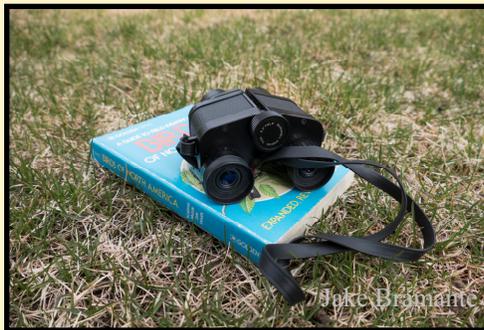




## A Golden Opportunity

We stood below the trees pishing so that we could count the Golden-crowned Kinglets that were flitting high in the canopy. I don't remember how old I was, but I remember the kinglets coming down to get a look at us. I was helping Al, a family friend and wildlife biologist, count his section in the annual Christmas Bird Count. I was also learning a few tricks of the trade that only come by mentoring from one birder to another. I considered myself fortunate. Over the next few years, I would participate in other counts. I would see Great Blue Herons, Black-capped Chickadees, and many other birds. I would even have a Northern Pygmy Owl fly up to a branch about ten yards from me. That cemented an already growing passion for birds.

My parents had given me a subscription to Ranger Rick and hung a bird feeder outside our home in the woods that attracted chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. I grew up on a patch of land that was a little over seven acres of wooded property bordering Forest Service land. My brother and I explored



it all summer long. Al had also bought me a "Golden Birds of North America" book and a pair of binoculars. Each one of these experiences, objects, and adventures fostered this love of birds and nature within me.

Upon moving back to Montana after college in Arizona, I rediscovered my love for the outdoors which has now become an obsession. During a trip to Bozeman this past summer to visit my cousin, we purchased a bag of sunflower seeds and a bird feeder for their two-year old daughter. She excitedly helped hang the feeder and now gets ecstatic for the finches that come and visit the feeder. Birds are such an amazing gateway to our wild places.

Through little acts like shopping for a feeder and participating in Flathead Audubon, I am finally starting to be able to pay it forward. Whether it's a magazine subscription, a bird feeder, a nature walk, or a bird book, we are presented with golden opportunities to gift the love of our wild places to the next generation. Make sure you take the time to do so. It matters.

By Jake Bramante

## UPCOMING ELECTIONS

The FAS Board election is soon upon us! At the May potluck, FAS will elect a Secretary, Treasurer and several Director positions. It is not too early to start thinking about who you would like to see guide FAS for the near future. The person sitting next to you at the last meeting is a good choice, and the person sitting in your seat is also a good choice! If you know of someone who would be a good leader, please contact Bob Lee (270-0371 or [ml3@centurytel.net](mailto:ml3@centurytel.net));

someone from the Nominations Committee will talk with them about roles and responsibilities and get them on the ballot. And anyone that would like to serve on the Nominations Committee should also contact Bob.



### APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

**Monday, March 14, 2016. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.**

**Monday, March 7, 2016. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.**

**Saturday, April 16, 2016. 7PM. Give a Hoot!! Barred Owls with Pete Fisher. See page 6.**

**Saturday, April 30, 2016. 8:00 AM-1:00 PM. Mission Valley Potholes and Prairie. See page 6.**

## BAT (not bird this time) OF THE MONTH

# HOARY BAT

By Lewis Young

The Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) is one of the most striking and recognizable bats in North America. It is the largest in Montana and one of the largest in

the U.S. with a wingspan of about 16 inches. The fur color on its back is a mixture of browns and grays with tinges of white giving it a frosted or hoary look that provides the common name and helps make it easy to identify. Ears are short and rounded with a distinct black edging and the tail membrane is heavily furred on the top. When roosting in cool weather the tail can be pulled up around the bat like a blanket. Relatively long,

narrow wings give it a fast, direct flight pattern. Rarely, they can be seen at dusk where they are noticeably larger than most other bats and generally high flyers. Although a "large" bat, they only weigh about 0.7 ounce! *Lasiurus* is Greek for hairy or shaggy tail, and *cinereus* is Latin for ash colored—referring to its color. The species was first described in 1796 from a specimen collected in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Hoary Bats roost on trees and tree foliage and are solitary except when females roost with their pups. Being solitary roosters and blending in well, they are seldom observed. They have been documented to return to the same roost tree for several years in some cases. Life span is typically 6-7 years but up to 12 years has been documented.

The Hoary Bat's diet consists of a variety of insects but they favor larger sized prey such as moths and beetles and like other bat species eat huge numbers of insects every night. Pregnant and lactating females may eat their own weight each night! They prefer to forage in uncluttered environments such as the edge between a meadow and forest, and usually come out to forage later than many species—often an hour after sunset. They catch their prey in the web of the tail membrane, like a catcher's mitt, then transfer it to the mouth all in a split second as do other bats.

Echolocation is used to navigate and find food—even in total darkness. Echolocation is like radar in that the bat sends out a rapid pulse of high frequency sound waves that bounce off objects. Then the return signals are used to judge the location. Their

echolocation calls at 20-30 kilohertz are at a frequency above human hearing but Hoary Bats also have a variety of social calls used to communicate with other

individuals and these are within human hearing range. Electronic devices are now available that can detect echolocation calls, and some even identify which species.

Hoary Bats usually have 2 pups but it can vary from 1-4. They have 4 nipples allowing more than 2 pups at a time to be fed. Breeding occurs in the fall but implantation is delayed so that fertilization occurs in the spring. Gestation is about 90 days with pups

being born in June. Pups at birth are mostly hairless except for a few patches of fine gray fur. They are capable of flying in approximately 30 days and reach sexual maturity the same year they are born. Although both sexes may inhabit the same general areas during summer males generally are scarce where females are raising their pups. Mothers fly up to 12 miles from the roost for foraging and when returning must find their well-concealed young. They recognize the pup's call and communicate with them when reuniting. If pups fall from the roost they give distress calls and the mother will retrieve them when possible.

With the widest range of any North American bat, Hoary Bats are found all across Montana and widespread in North America, Central America, and much of South America. It is the only bat found in Hawaii. Although widespread, they are usually in low densities except at times during migration when they may be concentrated in certain migratory pathways. They occur over a broad elevation range from the lowest valley bottoms to over 9000 feet.

A migratory species, Hoary Bats are present in Montana primarily from May or June through September. There are no records of overwintering in Montana. It is not known where Hoary Bats from Montana go in winter. Possibly, they migrate to mild coastal areas, the southern tier of states, and Mexico where they are known to occur in winter months. Males and

*continued on page 4*



# April Program

## Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge

*Once Managed for Livestock and Now Managed for Wildlife*

Our April program will be about the 9,225 acre Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. Lost Trail is a breathtakingly beautiful area nestled in Pleasant Valley in Northwestern Montana. The refuge was established in 1999 as the 519<sup>th</sup> refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Established for migratory birds, the refuge's restored glacial lake, numerous wetlands and riparian corridors, uplands dominated by prairie grasses and scattered large ponderosa pines, as well as other temperate forested areas, provide habitat for a wealth and abundance of wildlife species.

Beverly Skinner, US Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist will start her talk with the early history of Pleasant Valley and will then introduce some of the amazing wildlife that call the refuge home. Some refuge species like the boreal toad are in decline. Others such as the Trumpeter Swan and grizzly bear are on the slow road to

recovery. Many common refuge species such as the huge flocks of male Mountain Bluebirds in the spring, dancing Sandhill Cranes in the wet meadows, and the sounds of wolves howling and elk bugling in the fall are what make this refuge special. Lost Trail NWR even has a federally threatened plant – Spalding's Catchfly. Lastly, Beverly will talk about some of the current biological studies being conducted on the refuge, as well as the major three-mile county road movement which starts this spring.

Beverly was introduced to the natural world by her Missouri Ozark wildcrafter grandmother when she

was eight. She also gave Beverly her first bird book. Beverly graduated from the University of Missouri with a BS and MS in Wildlife Management and then married Bob, another wildlife biologist finishing up his PhD. Her federal career started with the USDA Forest Service in the Missouri Ozarks working on birds and endangered plants. She then spent time as a Land Operations Specialist with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Next, she took 10 years off to work as a full-time mom to their three unique and talented kids– the best job ever! The next move was to interior Alaska where Bob and Beverly both worked as wildlife biologists on

the 3.8 million acre

Innoko National Wildlife Refuge for 13+ years.

When it became necessary for Beverly to become a long distance caregiver to parents on the east coast, they returned to the lower 48 for jobs at Charles M Russell NWR. After 11 years in central Montana and a



husband ready to retire after 35 years of federal service, Beverly was offered an opportunity to transfer to Lost Trail NWR in 2013. Her personal plans are to remain at Lost Trail NWR until official retirement age, which means at least four more years of the second best job ever!

Please join us on at 7 PM on Monday, April 11. We'll meet 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. Just look for the lighted Flathead Audubon banner.

### MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 9, 2016

**Whitefish Community Center**, 121 Second Street, Whitefish

Program: Marco Restani, Director of Conservation, Montana Audubon.

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! Officers and Board Members will be elected.

### SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at the Flathead Audubon May Potluck. Now's the perfect time to gather all of the valuable "stuff" that you might be able to live without. Popular items at past Silent Auctions have been bird books, outdoor gear, art work, live bedding plants, homemade pies and cookies and bird houses and feeders of all kinds. This is your opportunity to be a Primo Recycler!

*Hoary Bat continued from page 2*

females typically don't overlap ranges during summer but do migrate together and breeding occurs then.

Conservation concerns exist even though Hoary Bats are considered "Apparently Secure" on a global basis. In Montana they are listed as a Species of Concern. Hoary Bats are the species most commonly killed by turbines at wind energy facilities and make up about 40% of all bat fatalities at those sites in North America. Although the number killed is large (estimated in the hundreds of thousands annually), the

overall size of the Hoary Bat population is unknown so the population impact of wind energy associated mortality is uncertain. Fortunately, White-Nose Syndrome (a fungus killing millions of bats in eastern North America) is unlikely to affect Hoary Bats due to their solitary roosting habits outside of caves and mines.

Hoary Bats contribute to the wonderful wildlife diversity in Montana. Although they are not easily observed during their nightly activities, they are widespread, have many fascinating features, and provide an amazing amount of insect control.

## Conservation Education Corner

by Lisa B. Flowers, FAS Conservation Educator

Learning how to really focus a pair of binoculars, what features of a bird make it able to fly and why some flap and others soar, whether to invest in a bird guide or download an app to use on your smart phone, learning common birds from their silhouettes, learning to train your ear to identify a bird by its call. These are a few of the birding basics our 26 senior students are learning about in the **Birds of Northwestern Montana** at FVCC. Volunteer class speakers include Bob Lee, Kathy Ross, Kari Gabriel, Denny Olson, and Joe & Lana Batts.

Jan Metzmaker joined Lisa Flowers to provide an opportunity for all ages to use the new Eagle Optics binoculars to view the live birds from Wildwings at the **Children's House Montessori** Interactive Children's Concert fundraiser at Muldown School in Whitefish. Our Flathead Audubon Society educational booth also had several bird skins, hummingbirds and a beautiful nest for the children and their parents to get an up close look. Brochures and 2016 Nature Reference Calendar were available to those who were interested. Children's House Montessori School administrator, Jennifer Bush, stated, "your educational display added to the excitement and interest of our entire event."

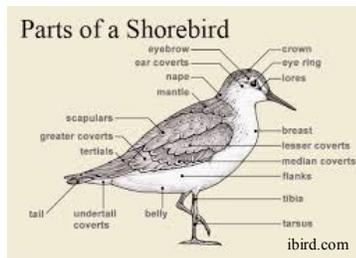
**North Valley Head Start** program students

ages 3 – 5 spent a month learning how to identify the parts of a bird with the FAS bird identification educational trunks. They loved the wearing the bird costumes. Lisa went

to their school in Columbia Falls to do two programs using the "Changing My Neighborhood" story and felt board along with the stuffed toy birds and bird puppets. The students were able to name all the parts of the birds with each other and loved telling their own stories about the birds they have seen around their neighborhoods. It was fabulous!

**West Valley and Flathead County Science Fairs** took place in early March with Linda de Kort, Denny Olson and Lisa Flowers participating as judges and selecting the FAS Naturalist Awards. Luke Ritzdorf from Kalispell Middle School was the awarded the honor for his project *Using a Towable Conductivity Mapping System to Locate Springs or Septic Leachate* presented at the Flathead County Science Fair. This award recognized Luke's excellent participation in the science fair and for using good scientific technique in asking questions that might shed light on understanding our local wildlife and the habitats that we all depend on. Luke also received a check to purchase the iBird app or other bird app of his choosing, he is considering extending his science project to include organisms that live in and near the water bodies. Other students who included their interest in the outdoors, good exploratory questions, and scientific knowledge were awarded a 2016 Nature Reference Calendar accompanied with a note from FAS.

There are many exceptional upcoming educational opportunities in April, May, and June! If you are or anyone you know are interested in volunteering or learning more contact Lisa Flowers, 406-781-1721, [auduboneducator@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneducator@gmail.com). Your interest, support, and participation in FAS's Conservation Education Program are much appreciated!!



## Beauty of Birds

In April, the adult education class **Beauty of Birds** begins at Flathead High School on Wednesday evenings from 6 – 8 PM. The 4-week class will begin with wildlife biologist Steve Gniadek. Topics will include bird songs/calls, raptors and owls. Volunteers for this class include Kari Gabriel, Denny Olson, Leslie Kehoe, and Bob Lee. For info contact Lisa Flowers, 406-781-1721, [auduboneducator@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneducator@gmail.com).

## CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

### Highlights from March 2016 Board Meeting:

- ◆ Heard Treasurer's Report that total revenue exceeds expenses to date for this fiscal year and that total financial assets have declined due to stock market trends.
- ◆ President Kay Mitchell reported a number of accomplishments to date this year including the finding of suitable storage space for FAS materials, recruiting several new committee members, and the updating of the FAS logo.
- ◆ Heard that Montana Audubon signed off on the Owen Sowerwine Memorandum of Understanding.
- ◆ Heard report that the Wiley-Robbins Bird Blind project had finally received the floodplain permit and work was continuing on getting the piers in place.
- ◆ Heard report that a variety of field trips for the spring and summer are scheduled and that the American Prairie Foundation trip is already full.
- ◆ Discussed participation in the "Great Fish" community fundraising effort and decided that the timing was not right for FAS.
- ◆ The Website Committee reported that updates have been accomplished and material from the Pileated Post is put on the website. A draft policy concerning e-commerce was discussed and will be revised and brought back to the board next month.
- ◆ Heard Membership report that both Flathead Audubon memberships (approximately 182) and National memberships (approximately 251) are down somewhat and 64 memberships overlap.

### TAX TIME ALREADY

Be sure to check the "Watchable Wildlife" box on your Montana tax form to support our feathered friends!

### FLATHEAD VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE EARLY BIRD TRIP AND BIOBLITZ

On Saturday, April 23, 2016 the Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) is hosting a Bioblitz, a full day of a campus-wide citizen-science effort to inventory of all living things. Prior to the start of the Bioblitz, Steve Gniadek, Dick Walker, and KC Voermans will lead a birding field trip through some of the diverse habitats on the FVCC campus. Meet at 7:30 AM at the tents south of the Early Childhood Center; parking is available just north of the Center. We'll return to the

tents by 9:00 AM for the Bioblitz welcome and kickoff, followed by guided hikes of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour each on the FVCC campus, centered on bird watching, plant identification, fungi identification, insect collection and aquatic invertebrate collection, plus DNA barcoding demonstrations. To pre-register for the early bird field trip, call Steve at 892-7406; or just show up at 9:00 AM for the main Bioblitz.

### West Valley Naturalist

Thursday, April 14, **Weeds of West Valley**, the good, the bad and the ugly. How can you tell a good weed from a bad weed? How can you keep bad weeds in check without harming others? What are the many ways (high cost or low cost, much time or little time, most or least effective) to control invasive plants? These are some of the questions that will be answered by Tris Hoffman, Weed Coordinator of the Flathead National Forest. Tris has been generously spreading information about weed control in our valley for 10 years. She is also the coordinator for the West Valley School insectary. Tris will bring lots of examples and visual displays to this presentation. Students and community members of all ages are encouraged to attend. There is no charge. The program begins at

7 PM and will be held in the Middle School Commons area. Please use the main West Valley School entrance at 2290 Farm to Market Road. For more information please contact Tris at 758-3510 or Jeanine Buettner 755-4733.

The West Valley Naturalist Awards were presented to two of the students who presented their projects at West Valley Science Fair. Emily Cleveland and MaKenna Hartle used good scientific technique and asked questions about local issues (effect of road deicers on soil organisms and benefits of using recycled aquarium water in aquaculture). We are grateful to Sportsman Ski Haus for donating prizes for these two young scientists.

## WINTER/SPRING FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!

All Flathead Audubon 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. All drivers must have their own vehicle insurance. 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 Flathead Audubon general meetings and on [www.FlatheadAudubon.org](http://www.FlatheadAudubon.org).



**GIVE A HOOT!! BARRED OWLS WITH PETE FISHER.** Saturday, April 16, 2016, 7 PM. Pete will again host a night of hooting and owling for Barred Owls and possibly other species that may be in the East Flathead Valley area. Field trip is limited to 25 individuals. Email Pete to pre-register: [fisherpete88@yahoo.com](mailto:fisherpete88@yahoo.com)

**MISSION VALLEY POTHoles AND PRAIRIE WITH JANENE LICHTENBERG.** Saturday, April 30, 2016, 8:00 AM-1:00 PM. We will walk through the Kicking Horse area of the Mission Valley and discuss some of the conservation partnerships and citizen science projects taking place there and in the surrounding area. Large numbers of water birds migrate through the Valley and use the many pothole wetlands for stop over and nesting habitat. The surrounding prairie provides for grassland birds such as Long-billed Curlew and Short-eared Owls. Common Loon and Trumpeter Swans can often be observed on the reservoir. Meet at 8AM, in the parking area on south side of Ronan, near MexExpress and H&R Block (and several other businesses). Contact Janene at 406-212-5473 or by email [lichtenberg@skc.edu](mailto:lichtenberg@skc.edu) to sign up. Be prepared for walking about 3 miles on flat, but uneven ground and dress appropriately for wet or cool weather conditions.



Barred Owl  
by Raylene  
Wall

**BIKE AND BIRD MCWENNEGER SLOUGH AND FAIRVIEW MARSH.** Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM to noon. Join us for a bike and bird tour of McWenninger Slough and Fairview Marsh, hosted by Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, and the Flathead River to Lake Initiative. We will bike about 8 miles on a 412-acre Flathead Land Trust conservation easement that includes a large portion of McWenninger Slough and in the Fairview Marsh area. Pete Fisher, the conservation easement landowner and bird expert of Flathead Audubon will help lead this trip. We will meet for the trip at the Fisher residence at 390 Columbia Falls Stage Rd. Because we will be traveling on both paved and gravel roads we recommend mountain or fat tire bikes that can be rented from Wheaton's (Kalispell) or Glacier Cyclery (Whitefish) for the day. Wear a bike helmet and appropriate clothing and bring water and binoculars. Please RSVP to Laura Katzman of Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 or [lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org](mailto:lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org)

**WARBLER "EARLY WEEKEND" AT TALLY LAKE.** Thursday to Saturday, June 9-11. Come join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary 2 or 3 days of birding and relaxing. We reserved the spacious group pavilion-campsite at the campground for both Thursday and Friday nights. Throughout the event, we will be focusing on bird 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 that can be found in NW Montana are found here. Plenty of other activities can be enjoyed at Tally Lake as well. Cost of camping is FREE courtesy of FAS. Call Jill or Mike Fanning at 862-8070 if you have questions about this outstanding adventure into the world of birds.

**COMMON LOONS AND LOON CHICKS.** Sunday, June 12, 8:30 AM- 2:00 PM. Join the Tally Lake/Kalispell West Loon Ranger to see recently hatched common loon chicks and adults on several local nesting lakes. Actual destinations will depend on timing and success of this year's loon hatch. Trip is ideal for people of all ages and young families. Walking may be necessary for short distances and down hills or trails to observation points. The Loon Ranger intern will provide an excellent spotting scope and information about northwest Montana loons, loon behaviors and loon interactions with each other and humans, the result of years of banding efforts, as well as other little known facts about our local loons. Meet at 8:30 AM at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 490 North Meridian Road in Kalispell. Bring lunch, binoculars, warm clothes, boots and rain gear. Return will be between 12:30 and 2:30 PM depending on distance to the lakes. To sign up or for more information, contact Laura Holmquist at the Flathead National Forest ([lholmquist@fs.fed.us](mailto:lholmquist@fs.fed.us) or 758-3501).

**LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.** Sunday, June 19, 8:30 AM-2:00 PM. Join refuge wildlife biologist Beverly Skinner and tour the incredible wetlands and grasslands of this hidden jewel west of Kalispell. See restored Dahl Lake with nesting Trumpeter Swans and an abundance of shorebird and waterfowl species. We will also spend time looking for bird species associated with Palouse prairie, riparian/wetland, and larch/pine forest habitats of the 9,000+ acre Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge northwest of Marion, MT. The trip may include seeing one of the Refuge's rarest plant, the federally threatened Spalding's catchfly, and finding/viewing boreal toads. We will drive and walk along some of the refuge's closed roads with short hikes to the best viewing sites. Meet at the Lost Trail Refuge Headquarters (about 45 miles northwest of Kalispell) between 8:15-8:30 AM. For location and more information about the refuge, go to [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/lost\\_trail/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/lost_trail/). To sign up for the field trip or get more information about the trip and possible carpooling with others, contact Beverly at 406-858-2286 or [beverly\\_skinner@fws.gov](mailto:beverly_skinner@fws.gov).

**ALVORD LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST CELEBRATION.** Friday, July 8, 2016 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Alvord Lake (Troy, MT). Come learn about the Alvord Lake Community Forest, a recently protected and outstanding 142-acre forested parcel located on Alvord Lake about 2 miles north of Troy, Montana. With the help of a federal Forest Service Community Forest and Open Spaces grant as well as donations from foundations, private donors, the landowner, and several Montana non-profits such as Flathead Audubon Society, Flathead Wildlife Inc., and Montana Loon Society, the Vital Ground Foundation was able to purchase this \$1 million+ valued parcel and protect it from possible future development. Vital Ground will manage the parcel in conjunction with the community stakeholders for its habitat, open space, educational, and recreational values. The Alvord Lake Celebration begins at Roosevelt Park in Troy around 10:00 AM where you will be shuttled over to Alvord Lake's Outdoor Classroom for an education/celebration event that includes lunch for all. We will learn about the Community Forest, ongoing forest restoration activities, currently nesting Common Loons and others birds of the lake via educational stations and short presentations. There will be some time for birding a portion of the 3-mile lake trail loop trail. Lynn Kelly, Paul Rumelhart, and Steve Gniadek will lead this joint Flathead Audubon/Montana Loon Society field trip. Those traveling from the Flathead can meet in Kalispell at 7:45 AM in the Gateway West Mall west parking lot near the United Way Public Meeting Room entrance. Return will be around 5:00 PM. Please **RSVP to Paul Rumelhart by July 5th** so we have a head count for food and travel. To sign up or get more information, contact Paul Rumelhart at 406-293 7544 (h) or 406-293-1359 (c) or by email [pwr@frontiernet.net](mailto:pwr@frontiernet.net).

**GOING BATTY!** Friday, August 12, 8:30 PM -11:00 PM. This cooperative trip between Flathead Audubon and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks will go to a site with known bat activity where electronic equipment will be used to detect the ultrasonic calls of bats flying overhead and mist nets will be used to capture bats for closer inspection. Wildlife biologists Lewis Young, Lisa Bate, and Chris Hammond will demonstrate the equipment, handle bats captured in mist nets, and talk about the amazing adaptations bats have for navigating, catching food, and hibernating. Participants will not be allowed to touch or handle bats. Headlamps or flashlights are necessary and come with suitable clothing for the evening temperatures and possibly mosquitoes as the day cools. Limited to 25 participants. Call Lewis Young (889-3492) to sign up.

#### UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS/EVENTS

**Flathead Valley Community College Early Bird Trip and Bioblitz.** Saturday, April 23, 2016 See page 5.

**Community Bird Festival,** May 5, Salish & Kootenai College. See page 9.

**FAS Birdathon,** June 18. Look for details in the May Pileated Post.

**Wild Horse Island,** June 26, with Doug and Don MacCarter.

## FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO

The 27th annual Family Forestry Expo will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Ron Buntmeyer Educational Forest located to the north of Kalispell along Trumble Creek on **Saturday, 7 May**, from 9 AM — 3 PM. This is a family event that offers hands-on understanding of the role that forests play in our everyday lives. Expo visitors 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.

There is a free "loggers lunch," demonstrations, exhibits, and a forest walk with many educational stops, including one run by Flathead Audubon Society. If you enjoy being outdoors on a spring day talking to people of all ages about forests, ecosystems and especially birds, please contact Lisa Flowers, the FAS Conservation Educator, at [auduboneducator@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneducator@gmail.com) or call 406-781-1721.

# wings across the big sky

June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

The annual Bird Festival is fast approaching. You should have received your registration brochure by now, so please register early by mailing the registration page or go online at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). Field trips are already filling up—while still plenty of options available, but you may not get your first choice. If

you're registering online, you only choose one field trip per day as the system will not allow you to register for a trip that is full; if you are registering by mail, be sure to include 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices.

Register soon and join us in Missoula in June. You will be treated to wonderful birding and non-birding tours, Friday evening and Saturday afternoon speakers, Erick Greene, Kate Davis, Jeff Marks, and American Prairie Reserve. Special items this year: purchase your copy of the new *Birds of Montana Book*—co-authors will be available for signing; PLUS be in on the beginning of our celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Montana Audubon!

## Time To Prepare For The Bears

Montana's hibernating black bears and grizzly bears will soon be stirring. Adult males usually emerge first from winter dens in mid-March. When bears emerge from their dens, they are physically depleted and food is a priority. Bears are often tempted to go where raccoons and domestic dogs are getting into garbage. If these animals are already causing problems nearby, consider it an early warning that food attractants are available and need to be removed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' bear experts stress that conflict prevention steps can greatly reduce the chances of attracting black and grizzly bears.

FWP recommends bear resistant storage bins in communities and on ranches; electric fence systems to protect bee yards and sheep bedding grounds; random redistribution of livestock carcasses each spring; and educational programs for schools, communities, and organizations.

FWP's **Be Bear Aware** website at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov)

is an easy way for homeowners and landowners to assess what they need to do now to prevent bear conflicts. Go there for tips and tools on obtaining and using bear spray, safe camping and hiking, access to bear resistant products and a guide to other items that attract bears to a property.

from MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks



Owen Sowerwine  
NATURAL AREA



### CAN YOU HELP?

#### VOLUNTEER MONITORS FOR OWEN SOWERWINE ARE NEEDED

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

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

- 1. Take an OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Form** with you **whenever you visit OSNA**. Record what you see and hear, and mail the form to Rick Mace (address on form).
- 2. Do a scheduled monitoring visit. THANK YOU** to all who have already signed up to do a scheduled visit this summer! At this point, only **2 more volunteers are needed** for the periods **August 1-15** and **August 16-31** to fill the summer schedule. The job is simple: Make one monitoring visit during the period you choose. Record your observations on a Volunteer Monitoring Form, and mail it to Rick.

For more information or to sign up for a scheduled visit, please contact me (755-1406 or [lindawin@centurytel.net](mailto:lindawin@centurytel.net)). The OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form can be printed from the FAS website ([www.flatheadaudubon.org](http://www.flatheadaudubon.org)), and will also be available at FAS meetings. A trail map that helps you locate the places referred to on the form is also available on the FAS website and at FAS meetings. Or contact me if you want them emailed or mailed to you.

From Linda Winnie



# Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through February 2016

## Osprey

Soroptimists of Whitefish



## Supporting Member + donation

Christine Dye

## My Own Vision

Roxie Davis



## 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.

**Save the Date!**  
**2016 Community Bird Festival**

Please join us for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual festival celebrating birds in science, art, and Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai tribal culture!

**May 5, 2016**  
**Salish Kootenai College**  
**4:30-7:30pm**

International Migratory Bird Day **2016**

*Spread your Wings for bird conservation*

©Loret Worrell for International Migratory Bird Day

## VINTAGE FLATHEAD AUDUBON PATCH

Recently discovered and only a few left! Wonderful for a jacket, shirt, or pack. Get one for a suggested donation of \$10. Proceeds go to the Education Program. Available at the April General Meeting.



Linda de Kort

## Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

Please nominate a deserving person for Montana Audubon's annual awards! This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award. To nominate your candidate, visit our website at <[mtaudubon.org/about/award/](http://mtaudubon.org/about/award/)>. To be considered

for this year's award, nominations must be submitted no later than **May 19, 2016**. Nominations can be submitted by email ([jellis@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org)) or mailed to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or <[jellis@mtaudubon.org](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org)>.



Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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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.

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Lisa Flowers: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

Table listing officers: President Kay Mitchell, Vice-President Gael Bissell, Secretary Marylane Pannell, Treasurer Joe Batts, Past-President Bob Lopp.

DIRECTORS

Table listing directors from 2014-2017 to 2015-2016, including names like Jim Rychwalski, Denny Olson, and Paula Smith.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Table listing committee chairs for various areas like Christmas Bird Count, Conservation, Education, Finance, Hospitality, etc.



MONTANA AUDUBON
P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
443-3949
www.MTAudubon.org
Executive Director: Steve Hoffman
Board President: Fred Weisbecker
Board Member representing FAS: Bob Lee

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)

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

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Phone

Email

The Pileated Post is sent to FAS members by email. If you wish to receive a paper copy by USPS, check this box.

Mail this form with your check to:
Flathead Audubon Society Membership
P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904