



Conservation Educator's Summer Blitz

by Denny Olson, FAS Conservation Educator

An interesting start to my tenure as FAS Conservation Educator!

June is always a busy month for our Audubon Crew. It started with a number of us attending the Montana Bird Festival in Missoula, camping at Tally Lake for the Warbler Weekend, and then Birdathon. Before I was aware that I would become the FAS CE, I had already scheduled a full summer (56 days!) of Field Instructor work in Glacier National with Road Scholar and the Glacier Institute, teaching on the trail and away from electronic contact with other humans.

With the days "off", here and there, I tried to get myself oriented to the yearly rhythm of Audubon education programming, had some monogrammed vests made to identify Auduboners as we work with the public, re-wrote the activity booklet used for our joint Road Scholar Intergenerational program, worked with Audubon volunteers on the above on two Fridays, generated another Basic Birds / Costume trunk, did a waterfowl program at Wayfarers State Park, two days of joint programming with Whitefish Legacy Partners for 5 – 8-year-olds, and scouted with teachers for our fall mentoring and monitoring event at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

The latter event will have happened by the time you read this (September 27), and, as part of our Wetlands Grant from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, will feature high school students from Flathead and Glacier Highs mentoring 3rd and 4th graders from the Kalispell Montessori School – teaching them "nature detective" skills, showing them how



to monitor plants and animals (birds!) at our permanent study plots, and removing invasive plants by hand as a service learning project. It promises to be a great day.

Looming over the busy summer for me was being responsible for coordinating the tenth annual Birds of Prey Festival in conjunction with Lone Pine State Park. This year's theme was Celebrating Hawk Watch, and included a training session for new volunteer hawk-watchers by Dan Casey in the afternoon. The weather was beautiful, Glacier Park and Sally Snag from USFS were there, Kathleen from Fancy Face Designs painted beautiful raptor faces on kids, many Audubon volunteers dressed kids in bird costumes, Hockaday Museum docents and Lone Pine staff did art projects, Kari Gabriel (Montana Bird Lady) brought her hawks and did a great program with Doug MacCarter, John Ashley talked about Harlequin Duck research, Dick Walker did a wonderful "tips and tricks" program on bird photography, and a very odd Professor Guano patrolled the grounds and regaled families with bird lore and bird songs. 285 people walked through the door in four hours, and the conservative estimate (to the great relief of yours truly) was that 350 people showed up outside! Many, many thanks to all the great volunteers who chipped in their time and talents that day, and to Lone Pine for hosting and co-sponsoring. No way could I have pulled it off without a lot of planning help.

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OCTOBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

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

Monday, October 10, 2016. 7 PM Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

Sunday, October 9, 2016. 1 PM-4 PM Golden Eagle Migration in Glacier National Park. See page 6.

Sunday October 23, 2016. 8 AM Autumn Birding in the Mission Valley. See page 6.

Sunday, October 30, 2016. 10 AM-1 PM Autumn Birding in the Flathead Valley. See page 6.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Go Goshawk!

By Ben Long

Some birders prefer pretty, showy waterfowl. Some like little perching birds that sing so lovely. Some of us go for goshawks, because they are enormously gifted predators, and dress the part.

The Northern Goshawk is the largest of the tribe of hawks called accipiter. These are the fighter jets of the hawk world. They are long-tailed and blunt-winged, built for extreme aerial maneuverability.

They earn their dinner chasing other, mostly smaller, birds down on the fly, dodging and swerving through dense forests until they are close enough to pluck their prey from the air with their talons. Such performances are a sight to see, if only because this race tends to last only seconds before “poof” go the feathers of the prey. (If you want to be amazed, search for the online video “goshawk flies through tiny spaces in slo-mo” on Youtube. It’s astounding.)

North America hosts three accipiter species: the diminutive Sharp-shinned Hawk; the middling Cooper’s Hawk, and the granddaddy Northern Goshawk. All of those are found here in the Flathead.

The Goshawk ranges across the forested regions of the northern hemisphere, including North America, Europe and Asia. In North America, the Northern Goshawk is found across Alaska and Canada and much of northern United States, their range tapering down the Rocky Mountains into the mountains of Mexico.

It can be quite challenging to distinguish one accipiter species from the other, especially since they are of the same general shape, share distinctive characteristics, and can overlap in size.

Mature, classic goshawks, however, stand out. For one thing, their heads, backs and shoulders



are a uniform, beautiful slate gray. They have a sharp white “eyebrow.” No other hawk has plumage like that. Secondly, mature goshawks have deep red eyes. These are eyes that belong in a horror show, if the audience were made of small birds and woodland creatures.

But the red eyes of the goshawks are not cosmetic. The red pigmentation is there to help the bird see clearly in

shadowy woodlands. It’s interesting to note that another coursing predator bird – the Common Loon – has similarly red eyes, although the loon uses its eyes to hunt down fish underwater, not sparrows and thrushes in the air.

The name, “goshawk” translates to “goose hawk”, is based on the old European belief that they prey upon geese. While a goshawk might eat a goose upon occasion, waterfowl is not high on the menu, as they tend to focus on forest species.

In spite of their predatory acumen, goshawks are not favorites of falconers because they are notoriously difficult to train. (The delightful and popular 2015 memoir, *H is for Hawk* by British naturalist Helen Macdonald, depicts how difficult that task can be.) Goshawks can be seen around the Flathead Valley, although it’s always a rare treat. They tend to spend their summers in the deep woods, often nesting in a “witch’s broom” cluster of branches in a Douglas fir struck with dwarf mistletoe. They can be seen in town, waiting to pick off passerine birds that come to bird feeders. In the winter, they are more often seen out in the open, hunting pastures and farmlands. Karen and I have seen goshawks at Lawrence Park and Lone Pine State Park and the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area near Kalispell.

continued on page 5.



THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA



Distribution of the Northern Goshawk in North America.

October Program

BIRD HABITAT CONSERVATION BY FLATHEAD LAND TRUST AND PARTNERS Our Current Effort to Protect Sandhill Crane Habitat

Laura Katzman of the Flathead Land Trust will be the featured speaker at Flathead Audubon's meeting on Monday, October 10. Laura will talk about bird habitat conservation accomplishments on over 750 acres in the Flathead and Mission valleys completed by Flathead Land Trust and its Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners over the last three years. In addition, Laura will describe Flathead Land Trust's current efforts to conserve almost 400 acres of crucial Sandhill Crane habitat in the West Valley. The presentation will go into depth about Sandhill Cranes and their life history and habitat needs. Find out about a proposed bird viewing area and education site overlooking a 45-acre pothole wetland in the West Valley and what you can do to help bring the project to fruition.

Laura has been a Land Protection Specialist at Flathead Land Trust for the past six years. She has a Master's Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University and was formerly a fish biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in

Thompson Falls and the Forest Service in Troy. She has lived in Kalispell the past eight years, but has been in Montana for 21 years. She has always been interested in birds and has volunteered helping with bird nest surveys and other birding work over the years.



Please join us at 7 PM in the United Way Conference Room of the Gateway Community Center, off US Highway 2 West in Kalispell. The program is free and all are welcome.

JEWEL BASIN HAWK WATCH BEGINS NINTH YEAR

The Jewel Basin Hawk Watch season officially opened on Friday, August 26 with 6 migrating raptors reported by veteran Jeweler, BJ Worth. BJ once again carried all materials to the mountaintop—again many thanks, BJ for getting things set up for the season. This report was followed the next day with 18 raptors, of seven species, being reported by Kathy Ross, Brigit Rooney and Daniel Ishmael. Despite stormy weather, numbers have increased most days with Barbara Summers having a record breaking, early season day on 9/1. On that day Barbara had an amazing 80 rap-

tors of 9 different species.

As of 9/10, 408 raptors have been counted this season with our ever-reliable, entertaining accipiters flying through in consistent large numbers (275 as of 9/10). We are grateful for our returning veteran Jewelers who have already signed up this year for surveys. A huge thank you to BJ, Barbara, Lisa Bate, Diane Lundgren and of course our dedicated leader Dan Casey. We look forward to all the new eyes and dedicated raptor lovers on the ridge this year.

By Kathy Ross

FIELD TRIP LEADER THANK YOU

THANK YOU from Flathead Audubon to the following 2016 field trip leaders for so generously sharing your valuable time and knowledge in leading an interesting, informative and varied group of field trips. From bats and bison, bighorn sheep to birds, biking, boating and new landscapes explored. A great year of field trips—thanks to each of you!

Steve Gniadek
Doug MacCarter
Lewis Young
Lisa Bate
Bob Lee
Leslie Kehoe
Janene Lichtenberg
Craig Hohenberger
Chris Hammond
Laura Katzman
Gael Bissell
Beverly Skinner

Mike and Jill Fanning
Pete Fisher
Bruce Tannehill
Gail Cleveland
Janette Oliver
Kathy Ross
Karen Nichols



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THANK YOU TOM AND TERESA QUINN

A special thank you to Tom and Teresa Quinn for their generous donation to Flathead Audubon. It will greatly facilitate our continued efforts in environmental education and conservation activities.

Snappy's Sport Senter Web Cam

In 2014 Mr. Lupton (store owner) and I discussed the possibility of erecting an Osprey platform behind Snappy's fish pond. In 2015 a web cam atop a 60 foot platform was constructed. However, It wasn't until April of 2016 that Snappy's became a proud home for its first breeding pair of Ospreys. The breeding pair produced a clutch of three eggs, however only two eggs hatched.

A contest was held to name the parents and the young ospreys. The winning names for the parents and the young were Duke & Duchess and Lewis & Clark respectively.

Mr. Lupton statement - "Its been specific to view and follow these magnificent birds - their nest building & mating, their patient process of feeding & waiting for eggs, then the laying of the 3 eggs, the hatching of 2 chicks and finally raising their offspring

to fledge successfully". The first chick hatched June 7 and chick number 2 hatched June 11. Both chicks fledged within the first week of August.



A camera system was placed on line for every body to see. As a result, every state in the USA viewed the Osprey Web Cam. In addition 60 countries also participated.

To the viewers, I hope you have enjoyed this great adventure of the life of an Osprey. Osprey have a strong fidelity to return to their nesting site so lets pray for a safe return back to Snappy's Sport Senter.

By Doug MacCarter

Lead Bullets and Wildlife

If you are a big game hunter you can contribute to the conservation of birds by switching to non-lead bullets. Why switch? Lead bullets, even copper jacketed lead bullets, fired from high velocity guns fragment on impact losing 20-40% of their mass when they hit an object. As many as 200 fragments disperse throughout the carcass and are often too small to see. The fragments may permeate the meat you bring home and often riddle the gut piles and carcasses left in the field.



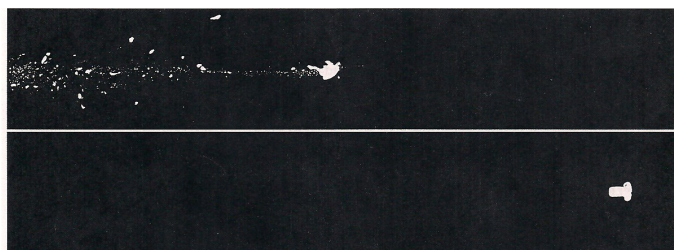
Found near Hamilton MT, 2014, this Bald Eagle died from lead poisoning. It exhibited clinical signs of lead poisoning such as head and wing droop, muscle tremors, and anorexia. Photo courtesy Brooke Tanner, Wild Skies Raptor Center.

Why are lead fragments a problem? Avian and mammalian scavengers feed on the gut piles and carcasses and ingest the lead fragments. Overwintering eagles in many parts of Montana test positive for elevated lead levels and several die each year from acute lead poisoning. Raptor View Research Institute tested 32 Golden Eagles and 11 Bald Eagles from the Bitterroot Valley from 2011-2014 and found that 86% had elevated blood lead concentrations. Evidence from multiple studies points to lead fragments as the culprit behind elevated lead levels in eagles and other scavengers.

Does switching to non-lead bullets make a difference? A voluntary program in the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming in 2009-2010 to get hunters to switch to non-lead bullets resulted in a corresponding decrease in the blood-lead levels of eagles in the sample area.

Over the last few years non-lead bullets have become available in factory loaded ammunition and multiple choices are available to those who handload their own ammunition. Non-lead bullets are normally all copper or copper alloys and retain virtually 100% of their weight upon impact. It's true that the non-lead ammunition costs more than traditional jacketed-lead bullets but the cost of ammunition is typically a very small portion of the total spent on the entire hunting experience. I personally switched to non-lead bullets several years ago and have been entirely happy with their performance in every way. Give our eagles and other wildlife a break and consider switching to non-lead bullets.

By Lewis Young, Conservation Chair



X-ray images of lead (top) and non-lead (bottom) bullets shot into a ballistics gel. Photo courtesy Jeremy Roberts/Conservation Media.

West Valley School Project

West Valley School sixth grade students spent one day last May planting native shrubs, trees, and flowers around the new addition of their middle school. Before the planting day students researched habitat requirements for each species. By midsummer hummingbirds were visiting the scarlet gilia and the serviceberry shrubs were bearing fruit. Thank you to the USFS grant



administered through Flathead Audubon for this flourishing landscape. We are also grateful to the Center for Native Plants for their expert guidance and generous discount. Thank you to West Valley teachers MaryCaye Dover and Vonnie McDonald for seeing this project through.

By Linda deKort



photographic-clipart.com

Jay's Take the Day in 2016 Birdathon

Saturday, June 18th started with a beautiful sunrise, periodic rain showers and blue skies that resulted in a wonderful birding day for Flathead Audubon's fourth annual Birdathon. Members of Jake's Jays and Tannehill's Tanagers searched the countryside from the Mission Valley to Freezout Lake and East Glacier to Tally Lake. All had a good time and the birds were cooperative, many coming out to sing after a rain shower.

The Jays carried the day with **164** species while the Tanagers found **154** species. The Jays are also slightly ahead in the amount raised by their pledges. But the day wasn't just about being in the natural environment and searching for bird species.

Flathead Audubon's fund raising goal for the bird-a-thon is two-fold. To help us pay the lease and expenses associated with the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and to continue our commitment to conserva-

tion education in the valley. OSNA is 442 acres of State Trust Land cooperatively managed by Flathead and Montana Audubon. It is Montana's only designated Natural Area. The area preserves pristine riparian habitat that supports many species of wildlife. OSNA is open to the public, so go enjoy. Directions to the site are available on the FAS website. Our new half-time conservation educator, Denny Olson, directs Flathead Audubon's conservation education programs. He is indispensable in accomplishing our conservation education goals. Money we raise helps fund his position so we can continue to educate the public at large, young people of all ages, and disadvantaged populations about the beauty of birds and the importance of conserving our natural environment.

A special thank you to all who participated in this year's Birdathon as well as donors who helped raise \$4,600.

Northern Goshawk continued from page 2

Because they haunt the deep woods, one often only catches a fleeting glimpse of a goshawk as it coasts over a logging road or zips along the edge of a meadow. You can sometimes coax the bird for a second look by kissing the back of your hand to make a squeaking sound, mimicking a mouse in peril. (While they mostly pursue birds, goshawks will also hunt hares or other small forest mammals.) Several times

I've had goshawks and other raptors double back and swoop at me, when I make such a sound.

Goshawks were persecuted in much of their global range by humans with a lethal bias against predators. They had to be reintroduced after being extirpated from, for example, Great Britain. Happily, Montana's Northern Goshawks are living here, making a dramatic living, the way they have done for uncounted centuries.

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from September 2016 Board Meeting

- ◆ Learned that the June Birdathon netted us more than we had earlier expected
- ◆ Appointed 4 committee chairs as 1-year directors
- ◆ Received a resignation from the Board from Paula Smith
- ◆ Named Jan Metzmaker as Publicity Chair
- ◆ Heard a list of programs for the new program year and suggested additional possibilities
- ◆ Learned that Hawk Watch observers are logging many more birds than at same time last year
- ◆ Discussed Owen Sowerwine Work Day (September 24)
- ◆ Studied FAS budget and asset information

FALL 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 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.



GOLDEN EAGLE MIGRATION IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, Sunday, October 9, 1-4 PM. Join Steve Gniadek and Flathead Audubon for a leisurely, mostly sedentary, "field trip" to observe migrating golden eagles, and learn about raptor migration routes and patterns. Bring a lawn chair and binoculars. Spotting scopes recommended, but a few should be available for sharing. Unlike the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch site, where birds pass at eye level, eagles migrate high over the McDonald Valley, with peak numbers in early October. Also unlike the Jewel Basin site, no hiking is required to see golden eagles and other raptors from the Lodge parking lot. Depending on the weather, dozens of golden eagles can be observed in a single hour. Golden eagles have been counted from this site for many years, and it is one of the premier golden eagle migration sites in Montana. Meet at Lake McDonald Lodge parking lot. Everyone is welcome to stop by anytime in the afternoon. If you have questions email Steve Gniadek, grayjaybro@yahoo.com

AUTUMN BIRDING IN THE MISSION VALLEY, Sunday October 23. Join Leslie Kehoe and Bob Lee for a great day of birding around Ninepipes and other bird abundant areas of the Mission Valley. It is a wonderful time to see raptors on the move and perhaps winter residents arriving. Depending on the weather, it will be interesting to see who lingers this time of year in this superb birding area. Meet at the White Oak Park N'Ride at 8 AM. We will be out most of the day so bring optics, appropriate clothing and lunch/snacks. To sign up or for more information contact Bob Lee at rml3@centurytel.net and/or 270-0371. Carpooling is encouraged.

AUTUMN BIRDING IN THE FLATHEAD VALLEY, Sunday, October 30, 10AM-1PM. Join premiere birder Craig Hohenberger exploring the Creston, Ramsfield Road and Bigfork area for late season migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. You will be treated also to an extensive list of resident birds that enjoy the winter with us, chickadees, nuthatches and bald eagles just to name a few of our wintering birds. Meet at 10AM at the Creston Elementary School parking lot, across Hwy 35, north of the Creston Fire Hall. Bring a lunch, binoculars, dress warm and plan to car pool. To sign up and for more information email Craig at aso-leado2003@yahoo.com

"The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: 'What good is it?' *Aldo Leopold*

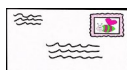
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please renew your membership in Flathead Audubon as soon as possible. For those who don't renew by October 18, this will be the last issue of the Pileated Post they will receive. Don't miss an issue of our very interesting newsletter! The FAS Board proposed and the membership voted last May to raise the membership dues a bit to cover increased expenses. The dues now are \$25 for a basic membership and \$40 for a supporting membership. This year we really need support for our excellent education program. We are the only organization in the Flathead Valley which offers free environmental education.

For those who join or renew memberships in National Audubon, note that they no longer will accept checks at the New York address. You must either use the envelope sent to you when requesting you to renew or to use the internet at <http://www.audubon.org/renew>.

When you renew your Flathead Audubon membership please include your email address. We would like to compile a list of members email addresses so we can send occasional notifications of events or important news.

By Mike Fanning



GO FOR THE ELECTRONIC POST!

Get the Pileated Post by email rather than snail mail! It saves trees and money that FAS can use to support our local projects. When you fill out the FAS Membership Form just leave the check box for "paper copy" empty; be sure to put your email address on the form. Or contact Linda Winnie directly to let us know you want email delivery: lindawin@centurytel.net



Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through mid-September 2016

Eagle

Tom and Teresa Quinn



Kestrel

Mr. Charles A. McCarty
Margie & Bob McDonald
D.B. Mitchell
Margaret R. Parodi
Ms. Elaine Snyder



Supporting Member + donation

June Ash
Joe and Lana Batts
Barbara Boorman
Lois J Drobish
Linda Hofman
Laura Katzman
Robert Lee & Leslie Kehoe
Rosemary McKinnon
Paul J Rana
Kathy Ross



MORE FIELD TRIP REPORTS ON FLAT-HEAD AUDUBON WEBSITE

Field trip reports of summer trips are available on the Flathead Audubon Website. Learn what happened at places like Alvord Lake, Owen Sowerwine islands, Going Batty, Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge, Wild Horse Island and more.

Did you know some birds can sleep while flying?

Recent studies have shown that some can take "power naps" for a few seconds and others can shut down part of their brains for a rest. These traits are especially useful to long distance migrants.



Bird Feeders and Bears

Bird feeders are often a strong attractant to bears especially in the fall when they are trying to fatten up before entering their dens. Please consider not feeding birds until the bears have entered dens which usually happens by the end of November.

Other attractants also create conflicts with bears also. Montana FWP Bear and Lion Specialist Erik Wenum says "We are urging people to step up their efforts in getting attractants secured; lock up the

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 _____

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Please send a notification of this gift to:

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☐ Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

Please make checks payable to:
Flathead Audubon Society



garbage, put the pet foods inside and pick the fruit. It's unfortunate when we have to kill a bear. It's not something we enjoy doing, but when a bear is fed human foods that is typically the outcome. If residents take responsibility and clean up all attractants, we will have fewer problems and fewer bears will need to be killed." You may contact Erik Wenum at 756-1776 or 250-0062.

the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

OCTOBER 2016



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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.

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 - Denny Olson: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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Vice-President	Gael Bissell	gbissell535@gmail.com	261-2255
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2015-2018	Lewis Young	68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917	889-3492
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2016-2017	Kathy Ross	mtkat67@gmail.com	837-3837
2016-2017	Jill Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
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Nominations	Bob Lee	270-0371			



MONTANA AUDUBON

P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
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www.MTAudubon.org

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Board President: Fred Weisbecker
443-4229

Board Member representing FAS
Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371

FAS does not share email addresses with anyone except Montana Audubon, so your address will be safe with us.

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

☐ Basic Membership \$25

☐ (Pays for newsletter and operating costs)

☐ Supporting Membership \$40

(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 ☐

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

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