



Member Spotlight

Artist and long-time member, Jim Jokerst is a local wildlife artist who is known for his pastel paintings and his Western Wildlife Portfolio, a set of twelve black and white pencil drawings of Rocky Mountain mammals. Jim is a quiet, soft-spoken man who believes in using his work to support organizations that educate people about wildlife and the natural environment.



By Gail Jokerst

He and his wife, Gail, live in West Glacier

where he also has his studio. His first season in Glacier National Park came in 1958 when he worked as a ranger naturalist. Since then, he has painted numerous animals and birds living in the northern Rockies. He says he likes to spend time studying an animal he

is going to paint so he's acquainted with its personality – how it moves and reacts in its natural surroundings.

This past December, Jim once again donated ten boxes of his pencil sketched note cards of native birds to Flathead Audubon Society. He requested the proceeds be given to fund the West Valley Wetland Project. The note cards can be purchased at the monthly meeting of the Flathead Audubon Society. They sell for \$10.00 for a box

of 12 cards with envelopes.

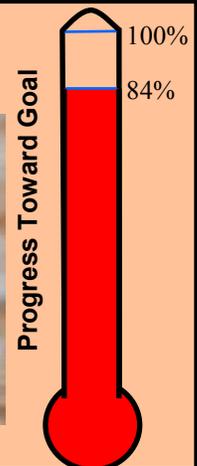
Jim's wildlife art work can be seen at The Montana House, in Apgar village, in Glacier National Park.
By Mary Nelesen

Thank You Soroptomists of Whitefish

Flathead Audubon is very grateful for a significant grant made to us by the Soroptomists of Whitefish. The mission of the Soroptomists centers on advancing opportunities for women and girls. Through our education and other programs, Flathead Audubon provides non-traditional learning and experiences in science and the natural world for women and girls of all ages from the Flathead Valley. We appreciate our partnership with the Soroptomists!

Kay Mitchell, FAS President

West Valley Wetlands Project
\$10,000 Goal



FEBRUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, February 13, 2017. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell, See page 3.

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

Saturdays & Sundays, January 9 thru March 19, 2017. Explore Glacier National Park on Snowshoes. See page 5.

Sunday, February 19, 2017. Great Backyard Bird Count. See pages 3 and 5.

Sunday February 26, 2017. Mission Valley Winter Birding. See page 5.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Black-backed Woodpecker

By Lisa Bate

When you look into a recently burned forest, what do you see? Destruction and loss? Or can you sense the pulse of new life created by stand-replacement fires? Every species has unique needs. For many plant species, fire provides a new lease on life by releasing abundant nutrients resulting in vigorous growth. For many wildlife species, fire also provides a pulse of concentrated foraging resources that allows them to not only survive, but to thrive. The Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) is one of these wildlife species. Indeed, it is so strongly associated with stand replacement fires that without periodic fire on our western landscapes, Black-backed Woodpeckers are thought to be vulnerable to local or even regional extirpations (extirpations).



MALE

© Jeremiah Tremble

The Black-backed Woodpecker is considered a rare and irruptive species, mainly found in recently burned coniferous forests. They can also be found, however, in lower densities along the edges of older burned areas, avalanche paths, flooded areas, and forests with beetle kill. The key to finding this species is to look where there are dying, and recently dead, trees. For these are the trees colonized by the highly prized round headed (Ceramidae) and flat headed (Buprestidae) wood-boring beetles. The larvae from these eggs comprise the majority of a Black-backed's diet and are rich in fat and energy.

The Black-backed Woodpecker is highly specialized in its ability to detect and obtain wood-boring larvae, more so than any other woodpecker species in our area. To extract these larvae, Black-backeds must excavate into the hard sapwood where the young larvae develop. This is made easier by their modified rib cage and skull that endure the hard pounding needed

for the job. Black-backed Woodpeckers will also feed on engraver and mountain pine beetles and their larvae; they obtain these prey by pecking, gleaning, or scaling (removing outer layer of bark) on tree trunks and logs. Black-backed Woodpeckers help in the biological control of many insects considered forest pests.

The Black-backed is a medium-sized woodpecker averaging 23 cm (9.1 in) in length. They are distinct in that they are completely black on the back, hence its name. On the closely-related American three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dor-*

salis), you will see some white on the back. Black-backed Woodpeckers are also black on the back of the head, wings, and rump. The male can be distinguished from the female by its yellow cap (instead of red as found on most woodpeckers). Along with the American Three-toed-Woodpecker, the Black-backed Woodpecker differs from other woodpeckers in our area by only have three toes: two facing forward and one facing backwards. All other woodpeckers in our area have four toes. Black-backed Woodpeckers have white on their bellies and throat; their flanks are white with black barring. Their scientific name *Picoides* comes from the Latin word *Picus* meaning "woodpecker" and the Greek word *-oides* meaning "resembling". The species name *arcticus* comes from the Greek word *arctikos* meaning "northern". This helps to describe their range which coincides with the northern limit of montane coniferous forests across North America. They can be found as far south as the Sierra Nevada range in California; in the Rocky Mountains, however, their range only extends to the Black Hills in South Dakota and northwest Wyoming.

Black-backed Woodpeckers are primary cavity-nesters, meaning that they are the first to excavate a nest cavity into a tree. Secondary cavity-nesters, like swallows, are not capable of excavating nest cavities

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FEMALE

© Tom Murray

February Program

Shrimp, Salmon, Trout and Mussels: Invasive Seafood Chowder in Flathead Lake

By Tom Bansek

Tom Bansek, aquatic ecologist at the Flathead Lake Biological Station will present a program on changes that have occurred in Flathead Lake over the last 100+ years including water quality and monitoring efforts. Although Flathead Lake's water quality is still some of the finest in the world, its ecological community has been greatly altered through both intentional and unintentional species introductions. The latest species threatening to change Flathead Lake forever are invasive mussels that were recently detected elsewhere in Montana.

Tom Bansek moved to the Flathead in the mid-1990s because of Glacier National Park and the Flathead Lake Biological Station. He completed his Master's Degree at the Bio Station, examining surface-



groundwater interactions on the Middle Fork Flathead River. Since then, he has gained extensive research experience on freshwater systems around Western North America, particularly the Flathead watershed and large salmon rivers around the Pacific Rim. Tom also has experience teaching ecology, and has led field ecology courses all over the West.

The Flathead Lake Biological Station is a University of Montana Center of Excellence that conducts ecological research with an emphasis on fresh water, particularly Flathead Lake and its watershed.

Join us Monday, February 13 at the Gateway West Community room in Kalispell at 7 PM. The event is free and open to the public.

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

Field Trips

Remember, it's not too early to begin planning your summer birding adventures! Come join us in Great Falls for **Montana Audubon's 17th Annual Bird**

Festival, this year co-hosted by Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon. We have over 20 field trips

planned for each day! — guided by knowledgeable birders and naturalists familiar with the species and their habitats in the Great Falls area. **Keep watch in early March:** Festival Registration Brochures with all field trip information, speakers and schedules will be in the mail, and the online system for registration will be active.

For more information please contact Montana Audubon Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson, cerickson@mtaudubon.org, or call (406) 443-3949.

Avalanche Research and Safety

The February session of *Science on Tap-Flathead* will feature Eric Peitzsch talking about "Avalanche Research and Safety." Peitzsch is with the Flathead Avalanche Center and USGS, Glacier Na-

tional Park. The session will be February 2, 6 PM, at the Flathead Lake Brewing Company in Bigfork.

For more information visit www.scienceontapflathead.org/.

The Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20, 2017

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages birds watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot where the birds are. Everyone is welcome—from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes a little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event.



It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website.

Go to <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/> for more details and to sign up.

FAS FIRST MEMBERS TO BE HONORED AT FEBRUARY MEETING

The first published list of Flathead Audubon members appeared in March 1977 -- in the very first issue of the new Flathead Audubon Society newsletter. It is a list of all who were members by the end of February 1977 - 40 years ago this month.

The list includes two different groups. One is all the National Audubon Society members who lived in the membership area of the Flathead Audubon Society when it was formed. They automatically became members of the new Flathead Audubon Society.

The second consists of people who were recruited for membership after Flathead Audubon was started. When in January 1977 the Bigfork Bird Club voted to turn itself into an Audubon Chapter, one of the first things it was required to do was to recruit 35 new members for National Audubon. By the end of

February -- about one month later, 23 of those new members had been signed up and by sometime in March the required 35 new members had been found.

The list of first FAS members published in 1977 combines both of these groups, making a total of 109 members. Note that some "members" consist of a couple, and in one case, a family, so there were actually at least 120 people on board.

At the upcoming February meeting of FAS we will honor all of these first FAS members.

We are hoping to get as many first members as possible to attend this meeting. If your name is on the first member list, please try to come in February. And if you know someone on the list, please urge them to come. *By Linda Winnie*

THE FIRST MEMBERSHIP LIST OF THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY—1977

Mrs. Louise Abell	Helen M Dresen	Jane Kapler	Charles R Shelton
David Agner	Daniel Dejong	Dr Loren Kreck	Fay E Smith
Art Aylesworth	Dr Muriel Edwards	Mrs Clyde Lockwood	Speer Family
Stan Bernal	Robert Gildart	Jerry R Long	Elmer Sprunger
Ilse Bailey	Marie Gaiser	Robert Lopp	John Stebbins
Victoria M Baker	Elizabeth Graff	Mrs Gregory Luduc	Paul R Strong
Betty Bartlet	Eugene E Graf	Con Lundgren	Mae Sudan
Barbara Baxter	Keith Green	Robert Lundgren	Dan & Karen Sullivan
LA Bibler	Elvira Gornick	Olga McLaughlin	JE Taplin
William C Bierrman	Dr John Frazer	Daniel R Miller	Mrs George Taylor
Marcy & Bill Bishop	Robert Hanger	Dennis Newby	Corliss H. Thomas
John Bissell	David Harriman	Linda Noble	Debby Thomas
Ladd Bjerneby	Dr & Mrs R Hastings	Marie Nooar	James Thormahlen
WA Blood (Lex)	Mrs CJ Henry	Evelyn Ober	Rick Trembath
Barbara Boorman	Mr. RA Hern	Jim Ofstad	Lillian Tubb
Mrs WD Brewer	Agnes Hopke	Daniel Paschke	Allen Tudor
Virginia Brobst	Dennis Hester	Nancy Paul (Trembath)	Jack & Ruth White
Joan L Brownell	Wanda Jamieson	Oscar O Pederson	Jack & Ursula Whitney
Kristin Bruninga	Douglas Johns	Charles Potter	Steve Wirt
Sue Buchel	Mrs K Johnston	William Rinck	Betty Violette
Randy Byrne	Dr & Mrs MEK Johnson	Betty Rose	Mrs. R. C. Wallace
David & Holly Castor	Jeff & Elly Jones	Newton Reed	David Walter
Dick & Maxine Conway	Mrs Glenn Johnston	Barbara Richardson	Rexford Webster
Dr Robert B Cotner	Diane Julum	"Doug" & Jean Robocker	Mr & Mrs Steven West
Jerome S DeSanto	Arden E Joy	Mr & Mrs H Robocker	George Widener
Roy Dimond	Antionette Jungster	Arthur Sedlack	Chester P Yost
F Divita	Sara Kane	David Shaner	

There is just one hope for repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every inch on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom and preservation of the wilderness.

Bob Marshall

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 Cory Davis at 257-3166, 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.



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 wintering songbirds at local feeders such as 3 chickadee species, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and many other species. 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.

EXPLORE GLACIER NATIONAL PARK ON SNOWSHOES. SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS, January 8 thru March 19, 2017. Enjoy a two-hour ranger-led snowshoe walk and take an intimate look at the park in winter. Search for signs of wildlife, discover the plants of the park and enjoy the solitude of winter. Not recommended for children under 6. Meet at Apgar Visitor Center. Trips leave at 10:30 AM and 2 PM. You may use your own snowshoes, or rent snowshoes for \$2 at the Visitors Center. This rental only is available for the 2 hour ranger led trips. Snowshoe rentals are also available elsewhere in the Flathead Valley. For more information, please call 406-888-7800.

MISSION VALLEY WINTER BIRDING, Sunday, February 26, 2017, 8 AM-5 PM. Join us for a day of raptors and winter birds. We'll drive the backroads of the Mission Valley and see what we can find. Meet at the Somer's Park and Ride at the corner of Highways 93 and 82. Dress warmly, bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes. We'll carpool as much as possible and Bob Lee and Leslie Kehoe will lead the caravan. For information contact Bob Lee at 270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net.

WINGS, TAILS, TRACKS AND TRAILS IN LATE WINTER, Saturday, 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.

WELCOME BACK SPRING, EARLY WATERFOWL AND OTHER MIGRANTS IN THE EAST VALLEY. Sunday, March 12. 10:30 AM-1:30 PM. Once again explore wetland areas of Creston and East Valley with premiere birder Craig Hohenberger. This is the peak time for migrating Tundra Swans and a large number of duck species heading north to breeding grounds. Early sightings of shorebirds and first of season migrant songbirds can always add to the intrigue and excitement of birding this time of year with Craig and Flathead Audubon. Meet at the Creston Elementary School, located one block north of Highway 35 on Creston Rd north of the Creston Fire Hall. Bring lunch, foul weather gear and plan to carpool. Please sign up by contacting Cory Davis at 406-257-3166, or piranga99@gmail.com.

FREEZOUT LAKE AND THE SNOW GEESE MIGRATION, March 25-26, 2017. The Snow Geese are moving from their California wintering grounds to their arctic nesting areas along with thousands of other waterfowl. There is nothing like Snow Geese and the Rocky Mountains at the same time and place. The place is Freezout Lake near Choteau; the time is the annual Flathead Audubon field trip. We will meet at the K-Mart parking lot on the corner of Highways 2 and 35 in Kalispell on Saturday morning at 10 AM, caravan/carpool to Choteau and arrive in time for the afternoon "fly-out." After spending a night in Choteau, we will head back out
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FIELD TRIPS continued from page 5

just before daybreak to watch the "mass ascension" of geese from the ponds of Freezout. After the morning's birding, we, too, will head home in the early afternoon arriving in Kalispell around 5 PM on Sunday. Bob Lee will provide a suggested schedule and route, and will be in the front of the group. Participants may choose to pursue the geese on their own as much or as little as they, the weather and the birds allow. Please make your own arrangements for lodging; primitive camping is available at Freezout WMA. Motel options include the Stage Stop (406-466-5900), Gunther (406-466-5444) and Big Sky (406-466-5318). For more information, contact Bob Lee at 270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net.

Ninepipes Christmas Bird Count 2016

The Ninepipes Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, 18 December 2016. Sixteen observers braved the single-digit weather and treacherous roads to count birds. The deep cold made open water scarce and held our total species down a bit from 5 and 10 year averages, but we found some excellent birds. Short-eared owls were present in good numbers and,

while the windbreaks didn't yield any of the usual Long-eared Owls, they did yield a Barred Owl, only the second record for the count. Other highlights included a Rusty Blackbird, white-morph Gyrfalcon, a count week only Barn Owl, and a high count of 290 Red-tailed Hawks. *By Brian Williams*

2016- 2017 Glacier National Park Christmas Bird Count

This year's Christmas Bird Count in Glacier was fantastic! We had a number of rare birds, first-time birds, unusual birds for this time of the year, and some new high counts for species. It was also 25 degrees warmer than the morning before (-15° F) and we had light, fluffy snow, making it a great day for a winter outing with friends.

This year's count was held on December 18, 2016. Twenty observers on 9 field routes and one feeder site (West Glacier) recorded 1003 birds of 37 species. This was 2.5 times more birds than last year's count! The Glacier National Park Christmas Bird Count (CBC) started in 1962, contributing to the 117th year of the National Audubon Society's CBC.

In the unusual-for-this-time of year arena, we had an American Robin and *five* Varied Thrushes. This was a new high count for Varied Thrushes, up from the previous record of two. Two Pacific Wrens were also observed. For new species on count day, we recorded a White-throated Sparrow at the feeder



White-throated Sparrow

Pat McClelland

site along with a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

We had new high counts for Snow Buntings with 15 counted and Trumpeter Swans with 25 counted. Eight of the swans were cygnets. One team recorded a White-breasted Nuthatch which is unusual anytime of the year here in Glacier; another team observed the rare Northern Hawk Owl.

Pine Siskins were the most abundant bird species detected with 420 individuals counted, followed by Common Goldeneyes at a count of 81. Count week (3 days before and 3 days after count day) yielded four additional species: Western Grebe, Northern Pygmy Owl, Black-billed Magpie, and a Merlin.

Thanks to all participants for contributing their expertise, time, and energy for this annual event. Your efforts are invaluable in tracking long-term changes in species abundance and diversity in Glacier during the early winter season! Looking forward to our next outing! *By Lisa Bate*

2016 Libby Christmas Bird Count Summary

The 47th Libby Christmas bird count took place December 17 with 10 field observers and 4 feeder watchers. The day was partly cloudy to clear with a low in the morning of -9 degrees and an afternoon high of +6, a trying day for man and feathered friends alike. Thankfully there was no wind to speak of. 42 species and 1321 birds total were recorded. Libby Dam discharge has been at full capacity for some time now attempting to spill record fall rains and many of our normal river birds including dabbling

ducks were not seen. Given the weather, our Kootenai River floaters had the good sense to abort which also contributed to our low river count. We did have one very unusual sighting however, a first for the Libby count, a Northern Shoveler. We also observed 2 Varied Thrushes and they have been seen down the road in Troy as well, unusual for us but not a first. Bald Eagles were once again abundant with 75 counted, 62 adults and 13 juveniles. *By Gene Rekin*

Kalispell Christmas Bird Count

The 18th annual Kalispell Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on January 1, 2017. Twenty-eight intrepid field observers braved wind and drifting snow to count 75 species of bird. Four feeder watchers contributed data as well. Major highlights were an Iceland Gull at the Flathead Dump and a Northern Saw-whet Owl at the Treasure Lane access point to Owen Sowerine Natural Area. Both were second ever sightings for this CBC.

Also, two new species were added to the Kalispell CBC list. Three Trumpeter Swans were discovered in the Egan Slough region and a single female

Ruddy Duck was present in Evergreen. This brings the all-time total number of species to 127! Several all-time records were broken as well. We counted the most ever Golden Eagles (3), Merlins (14), Eurasian Collared Doves (708), American Robins (206), European Starlings (2061), Dark-eyed Juncos (331) and Pine Siskins (228). Birds that were conspicuous by their absences were Gray Jay, Steller's Jay and American Dipper.

Thanks to all that participated! And Happy New Year!
By Pete Fisher

Bigfork CBC 2016

The 43rd annual Bigfork Christmas Bird Count was held Saturday, December 17th, under cloudy skies with very cold conditions; temperatures ranged from -16 to 7 above. There was a limited amount of open water (less than 10%), and much of Flathead Lake was plagued by surface fog. Thirty-three volunteer participants counted 12,459 individual birds of 80 species, down from 83 species recorded last year. The overall number of birds was also lower by approximately 2000. While we found no species that were new to the count, however, highlights were nine Snow

Geese and one Mew Gull was seen on the north shore of Flathead Lake region, one Golden Eagle in the Mud Lake area, one White-throated Sparrow in Ferndale, one Three-toed Woodpecker in Many Lakes, twenty-eight Snow Buntings in the Creston locale, and both Eared and Western Grebes observed on Flathead Lake. There was one Northern Pygmy-Owl seen during count week. We had a record high of 76 Bald Eagles for the count! Thank you to all the great participants who helped make this a wonderful count!
By Craig Hohenberger

EUREKA CBC 2016

The 24th annual Eureka Christmas bird count was held on Saturday December 17 in bitter cold weather that ranged from -17F to +3F. Twelve hardy people went to the field and 16 people counted at their feeders. Fifty-two species and 2206 individual birds were recorded. There were record high counts for 2 species--Great Blue Heron (6) and Lewis' Woodpecker (2). Record low counts were recorded for Rough-legged Hawks(2), Black-capped Chickadees (21),

Mountain Chickadees (22), and White-breasted Nuthatches (0). The scarcity of chickadees at feeders was noted by many feeder watchers. Nearly half of the species found were represented by 1-5 individuals. The most numerous species were Bohemian Waxwing (703) and Wild Turkey (233).

Thanks to all the participants for making this another enjoyable CBC!
By Lewis Young

Troy Christmas Bird Count

Troy held its Christmas Bird count on Saturday December 31st 2016. Weather started off clear and cold (6 degrees) and ended with mostly cloudy (26 degrees). We had 23 Field participants and 5 feeder watchers. Species count matched last year at 48 species for count day and 3 for count week (Cedar Waxwing, Townsends Solitaire & Merlin). Numbers were down especially in the outer areas where even the feeders were quiet. Chickadee numbers were reporting low within and outside the count area all winter. Most unusual bird was the Varied Thrush, not that we had one but in that we had 38. Just about any-

where you had a crab apple or apple tree you could find a Varied Thrush. We had one crab apple that had 12 individuals in it. The 3 hours of Owling didn't produce one bird but you can't beat being out there on a cold clear night checking out fresh lynx and wolf tracks in the powdery snow.

Participation continues to grow and the mean age is dropping – great sign, nothing like young eyes and ears. Thank you all who participated. The potluck at our house was fun as usual as was our group breakfast.
By Don Jones

Black-backed Woodpecker continued from page 2 on their own, but will readily occupy a Black-backed's cavity in subsequent years. The call of the Black-backed Woodpecker is described as a sharp "chek" and the drum is easily distinguished from other woodpecker drums by it slower, longer, and accelerating beat. Best of all is its harsh rattle call which reminds me of the sound a diving board makes as a swimmer jumps off: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-backed_Woodpecker/sounds.

How Black-backed Woodpeckers detect and move to large burn areas on our landscape is not well understood. It may simply be opportunistic, but it may be more complex. Perhaps they can detect wood-boring beetles at great distances? Many insects exude pheromones, or chemical aromas that have distinct messages. For example, mountain pine beetles inhabiting a tree release a pheromone that tells other beetles that the tree is already inhabited. Then the investigating beetle will have to find another tree in which it can lay its eggs. This is how pheromone packets hung on large, stressed trees prevent beetles from attacking it.

Biologists wonder if certain wood-boring beetles may exude a pheromone that Black-backed Woodpeckers can detect from great distances away. Consider wood-boring beetles in the genus *Melanophila* (fire-loving). Commonly known as "fire beetles", these insects can detect forest fires up to 100 km (60 miles) away. Researchers have found

that these beetles have unique sensors on the sides of their bodies that can detect infrared energy from fires. The infrared energy is then converted into mechanical energy by these sensors, informing the insect of the direction and distance of the nearest fire. This is important because freshly burned trees are the only place where the fire-beetle larvae can develop. Firefighters have often reported large numbers of these beetles arriving in forests as they clear a fire line and the landscape is still smoking.

Conservation concerns for this species include fire suppression and salvage logging. Research has shown that in stand-replacement burned forests, Black-backed Woodpeckers select areas with the highest densities of snags (standing dead trees). Retention of the bark is critical if the trees are to be colonized by wood-boring beetles and provide foraging resources for woodpeckers. Salvage logging operations are known to adversely affect Black-backed Woodpecker habitat; therefore conserving select forest stands in burned areas is important for maintaining viable populations of this species.

Interested in seeing Black-backed Woodpeckers? Visit recently burned forests that have burned within the past three years; this timeline coincides with the beetle larvae life cycle. In older burned areas, focus on the perimeter of the burn where larger trees that still retain their bark may be dying or have recently died. Then

stand still and listen. Follow the sounds of calling, drumming, tapping, and excavating as these woodpeckers defend their territories and seek the juicy wood-boring beetle larvae.



CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from January 2017 Board Meeting

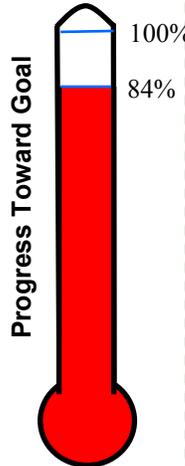
- ◇ Heard the informal financial review conducted by Bruce Tannehill found that everything looked correct and clear.
- ◇ Discussed if there is a need for an Important Bird Area (IBA) committee to put more emphasis on the existing IBA's and potentially develop additional IBA's. No committee was formed at this time.
- ◇ Agreed to reduce the amount of paper used at Board Meetings by using a computer projector to view as many documents as possible.
- ◇ Heard the Education Report from Denny Olson, Conservation Educator. The Education Trunk, Riparian Wetlands/Birds and the River, has been completely revised and is available for use.
- ◇ Received an update on progress on the 2018 calendar project. Nine of the 12 months have sponsors already and the monthly write-ups are being reviewed.
- ◇ Heard that the website has been moved over to a new host that costs considerably less although the transition was not easy.

Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon in the period mid-December 2016 through mid-January 2017.

Donations to West Valley Wetlands Project

- Anonymous (matches other donations 1:2)
- Tom and Teresa Quinn Foundation
- Bruce Tannehill and Gail Cleveland
- Robert and Beverly Skinner
- Beth Schecher
- Elaine Snyder
- Preston and Margie Spenser
- Peter and Karen Saunders
- Duane Klarich
- Michael and Noreen Fraleigh
- Craig Hohenberger and Susan Socha
- Richard and Carla Holman
- George and Patricia Nye
- P.A. McLaughlin
- Dan and Jean Paschke
- Karen Chickering
- Dean Robbins
- Tom and Stephenne Harding
- Don and Mary Patterson
- Joel and Barbara Vignere
- Michael and Wendy Lauman
- James Petersen
- G.A. Letourneau
- Charles and Mary Bleck
- Ryan and Judith Overbeek
- Charles and Rachel Potter
- Florence Jacobson
- William Beyer
- Christine Dye
- Barbara Summer
- Monica Jungster and Charles Brasen
- Linda Hofman
- Carol Buchan
- Carolyn and Brian Nelson
- Elizabeth Powell
- Daniel and June Diamond
- Edmond and Scherry Baldwin
- Linda and John Winnie
- Beverly and James Murphy
- Raylene Wall and Eric Caster
- Diane and William Lungren
- Gael Bissell and Richard Mace
- Steve Gniadek and Susan Sindt
- James and Mary Sloan
- Dennis Olson
- Paula Smith
- John Clay
- Jan Metzmaker
- Alice Flowers
- Scott or Patricia Mason



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 _____

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In memory of _____

In honor of _____

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Name _____

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City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:
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P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904
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- Lois Drobish
- Diane Buchele
- Margaret Parodi
- Barbara Lee
- Elizabeth Gardner
- Peggy and Christopher Moore
- Harry Gibson
- Sandra S. McQuirk-Linus
- Barbara Lutz
- Billy Burch
- Carin Cross
- Paul Rana
- Pamela Haqlund
- Patricia Jaquith



Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

FEBRUARY 2017



Common Redpoll

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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 with 4 columns: Position, Name, Email, Phone. Includes President Kay Mitchell, Vice-President Gael Bissell, Secretary Marylane Pannell, Treasurer Joe Batts, Past-President Bob Lopp.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Table with 4 columns: Committee, Name, Email, Phone. Includes Conservation, Education, Field Trips, Finance, Donations, Hospitality, Membership.

Table with 4 columns: Role, Name, Email, Phone. Includes Newsletter, Nominations, Program, Publicity, Sales, Refuges, Website.

DIRECTORS

Table with 4 columns: Term, Name, Address, Phone. Lists directors from 2015-2018 to 2016-2017.

Owen Sowerwine Linda Winnie 755-1406 Natural Area Bob Lee 270-0371



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 \$

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