



West Valley Wetlands Project Off to a Good Start

We are off and running toward our goal of \$10,000 to support the West Valley Wetlands project! As you can see by the thermometer, we are over half-way there! To all of you who have donated so far, THANK YOU! Whether you have sent a large donation or put \$1 in the "donation duck" at our general meetings, we consider you to be generous. Together, we will provide a safe place for all of the many birds that use the West Valley ponds, a protected staging area for Sandhill Cranes to prepare for their trips south, and a place for humans to easily watch birds all year round. Watch our thermometer rise by next month, too. Flathead Audubon is proud of our members' generosity and our ability to make such a major difference for our Valley's wildlife!

Kay Mitchell, Flathead Audubon President



FLATHEAD AUDUBON TURNS 40!

Time to celebrate! Flathead Audubon turns 40 this month. It was in January 1977 that a group of Flathead Valley birders decided to form the Flathead Audubon Society.

Our parent organization was the Bigfork Bird Club, which traces its roots to the first Bigfork Bird Count – held in December, 1974. The enthusiasm generated by this first Count inspired several Count participants to form the Lower Flathead Valley Bird Club, which later became known as the Bigfork Bird Club. When several years later the Club decided to take the next step and affiliate with National Audubon, Flathead Audubon was born.



To be officially chartered as a chapter of Audubon, the group needed to have at least 35 members. By late February 1977, 23 people had joined up, and in March the goal of 35 was reached. From this small nucleus of 23 people, FAS has grown to over 40 years to more than 450 members. On the list of those 23 founding members are such familiar names as Barbara Baxter, W. A. (Lex) Blood, Barbara Boorman, Kristin Bruninga, Dennis Hester, Elly Jones, Loren Kreck, Bob Lopp, Dan Paschke, Jean Robocker, David Shaner, Elmer Sprunger,
continued on page 8

JANUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, January 9, 2017. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell, back in our regular room. See page 3.

Monday, January 2, 2017. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Sunday, January 1, 2017. Kalispell Christmas Bird Count, see page 5 for details.

Saturday, January 14, 10:00 AM-noon. National Winter Trails Day: Winter Birds and Tracks in Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. See page 6.

ANIMAL OF THE MONTH

Little Brown Myotis

By Lewis Young

The Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), also known as the Little Brown Bat, is the most common bat in Montana and one of the most common in the United States until recent years. It is well named since it is small and normally some shade of brown. Colors include cinnamon-buff to dark brown above, buffy to pale gray below, and with dark brown ears and wing membranes. Their wingspan is about 10 inches and they weigh about 6 grams (0.01 pound or 0.2 ounce). Life span is probably 15-20 years but may exceed 30. One was recaptured in Wisconsin that was 39 years old.



Lewis Young

Little Brown Myotis, like most species of bats, have amazing adaptations for being active in the dark and surviving winter and are often under-appreciated for their importance to ecosystems perhaps due to lack of understanding and factual information about them. They are the bat species mostly likely to come into contact with people due to their summer use of houses, barns, and other human structures. They also roost in tree cavities especially dead trees, caves, mines, and cracks in rock outcrops and cliff faces. Hundreds of bats may be found together in good summer roosts. Males and females are mostly segregated during summer and in Montana, known maternity roosts are in buildings. If it is desired to exclude bats from buildings, non-lethal techniques are available through Montana Department of Fish Wildlife, and Parks; online through bat conservation organizations such as Bat Conservation International; and at knowledgeable private wildlife control services.

A high percentage of their diet is aquatic insects, as they like to forage over and near water. Typically they forage for the first few

hours of the night then go to a night roost where they rest and digest before foraging again before sunrise. They are especially adept at foraging through swarms of insects, and a single Little Brown Myotis may eat 1,200 mosquito-sized insects in one hour. Enormous numbers of insects are consumed nightly by these bats. Normally they feed between 3 and 15 feet off the water or ground and fly in an erratic pattern as they detect and chase prey. Prey is often caught with the tip of the wing and rapidly transferred to the mouth unlike most bats that catch their prey in the web of the tail before transferring to the mouth.

Echolocation is used for both navigation and detection of prey items. Calls at frequencies of 40 to 80 kilohertz, well above human hearing capabilities, are sent out and the reflection is used to determine the position of objects. These high frequency calls are very loud (may exceed 110 decibels) and are emitted thousands of times per second allowing them to home in on insects or avoid collisions with inanimate objects while flying rapidly. Little Brown Myotis also make social calls to communicate with other individuals and many of these calls are within human hearing range so it is possible to hear squeaks and other sounds from these bats.

Little Brown Myotis breed in the fall and the female stores the sperm until coming out of hibernation in the spring when ovulation and conception occurs. Gestation is 50-90 days and females have one young per year that are born in late June or July. Young bats are called pups and grow rapidly as the mothers nurse them. Adult body weight is achieved in



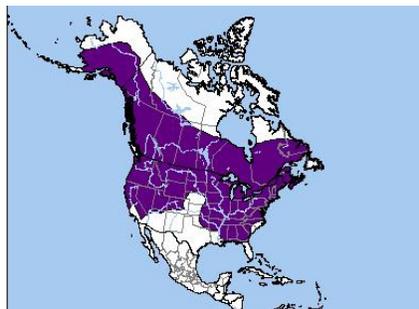
nps.gov

about 16 days and wing bone growth by about 20 days. The pups begin flying in 3-4 weeks and are weaned in about 5-6 weeks.

Hibernation takes place from around late September or early October until late March or early April at sites called hibernacula. Although considered a yearlong resident, very few hibernacula are known in Montana and some migration may occur because winter aggregations are

continued on page 8

NatureServe



January Program

Palmyra Atoll, Sooty Terns and Invasive Rat Eradication

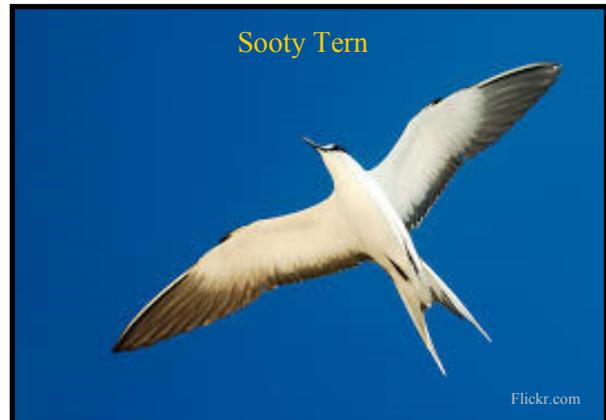
By William Beyer

Mr. William Beyer has been a Flathead valley resident since 1982, and got interested in bird watching after attending Bird Identification classes at FVCC. He has also been an Audubon member since the mid 1990's and participates in Christmas bird counts when not away from home. William has worked as a mechanic at remote locations such as Antarctica off and on since 1999. At present, William works part time for "The Nature Conservancy" at "Palmyra Atoll Research Station" as a Maintenance Technician with his first deployment being in 2007.

Palmyra Atoll is a 600+ acre speck of land with a maximum elevation of 6 feet above sea level. It lies 5 degrees North of the equator, roughly 940 miles South of Hawaii. The Nature Conservancy owns several of the islands that make up the atoll complex and the remainder belongs to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and some private interests. The Palmyra National Wildlife Refuge is part of the Pacific Marine National Monument system that protects thousands of square miles of the Pacific Ocean from commercial fishing and exploitation. Palmyra Atoll is one of the few places left where several dozen species of sea birds can still nest unmolested by man and rat alike. Palmyra Atoll is also a living laboratory where scientists and biologists can come and study the surrounding coral reef, lagoon and terrestrial life systems. The collaborative effort between TNC and USFWS allow for this, and there is enough infrastructure to support this research.

When conditions are right, Sooty Terns nest on Palmyra Atoll in huge numbers (66,000 pairs in 2011). This is quite a sight. Up to 7 nests/square me-

ter and the sound is incredible, so incredible that Alfred Hitchcock chose this sound for his movie, "The Birds". Sooty Terns spend most of their life on the wing and out at sea, only landing to reproduce.



Rats were likely introduced to Palmyra Atoll during WW-2 and had a devastating impact on nearly every form of terrestrial life here. However, in 2011, a team of experts using proven techniques were able to rid the atoll completely of the rodents. Today Palmyra is still 100% rat free. The change has been dramatic and has brought new but mostly expected changes that have yet to be addressed if need be.

William is planning to share some photos of Palmyra Atoll, the "Rat Project" and some of its bird life. Join us at 7 PM at the Gateway Community Center in our regular meeting room for this free presentation. All are welcome.

wings 
across the big sky
June 9-11, 2017 Great Falls, Montana

Time to begin making those summer plans! **Montana Audubon's Wings Across the Big Sky Festival, co-hosted by Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon**, will be held June 9-11, 2017 in Great Falls. We invite you to spread the news and enthusiasm so we can all enjoy a fantastic celebration of **40 Years of Montana Audubon**. Invite your out-of-state and nearby friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit the Missouri River corridor and participate in a

myriad of festival activities.

Included in this year's activities are amazing field trips scheduled both Saturday and Sunday. These include excursions to the Rocky Mountain Front, Benton Lake, Kevin Rim, the Highwood and First Peoples State Park, among others, with the anticipation of seeing a varied array of species and habitats, as well as some education on surveys and conservation issues.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Best Western Heritage Inn. Each month we will continue to feature developing news on the 2017 Bird Festival. Registration will begin in March. Stay tuned!

For more information contact Montana Audubon's Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson: cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

Conservation Education Corner

By Denny Olson

One of the unfortunate curiosities of Western Neo-European culture is that pesky illusion we have of disconnection from nature (when we are in reality totally comprised of nature, and nature is partially comprised of us). The natural outgrowth of that illusion is two-fold: (1) we assume that we can stand apart from nature as objective observers, and (2) we can control most of nature for our benefit without any fear of paying later consequences. For most of Western culture, it is a state of permanent denial of reality.

Indigenous cultures around the world have always been bewildered by these attitudes. Living closer to nature in tribal, economic hand-to-mouth societies makes disconnection from the nuances of nature painful and usually fatal. But existing in “civilized”, urbanized, technologically enhanced and interconnected society takes us farther and farther from the immutable truth: we are still subject to the needs of all biological beings—food, water, shelter and space – and the layers of civilization mask that from us. We have signed up for an “exemption” from the usual laws of nature, namely that the logical consequences of overpopulation, of assuming that finite resources are really infinite for us (because we are “special”, I guess) simply don’t apply to us.

That is why, as a “conservation educator”, I view my prime directive as remedial – *re-connecting* people to their life support system (it’s called “nature”). When this happens to us, what naturally follows is a wider awareness of our surroundings, a feeling of belonging to a benevolent “something” larger than ourselves, and careful, thoughtful changes in our behavior. Sounds awful, I know.

That is what is so wonderful, at least for me, about birding. Birds are out there, all the time, actively *doing* the nature that is culturally unfamiliar to us. Watching them closely, through binoculars, we see their struggles for food, water, shelter and space as a reminder of our own real needs. Under the guise of “identifying” them, we can’t help but learn from them, often accidentally, but effectively just the same. Birding is a sequential process, from noticing the American Robin cocking its head on the lawn to get its eye closer to the worm, to studying an immature Iceland Gull to determine if it is in its first or second year. It is work. It takes time and patience. You have to start at the beginning. Every new bit of knowledge is based on what you learned before.



And teaching “conservation” is completely parallel. When I recently overhauled the Flathead Audubon Riparian Wetlands educational trunk, which teachers can check out and use with their students, I first had to think about “where they probably are now, and where do I want them to be” after doing the activities and using the materials in this trunk. It is a sequence, and each activity is based on the knowledge gained from the one before. In the new trunk, first they get a geographical sense of “where am I” in the *natural* world, by using laminated maps without human constructs to determine their “water address” or their exact location on the water system as opposed to street, city, state, etc. I’m at: Drainpipe X, on Sewer Main Y, Kalispell

Water Treatment Plant, Ashley Creek, Flathead River, Clark Fork River, Columbia River, Pacific Ocean (“Sip Code” unknown). The students’ connection to the water system of the Water Planet is clear and apparent. Next, again with the maps, they draw all the stream connections both upstream and downstream from themselves (which allows them to define the Flathead Watershed and the Columbia Watershed), and discuss the consequences of being downstream from and the responsibilities of being upstream from others.

From there, through the rest of the sequence, students (3) study the diluting effects of moving water in a river re. nutrients and pollutants, (4) study the way plants and animals bio-accumulate (exponentially!) nutrients and pollutants and re-concentrate them, (5) who are the birds by the river and (6) what are their food webs and vulnerabilities, (7) how do migrators use rivers, ridges and weather to find their way to and from the river bottom next door, (8) what are their survival headaches and sanctuaries on migration – all followed by (9) a schoolyard bird survey, (10) some beginning bird song recognition exercises and emotional appreciation of bird music, (11) and then a field trip to Audubon’s Owen Sowerwine Natural Area to do an actual breeding bird survey.

The net effect (pun intended) is (hopefully) “connection” to the big wide world of the river right next door. In a perfect conservation educator’s world, it starts with “who am I” and “where am I” and ends with the birds right outside my door. Hopefully, that ending awakens a beginning – a sequence leading to the “shock and awe” of connections to everyone and everything. In case you were curious, *that’s* what a conservation educator does.

An Unusual, but Successful Season at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch

As 2016 comes to an end, Flathead Audubon volunteers and our funding partners have conducted nine years of season-long hawk migration surveys at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch. After recording 60 birds over four surveys during the last week of August, we conducted 22 surveys in September, including a six-day stretch (Sept 25-30) where 1,129 birds were counted! By October 3rd we had counted more birds (2,294) than during any previous migration season.

But just as the peak flights of Golden Eagles should have begun, we began a stretch of bad weather that limited surveys, and we were able to conduct only eight more before the end of October. It was looking like we might not even get 40 surveys done, which is our minimum target. With unseasonably nice weather in November, we got four more surveys done, the last of which (November 13th) was more than a week

later than we had ever surveyed before. One payoff for the later surveys was an immature Gyrfalcon that came to the owl November 4th; another was that we counted record numbers of Bald Eagles this year, with 39 passing during the November surveys alone. We ended the season with 2,724 birds and 17 species during 236 hours of counts on 40 survey days. Although we averaged under 6 hours per survey due to weather problems, our season long passage rate of nearly 12 birds per hour was our best ever.

If you would like more information about the Hawk Watch, contact Dan Casey at 406-270-5941 or danielcasey55@gmail.com. A more detailed final report will be provided to the Flathead National Forest and the Flathead Audubon Board of Directors early in 2017. Our totals, with record counts in **bold**:

Turkey Vulture: 0	Swainson's Hawk: 1	Prairie Falcon: 10
Osprey: 6	Red-tailed Hawk: 181	Gyrfalcon: 1
Bald Eagle: 91	Ferruginous Hawk: 1	Falcon, species: 2
Northern Harrier: 36	Rough-legged Hawk: 25	Eagle, species: 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1,308	Buteo, species: 11	Raptor, species: 18
Cooper's Hawk: 478	Golden Eagle: 302	
Northern Goshawk: 41	American Kestrel: 60	Total: 2,724
Accipiter, species: 93	Merlin: 18	
Broad-winged Hawk: 26	Peregrine Falcon: 14	

Kalispell CBC

The 18th annual Kalispell count will be on **New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1st**. Centered at Reserve and Highway 93, the 15-mi diameter count circle includes Evergreen, much of the Flathead River corridor including the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, Happy Valley, Herron Park, and the Kuhn's Wildlife Area. This count has proven to be a popular New Year's tradition. Our traditional start to this count is a group breakfast at 7:00 AM; **this year we will meet at Finnegan's Restaurant at 660 East Idaho in Kalispell**. It is here that we will finish assigning circle segments and field teams for the day's efforts. If you are interested in participating, contact Pete Fisher at fisherpete88@yahoo.com or 406-250-9624.

Great Backyard Bird Count Coming in February

The 20th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held Friday, February 17, through Monday, February 20, 2017. The GBBC is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one

or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. Please visit the official website at birdcount.org for more information.

Upcoming Discussion Topic: Invasive Mussels in the Flathead

The January session of *Science on Tap-Flathead* will feature an Expert Panel Discussion about "The Threat of Aquatic Invasive Mussels in the Flathead Watershed". It will take place January 3,

6 PM, at the Flathead Lake Brewing Company.

For more information about this January program or the *Science on Tap* series itself, visit www.scienceontapflathead.org/.

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 at 837-3837 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.



NATIONAL WINTER TRAILS DAY: WINTER BIRDS AND TRACKS IN OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA, Saturday, January 14, 10 AM-noon. Join FAS Conservation Educator and long-time teaching naturalist Denny Olson on a winter hike of all the OSNA trails. Winter birds, bird songs, tracking, botanizing, and seat-of-the-pants interpretation will be the unstructured itinerary. This is one of the best spots in the area to see Pileated and other woodpeckers, many kinds of chickadees, Bohemian and Cedar waxwings in flocks of thousands, Pine Grosbeaks, Townsend's Solitaires -- and there's always an unexpected bird. Not just ID, but lots of natural history lore, which is Denny's trademark. Dress warm, bring binoculars and snow boots, and check with us on the need for snowshoes if the snow is deep. We have binoculars and field guides if you need them. Meet at the ONSA Treasure Lane entrance gate (at the end of Treasure Lane off Willow Glen). Call 249-3987, or contact Denny at auduboneducator@gmail.com to register.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT-- EXPLORING THE BIGFORK, SWAN RIVER AND SURROUNDING AREA, Sunday, February 19, 2017, 10 AM-1:30 PM. Join us for an exciting morning of birding and learning about our winter avian residents in the Bigfork/Swan River area. We will be counting at local feeders our wintering songbirds including 3 chickadee species and Golden-crowned Kinglets as well as many other feeder surprises. Exploring the river corridor and surrounding fields we hope to see Trumpeter Swans, many duck species, Bald Eagles and maybe even a Pygmy Owl. This is an excellent outing for families with children as well birders of all ages. Dress warm, bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes. Meet at 10 AM at the east end of Swan River School main parking area. Contact Kathy Ross at mtkat67@gmail.com or 406-837-3837 to sign up.

WINGS, TAILS, TRACKS AND TRAILS IN LATE WINTER, March 4, 2017, 9 AM-about 3:30 PM, co-sponsored by Montana Wilderness Association, FAS, and Montana Audubon. Join us for a hands on, boots (or snowshoes) on the ground field study of this unique wetland habitat, the Owen-Sowerwine Natural Area! We will focus on late-winter birds, including raptors, waterfowl, woodpeckers, and songbirds. We will also study the tracks and trails of birds and mammals that leave their imprints for us to decipher. Expect some off trail travel, mud, and brush. Please come prepared with lunch, water, binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras and smiles! Meet at the Montessori School parking lot off of Willow Glen Road near Kalispell. Leaders will be Brian Baxter and Greta Gansauer of MWA. Group size is limited to 15. For more information or to sign up contact Brian Baxter at b_baxter53@yahoo.com or 406-291-2154.

FREEZOUT LAKE AND THE SNOW GEESE MIGRATION, March 25-26, 2017. Mark your calendar for the annual field trip to Freezout Lake to witness the amazing Snow Geese migration and much more. Watch for details in the February Pileated Post.

How Golden Eagles Spot Prey from Incredible Distances

Ever used the term "eagle eye"? The eye of an eagle is one of the most sensitive in the animal kingdom, and its size can cause it to weigh more than the eagle's brain. The secret to the bird's exceptional vision is the density of visual cells, the rods and cones of its retina. Look at the back of your hand: your rods register the overall shape, the cones register details such as contour and color. The density of rods and cones within a raptor's eye may be five times more than in your own eye.

So when hunting in open country, the Golden Eagle uses its seven-foot wingspan to ride thermals high into the air. There, it spots the minute movement of its favorite prey, a rabbit, over a mile away. That's like you driving at forty miles an hour, and being able to look back to where you were when you started reading this and see a jack rabbit.

So the next time you give the "eagle eye" to a raptor, chances are, it saw you first.

MAKE YOUR OWN SUET

Suet is a quick source of heat and energy for birds that's especially helpful in cold weather. Which birds does it attract? With this DIY suet from National Audubon Society you can expect woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and more!

Materials:

- 1 1/2 cups shortening
- 3/4 cups nut butter (any kind)
- 3 1/2 cups wild bird seed
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/2 cup corn meal
- Ice cube tray



Steps:

1. Mix the dry ingredients of bird seed, oats, and corn meal together and set aside.
2. Combine the shortening and nut butter in a separate bowl and melt. Stir until completely combined.
3. Pour the melted mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined.
4. Spoon mixture into the ice cube tray.
5. Freeze for one to two hours and place in your suet feeder!

♦ *Note: Not recommended for outdoor temperatures above 50 degrees.*

West Valley Naturalists

Did you know that nationally, 1 in 15 homes has elevated radon levels? In fact, the EPA suggests that there are 21,000 radon attributed lung cancer deaths every year in America. Radon is 3.5 times more deadly than pesticides in food, 7 times more deadly than asbestos, and nearly 50 times more deadly than carbon monoxide. The West Valley area of the Flathead Valley is a known "hotspot" for radon.

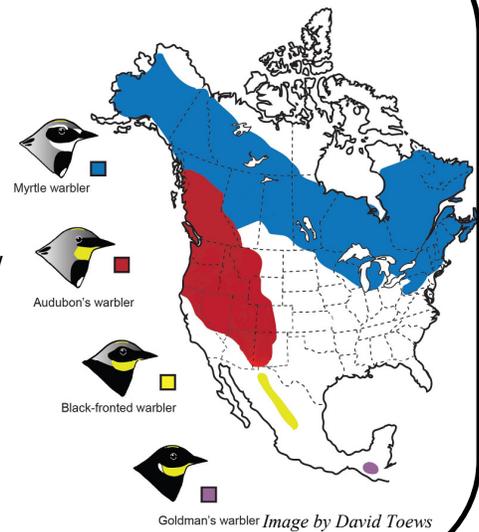
Come join the West Valley Naturalists on Thursday, January 12, 2017 at 7:00 PM at the West Valley School for a crash course in radon basics, residential radon measurement, and basic radon mitigation techniques. Information and presentation by Nick Hanson of *Pillar To Post Home Inspectors*, a nationally certified residential radon measurement provider in the Flathead Valley.

Familiar Songbird May Be At Least Three Different Species

One of North America's most beloved and familiar birds, the Yellow-rumped Warbler, may be at least three separate species, if the species were to be split, it would upend a status quo that has lasted for almost five decades and would restore two cherished common names that many bird watchers still fondly use.

For most of the last century the Yellow-rumped Warbler was two species, the Myrtle Warbler of the East (and far north) and the Audubon's Warbler of the West. But in 1973 scientists lumped them based on evidence that the two species routinely hybridize in a narrow zone in western Canada.

Now, evidence from more than 37,000 regions of the birds' DNA suggests that Myrtle and Audubon's really are separate species—and so is a third, isolated form known as "Goldman's warbler" that is almost entirely restricted to Guatemala. A fourth form known as the "Black-fronted" warbler lives in the mountains of northern Mexico but its species status is more debatable. *Adapted from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology*

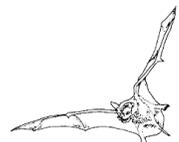


tpwd.texas.gov.com

Brazilian free-tailed bats are the species that lives in caves, under bridges, and in buildings in the southwestern US, and number in the millions. Bat Conservation International recently reported a study that documented them flying at up to

Speedy Flyers

99.4 miles per hour (160 kilometers/hr) in level flight. That is faster than any previously documented level flight for any bird or bat. Peregrine Falcons can exceed this speed but only in a dive.



Cooling.com

FAS turns 40 continued from page 1

and Jack Whitney. The first newsletter of the young Audubon chapter was called the Accipiter Express. The name Pileated Post didn't appear until 2 years later, in March 1979.

That first issue of the Express appeared in March 1977. The Directory of that first issue lists 4 officers and 2 Committee Chairs who came from a variety of locations: President Dan Sullivan was from Yellow Bay; VP Newton Reed from Bigfork; Secretary Wanda Jamieson lived in Kalispell; and Treasurer Nancy Paul is said to be from the East Shore.

Chairing the Membership Committee was Karen Sullivan of Yellow Bay; and Chairing Programs & Publicity was Rick Trembath from the East Shore. There was no Board of Directors yet. Looking at the December 2016 Pileated Post, we get a measure of how much Flathead Audubon has grown since then. Now Flathead Audubon depends on the volunteer efforts of 15 officers and board members and 15 Committees. And 12 years ago, in 2005, FAS expanded in another way when we began contracting a part time Conservation Educator to develop and carry out our Conservation Education Program.

Some things haven't changed a lot, though. Thirty years ago, the young Audubon chapter met in March for a slide program on the proposed Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and went on to submit comments supporting the passage of that Act. Today we work to keep up with what Congress has planned for the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, and submit comments supporting the continued protection of that area.

In this 40th year of Flathead Audubon we will celebrate several firsts in the formation of our organization, and recognize and thank those people who fostered the birth and growth of our organization. Watch upcoming issues of the Pileated Post for features on the activities of the young Flathead Audubon, and for announcements of special anniversary activities at upcoming FAS meetings.

OUR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION BEGINS JANUARY 9!!

Please join with your fellow FAS members to celebrate Flathead Audubon's 40th birthday during the pre-program portion of our January meeting. We'll sing Happy Birthday to ourselves, and cheer on President Kay as she cuts into our birthday cake.

Little Brown Myotis continued from page 2

much smaller than summer populations. Hibernacula offer protection from freezing temperatures and have high relative humidity that helps minimize water loss during hibernation. During this time the heart rate drops to 10-20 beats/minute compared to 200 beats/minute during rest and 1300 or more in flight. Periodically they must arouse out of the hibernation state to excrete body wastes like urea, but it may be up to 90 days continuously in full hibernation. Since they depend on stored body fat during hibernation they may lose up to 25% of their body weight during hibernation. Human disturbance in hibernacula may cause death by starvation due to the increased energy demands required to arouse from hibernation more frequently.

Little Brown Myotis range throughout most of North America from the Alaska-Canada boreal forest south through most of the continental U.S., except being generally absent from the southern Great Plains.



They are common here in northwest Montana and throughout the rest of the state.

Little Brown Myotis are susceptible to White-Nose Syndrome, an introduced, cold-loving fungus that has killed approximately 6 million bats of several species in 26 states and 5 Canadian Provinces in the eastern part of North America since 2006. Little Brown

Myotis populations in eastern U.S. and Canada have crashed with an estimated 95% mortality. So far, White-Nose Syndrome has not been detected in Montana but was found in Washington last year and has been predicted to eventually reach Montana. Montana bat researchers and cavers have implemented strict decontamination protocols when working with bats

or being in caves or other bat roosting sites in an attempt to keep White-Nose Syndrome out of Montana.

Although not usually conspicuous, Little Brown Myotis deserve appreciation for their amazing adaptations and the role they play in ecosystems.

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS**Highlights from December 2016 Board Meeting**

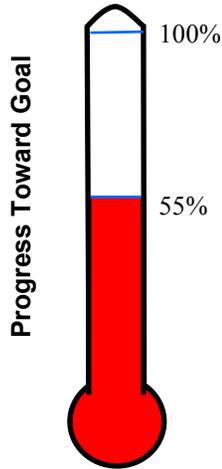
- ◆ The December Board Meeting was cancelled due to the snowstorm but some business was conducted by email afterward.
- ◆ Voted to approve the minutes from the November Board Meeting.
- ◆ Agreed to send out an appeal letter for donations to the West Valley Wetlands Project.

Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon November 1, 2016 through mid-December.

Donations to West Valley Wetlands Project

- Anonymous (matches other donations 1:2)
- Dan and Susannah Casey
- Frank and Linda de Kort
- Mayre Flowers
- P. T. McClelland
- Mary Patterson
- Mr. Franklin E. Schroeter
- Wilderness Glass Works
- Marylane Pannell
- Lewis and Lynda Young
- Bob Lopp
- Rod Walette
- Jake Bramante
- Kay Mitchell
- Devonna L. Devvi-Morgan
- Barbara Boorman
- Clancy Cone
- Donors to the "donation duck" (standing in for Sandhill Cranes) at FAS monthly meeting



Redheadredca.blog



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SPECIAL GIFTS

Flathead Audubon has committed to raising \$10,000 to support the West Valley Wetlands Project. Until that goal is reached, all donations will go to that project.

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

I want my gift to recognize another:
In memory of _____
In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

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Please make checks payable to:
Flathead Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904
Your gift is tax deductible.

Lose Your Binoculars? Were seen falling off the roof of someone's car along Hwy 93 in Kalispell then picked up. Call Sam Harworth at 890-5673 to identify and reclaim.

Songbird Stamps Available

If you would like some nice stamps to use on your letters, a special edition of Songbird stamps are now available. These stamps show four birds: Northern Cardinal, Cedar Waxwing, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet. They come in a packet of 100 stamps and cost \$47 at the Post Office, \$46.75 at COSTCO or \$9.40 for 20 stamps.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ⇒ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ⇒ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ⇒ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ⇒ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.



Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

JANUARY 2017



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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

OFFICERS

Table listing officers: President Kay Mitchell, Vice-President Gael Bissell, Secretary Marylane Pannell, Treasurer Joe Batts, Past-President Bob Lopp. Includes email addresses and phone numbers.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Table listing committee chairs: Conservation Lewis Young, Education Vacant, Field Trips Kathy Ross, Finance Mike Fanning, Donations Mary Nelesen, Hospitality Lois Drobish, Membership Mike Fanning, Jill Fanning, Owen Sowerwine Linda Winnie, Natural Area Bob Lee. Includes phone numbers and other contact info.

DIRECTORS

Table listing directors for various years from 2015-2018, including names like Lewis Young, Doug MacCarter, Jan Metzmaker, etc., and their contact information.

MONTANA AUDUBON
P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949 www.MTAudubon.org
Interim Executive Director: Norane Freistadt norane@mtaudubon.org
Board Member representing FAS Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371



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

Total \$

Name
Address
City
State Zip Code
Phone
Email

Your email address is safe with us.

You may renew or join online on our website:

http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/

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