one or two people can make a tremendous impact on a community and leave a lasting legacy that benefits us all. Following June, Bob Lopp gave a warm welcome from Flathead Audubon Society to the

packed room. Montana Wildwings Recovery Center then pulled out all of the stops with 11 live Raptors and a dynamic presentation on each bird that wowed the crowd. In the afternoon Matt Larson from Denver Holt's Owl Institute gave a fascinating presentation on the Owls of Montana.

While all of this was going on, Amy Grout's Ranger team from Lone Pine was running an "Owl Camp" for kids - teaching kids about birds of prey through fun games and activities.

We are extremely grateful to the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for the grant dollars that made this event possible. We are also grateful for the energy, talent and collaborative spirit of our tireless partners at Lone Pine State Park!

Audubon Field Trip

by Doug McCarter of MT Wildwings Recovery Center

Another successful Audubon field trip! We had a total of 28 people take part in activities at the Montana Wild Wings Recovery Raptor Center. Tethered outside were 3 Buteos - Ferruginous Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, & Swainson's Hawk; 6 Owls - Great Gray Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Long Eared Owl, Saw-whet Owl, & Pigmy Owl; 2 Falcons - Peregrine falcon & American Kestrel; and an Osprey. The life history of each raptor and their injuries were discussed. Participants were divided into three groups: group 1 - Hana our Bald Eagle; group 2 - feeding program; and group 3 - new raptor housing. Montana Wild Wings volunteers presented information about each area and then the groups were rotated until all areas were covered. It was a beautiful day for a field trip. Everybody seemed to have a good time.



During the rest of 2014, in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of passage of The Wilderness Act, we will offer quotes honoring our wilderness heritage, like the following:

"If we lose wilderness, we lose forever the knowledge of what the world was and what it might, with understanding and loving husbandry, yet become." - Harvey Boome, co-founder of The Wilderness Society

FeederWatchers Track the Culprit in a House Finch Epidemic

In research that may help doctors learn how to tame human epidemics, Cornell Lab scientists are learning about how diseases move between species, and what makes them more or less deadly as time goes by. They're studying House Finch eye disease, a kind of conjunctivitis that members of [Project FeederWatch](#) helped find when it first emerged in 1994—and subsequently tracked as it spread through finches across the continent. Since then, we've been able to learn valuable lessons about how epidemics progress.

But - We Still Need Your Help.

House Finch eye disease is still around, and it continues to spread into new areas—particularly parts of the West. This year, [we're asking FeederWatchers to pay special attention](#) to House Finches at their feeders.

House Finches may be found at feeders across much of North America, and if you see these little birds, we'd like to know about it. Specifically, our scientists want to know if the birds you see appear healthy or if they have redness and swelling

around the eyes—signs of the bacterial disease (*Mycoplasma gallisepticum*) that first appeared in 1994 and is now found in House Finch populations from coast to coast.

This special push to track both sick and healthy House Finches is being carried out through the Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch. New participants are invited to sign up to help at www.FeederWatch.org. Making the correct ID is important, so there's additional help provided in distinguishing among similar species, such as the Purple Finch and Cassin's Finch.

Though this disease does not affect people, understanding how it's transmitted provides insight into how human diseases are spread. House Finch eye disease first appeared in the eastern United States and arrived in parts of the West in 2003.

Project FeederWatch is a joint research and education project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.



The eyes of this female House Finch are swollen by disease.
Dan Fleming

Book Review: [POISON SPRING: The Secret History of Pollution and the EPA](#), by E.G. Vallianatos and McKay Jenkins, Bloomsbury Press.

A new book that may interest anyone of environmental leanings came on the market in April of this year. Lois Drobish reports that it may be seen as a modern day sequel to Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" of the 1960s. Authored by a long-term official, now retired, of the Environmental Protection Agency, the book puts forth and documents some chilling behind-the-scenes policies and practices that represented day-to-day routine in the agency. Read it if you dare!



OCTOBER FIELD TRIP

THIRD ANNUAL FALL HAWK WATCH AT BAD ROCK CANYON, Sunday, October 5, 2014. From the comfort of your lawn chair and with experienced guides and quality spotting scopes, you can enjoy the annual eagle and hawk migration at Bad Rock Canyon! Join Kathy Ross and others at the House of Mystery Fishing Access Site along Highway 2, just west of Bad Rock Canyon, from noon to 4 PM. At this time of year, we expect to see Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, hawks, accipiters, and possibly migrating or resident Peregrine Falcons. This is the second annual FAS simultaneous count for Hawk Watch at both the Bad Rock Canyon and Jewel Basin Hawk Watch sites. If weather permits, we will compare our observations for Hawk Watch at both Bad Rock Canyon and Jewel Basin Watch sites in real time. Bring binoculars, scopes, chairs, and appropriate clothing. Contact Kathy Ross, 837-3837, for more information. You may also volunteer with the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch (see page 5). If neither of these options works for you, stop by the House of Mystery Fishing Access Site any time on your own and you will likely see Golden Eagles and other raptors cross Bad Rock Canyon throughout the month of October. We hope you will be able to enjoy this incredible experience!

Continued from page 2




where these birds were seen in the wild. Todd McGrain's memorial can be visited at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus, Ohio. Todd's aim in making and placing the sculpture "is to give presence to the birds where they are now so starkly absent." "These birds are not commonly known," he says, "and they ought to be, because forgetting is another kind of extinction. It's such a thorough erasing."

In Susan Dudley Morrison's book, *Gone Forever*, she writes, "The Passenger Pigeon is gone forever. Never again will anyone see the huge flocks that once blocked the sun. The beautiful bird taught us that life is fragile. Earth's wild things must be protected. If they aren't, then they, like the Passenger Pigeon will vanish."

Thank You!
 ...to those below who have made donations to
 Flathead Audubon through September 18, 2014

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Supporting Member + donation
 Steve Grayson
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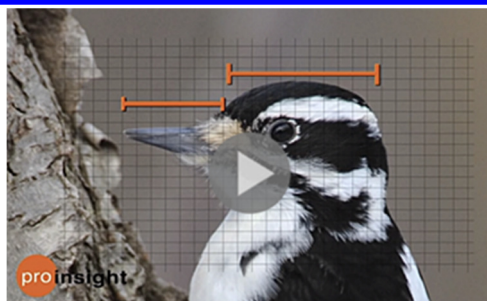




In addition to their own membership, many FAS members make donations to Flathead Audubon during the year, to further support the positive work we do. Donations are quite welcome and may be made in honor or in memory of another person. We also accept bequests and similar gifts with deep gratitude and careful stewardship.

Get Fascinated by Feathers With New "All About Bird Biology" Site at <http://biology.allaboutbirds.org/all-about-feathers/>

Feathers are amazing: they're light, aerodynamic, beautifully patterned, colorful, waterproof, and warm. To help curious minds of all ages learn about these impressive structures, we've just launched an in-depth, immersive website. It's the first stage of our new All About Bird Biology project, with more to come. Try out [All About Feathers](#), including these great elements:

- Self-paced interactive features
- Free PowerPoint downloads of all the illustrations and animations, especially useful for teachers
- Accompanying reference article that provides quick access to the science
- A video library featuring 90+ videos that bring bird biology to life. *From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology*



Free Cornell Bird ID Videos at <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/page.aspx?pid=1270>

Inside Birding videos help you with practical tips on how to recognize species like this Hairy Woodpecker.

The fields are bursting with song and the woods are teeming with feathery creatures—or you might say feathery question marks. Our four-part Inside Birding video series will walk you through the four basic keys to identifying any bird: Size & Shape, Color Pattern, Behavior, and Habitat. The videos take you out in the field with Chris Wood and Jessie Barry, two members of Team Sapsucker for clear, fun, one-on-one instruction.

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+
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The FAS activity which most interests me is:

- ☐ Education Programs
☐ Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
☐ Scholarships and Grants
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- * * * *

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Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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OCTOBER 2014



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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM 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

Conservation Educator - Ashley Mason: AudubonAshlev@gmail.com

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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 Conservation Education and Owen Sowerwine Natural Area)

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