

Accipiter Express

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY - BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911 AUGUST, 1977

CHAPTER MEETINGS: Held at Bigfork Grade School Cafeteria (Small Log Building)

Business - 7:30 Program - 8:00

NOTE: Recognizing the fact that many of our members must travel considerable distances to attend meetings, programs will be limited to approximately 1 hr. to ensure reasonable departure times.

Sept. 12 (Monday): First meeting of the fall - Come and start it off right! Danny On, nationally renowned wildlife and nature photographer, will present a slide program featuring birds which you'll not want to miss.

Oct. 10 (Monday): This meeting will be highlighted by a visit from our regional Audubon rep, Bob Turner, a man we're sure you'll enjoy meeting. Also a bird movie containing some exceptional slow motion footage of eagle and waterfowl flight will be presented by Jim Rice, a local film maker from Whitefish. Ever seen an Osprey land on the back of another Osprey??? Come--you'll be sure to enjoy the evening!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

GREAT BEAR: The Forest Service has released its Great Bear Draft Wilderness Proposal and draft environmental statement which recommends wilderness classification of 77% of the study area. The primary reason for not recommending the other 23% seems to be high gas potential, especially in the areas north of Schafer meadows. Also excluded was a power corridor over the Logan-Dirtyface divide with hints of a coal slurry pipeline over the same route. Public comments are being sought on this proposal. A public hearing at the Outlaw Inn, Kalispell, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 6 at 10 A.M. and at 7 P.M. If interested write, Citizens for the Great Bear Wilderness, East Shore Route, Bigfork, Montana 59911

MISSION MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS: The Swan Lake District of the Forest Service has its Mission Mountains Wilderness Management Plan out for public review until October. Copies of the plan are available at the Bigfork Ranger Station.

RARE II: The Forest Service is in the process of completing its second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) which is a nation-wide review of all uncommitted roadless and undeveloped Federal lands to determine their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Flathead Forest is seeking comments until Sept. 15.

208 PROJECT HEARINGS: The Flathead Drainage 208 Project, a water quality management study designed to upgrade and/or maintain the area's water quality, will hold hearings on the proposed management plans this August. Your comments, criticisms and suggestions are earnestly desired. Written testimony will be accepted until 9 Sept. '77. Write: Flathead Drainage, 208 Project, Box 343, Kalispell, Mt. 59901

Meeting Dates: 24 August - Conrad Nat. Bank, Kal., Mt. 7:30 P.M.
25 August - Flathead Irrigation Project Service Center, 400 6th Ave. E., Polson, Mt. 7:30 P.M.

Show-Me-Tours: directed to citizens to show examples of good and bad water management. Lunches & transportation provided without charge but participants must register. Tours held on Saturdays from 9 am - 4 pm. Ronan Area: 27 Aug, Call Dorothy Trosper, 676-2066. Kalispell Area: 17 Sept., Call Barbara Elliott 837-4748 or 837-4614.

PROPOSED LOWER FLATHEAD RIVER DAMS: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed six dams sites on the Lower Flathead River. One to three dams could be built depending on the alternative chosen. The proposed benefits from the dam(s) according to the Corps are hydropower, irrigation and lake recreation. The largest proposed dam, Knowles, 3 miles from the mouth of the Flathead River would back water to the tail-race of Kerr Dam (60+ miles) and inundate 51,500 acres. Smaller dam proposals but incompatible with the maintenance of the only free flowing river in the south valley are run-of-the-river dam proposals -- Buffalo Rapids #2, Buffalo Rapids #4 low and Moise (reregulating dam) -- which together would inundate 7000+ acres and back water 35 miles.

On 30 April-May 1 the Chapter along with the Montana Wilderness Assoc. sponsored a float trip on the river. Over 80 people responded including people from Missoula, Helena and Great Falls. Representatives from the Corps and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were also in attendance. The float allowed chapter members and interested non-members to gain first-hand experience with the river and permit an exchange of views between the Corps officials and those interested in the free flow of the river. The warm, sunny week-end was conducive to peace, relaxation, sunburns and wildlife observation.

The wildlife census conducted by 14 participants netted 72 species of birds which is a good indicator of the habitats diversity and quality. This diversity and quality would be adversely affected by the building of the proposed dams. Nesting habitat of 30 species of birds would be directly lost because of flooding (tree cavity, mud bank, ledge, tree platform and island nesters). Most of these and other species would not find replacement habitat since suitable habitat elsewhere is already occupied. It is estimated the Lower Flathead River may support over 122 species of birds during the course of a year. Wildlife populations depending on the area affected by the dams would be lost or at least seriously affected.

At the May 13 chapter meeting with 57 present a resolution opposing the dams and the feasibility study was passed unanimously. During the last week in June packets containing a copy of the Dam Opposition Resolution, a summary of the wildlife census, a statement detailing the Chapter's position regarding the dams and various news articles and other information were mailed to interested parties asking for support. A limited number of copies of the packet are available from officers and committee heads and will be available at chapter meetings.

Please inform yourself on this issue. These dams are not inevitable and in the view of many are not desirable. Write our representatives (particularly Max Baucus), senators and state officials and express your views. Your thoughts do count but only when given to the people who have the authority to convert thought to action. Now is the time to stop these dams, while the process is just beginning. The more money the Corps spends and the more momentum they gain the harder they will be to stop. WRITE!!

ALASKA: With the enactment of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971, Congress set a deadline of Dec. 18, 1978 for deciding the fate of some 125 million acres of specially designated Public and National Interest Lands in Alaska. The Alaska Coalition, a loose coalition of Alaska and National Conservation organization, of which Audubon is a member, is strongly supporting legislation introduced in the House of Rep., Udall (HR 39) and in the Senate, Metcalf (S. 1500). This legislation would provide permanent protection for 114 million acres of this country's most precious wildlands by placing them into units of the National Park, Wildlife Refuge and Wild and Scenic River Systems.

Sen. Metcalf not only introduced the bill but has promised to champion the legislation in the Senate. Sen. Metcalf is to be commended for his positive action. Rep. Baucus has co-sponsored the legislation in the House. Both men need your support for their actions. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act will face much opposition from development oriented interests and will need the strong support of conservationists to see it through.

The heart of this legislation is that it protects entire ecosystems not just core areas or sections of land on which boundaries are arbitrarily drawn. Boundaries in many cases will follow rivers, mountain ranges and other natural boundaries resulting in self-sustaining ecosystems.

A good example of a preserved core area now in jeopardy is the Redwood National Park. Because of extensive clearcutting upslope and upstream from the park, erosion is threatening the flood plain groves. Of particular concern is the Tall Trees Grove which includes the first, third and sixth tallest trees in the world. A bill, HR 3813, introduced by Rep. Phillip Burton (Calif.), which is strongly opposed by logging interests, would enlarge the 58,000 acre park by an additional 74,000 acres. Of the 74,000 acres only 9000 are old growth forest. The remaining 65,000 acres are cutover forest and natural prairie. These additional areas would make the park a logical management unit with boundaries along ridge lines to coincide with the natural water shed. The problems of the Redwoods shows the danger of preserving core area and allowing development in the surrounding lands, land which may be vital to the core area's stability.

If you think that Alaska is a long way to go for a national park, so was Yellowstone in 1872. Alaska's cold, ruggedness, insects and incomprehensible vastness no longer protect it. An 800 mile oil pipeline cutting through Alaska's center is an excellent example of its vulnerability.

MARLENEE OPPOSES WILDERNESS STUDIES: Rep. Ron Marlenee has made his first public stand of the Big Snowies and Middle Fork of the Judith River calling for their exclusion from the Montana Wilderness Study Bill. The study bill introduced by Sen. Metcalf has nine proposed study areas. The Snowies and Judith River are the only areas in the eastern congressional district. The Big Snowies represents the eastern most point in Montana where there is coniferous forest. Rep. Marlenee states the main reason for his opposition is opposition from people living nearby the proposed study areas.

Although the local people who are familiar with the areas and who would be most closely affected by their fate should have considerable say about the areas' use they do not have exclusive rights over the areas. These are National Forest lands about which every interested U.S. citizen has a right to be involved in the decision making process. Although Rep. Marlenee is not our congressional representative it is appropriate to write him on issues that are beyond local eastern district concerns.

Sen. Melcher under pressure from logging concerns and livestock producers is opposed to the entire study bill. Rep. Baucus has taken a stand favoring the wilderness study.

POINTS ON LETTER WRITING: Writing letters is one of the most important actions we as individuals and as chapter members can perform. Many may believe that letters have little if any impact. Consider, however, the impact of not writing a letter. It has no effect at all and lack of response or comment on issues may be interpreted in a manner opposite to your views. In fact, letters do have effect, particularly when written responsibly and with sincerity. For an organization such as ours letters are the most economical and effective means of influencing legislation. Like most conservation groups we have limited funds and are restricted by law to spending no more than 20% of our expenditures on lobbying. The following are some guidelines to follow in writing letters which will give them maximum effectiveness:

1. Inform yourself on the issue. Don't simply accept dogma or the "party-line". Write in your own words and include thoughts of your own. Cite your own experience and explain how the issue would affect you.
2. Show as much knowledge as you can but don't feel you must be an expert to write. Don't exaggerate, misquote or mislead.
3. Use your own stationery. Don't send a postcard or form letter. Hand written letters are fine if they are legible. Put your address on the letter... Envelopes get lost.
4. Be respectful but you need not apologize for taking the readers time. Don't threaten or affect a righteous tone.
5. Write briefly on one or two subjects. Refer to bills by name & number if possible.
6. Don't send a carbon copy of a letter to one legislator when you have addressed it to another. Write each one individually.
7. Don't mention that you are a member of a club or letter-writing campaign. Hint of high pressure campaigns whether real or not tend to produce little effect. Form letters and petitions are received in the same light. It is reasoned that a person

who takes the time to write an individual a self-composed letter is more concerned with the issue than a person who simply signs his name.

- 8. Thank your legislator if he or she pleases you with a vote or action. Everyone appreciates a pat on the back and remembers it. On the other hand if a vote is contrary to your position, don't hesitate to let him or her know. They remember that that too.

Sen Lee Metcalf	Rep. Max Baucus	Gov. Tom Judge	Pres. J. Carter
Sen. John Melcher	Rep. Ron Marlenee	State House	White House
Senate Office Building	House Office Building	Helena, Mt. 59601	Washington, D.C.
Washington, D.C. 20510	Washington, D.C. 20515		

CHARTER RECEIVED: The Flathead Audubon Society received its charter from National Audubon effective 1 May 1977. One of the primary requirements for chartering was attaining 35 new members. This took less than three months from our initial organization, far faster than imagined even by our most optimistic organizers. This rapid growth and interest is an excellent indicator of our chapter's future potential. Chapter meetings have been well attended averaging over 50 people per meeting. These are excellent turn outs considering the wide area our chapter represents. Many Audubon Chapters with far larger memberships than ours have meetings that are not as well attended. Interesting and informative programs were presented at each meeting and more of similar quality can be expected this coming year.

With the reception of the charter comes money from National Audubon in the form of a dues split. Our most common memberships are student, individual, and family. The local chapter's share of the memberships is \$1.75, \$5 and \$7 respectively. With over 125 members in our chapter this amounts to a fair sum of money. Initially a major portion of this will go to the production and mailing of our newsletter until we receive a non-profit bulk rate mailing permit. This will reduce our cost from the present 13¢ per piece to 2¢. Other initial expenses will be general secretarial supplies and chapter stationary. Elmer Sprunger of Bigfork has been kind enough to design a letter head for the stationary. The Board of Directors is responsible for the budgeting and expenditure of money. But, it is your money and any suggestions for its use will be gratefully received. Please submit your ideas in writing to any officer.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS! Since publication of our first newsletter in March we have 32 new names to add to the membership list! It is hoped these lists will help in organizing car pools to club activities. A big welcome to these people:

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| <u>Kalispell</u> | <u>Bigfork</u> | <u>Polson</u> |
| Mrs. Roma Reber | M/M John Armstrong | Lorina Clark |
| Milton E. Stiles | Minnie LaBree | Carroll Swanson |
| Charlotte Ebeltoft | Stan & Janet Bones | Ralph Campbell |
| Mrs. Edw Holt | Helen Vandenhook | Walt Vermedahl |
| Larry & Cindy Hyslop | Beryle & Nell Dunn | David Weld |
| Wilson Higgs | M/M Richard Garvey | William C. Pinkney |
| Malcom S. McLelland | <u>Somers</u> | <u>Ronan</u> |
| Marie Miller | Barbara Baxter | Robert W. Klaver |
| Drew Smith | <u>Whitefish</u> | Nick Edington |
| Judy Smith | Robert E. Conway | <u>Charlo</u> |
| <u>Lakeside</u> | Steve Johnson | M/M R.W. Edelen |
| Philip Caperton | Lawrence O'Shaughnessy | <u>Essex</u> |
| <u>Hun. Horse</u> | | Izaak Walton Inn (Sid Goodrich) |
| Gary Koehler | | |

PROPOSED SWAN RIVER NATURAL AREA: Officials of the Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead Nat'l. Forest have proposed establishing a 300+ acre natural area along the Swan River. The area (T24N:R18W:Sec.2) is about 3 miles above Swan Lake. The land is an island formed by the Swan River on the east and Gildart and Porcupine Creeks on the west. The island center is rather dense old growth timber with an abundance of snags. The edge of the island

consists of thick deciduous shrubbery, backwaters and flood plain.

The Forest Service asked the Chapter to conduct bird censuses in the area. Two censuses, 1 June and 28 June, have been made. Forty-nine species were seen during the two outings. Fourteen species of tree cavity nesters were observed including the Vaux's Swift, Pileated Woodpecker and Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Also noted were three species of raptors, six species of woodpeckers, three species of flycatchers, and six warbler species. Thanks to Barbara Baxter, Elly Jones, Bob Kent, Elmer Sprunger, Jack Whitney and Jack and Ruth White for participating in the censuses.

The area should be considered for its possible inclusion in the RARE II inventory. Although most areas for RARE II must be 5000 or more acres, small areas can be considered if they are self-contained ecosystems (e.g., an island). Although this area is going through Forest Service channels as a proposed natural area it may not be so designated. Just this year the area was scheduled for helicopter logging before the natural area proposal was made. Please write the Forest Supervisor, P.O. Box 147, Kalispell, Mt. 59901 asking that this island be included in the RARE II inventory.

OUT AND ABOUT - BIRD SIGHTINGS: Marcy Bishop had a breeding bird census published in the Jan. 1977 American Birds. Her study was a bulrush and cattail marsh in a conifer forest 6 miles north of Polson on the west shore of Flathead Lake. She describes the area and lists the birds and nests she found during the two year study. Marcy has been doing the censusing and working with the land owners in hopes of preserving the 80 acre wetland area as a nature sanctuary.

Marcy is studying Double-crested Cormorants at the Ninepipe NWR this summer. During a wind storm a nest fell from the rookery tree. The two surviving young are now in Marcy's care. Marcy's children catch perch from Polson Bay which Marcy steadfastly passes through a meat grinder. This gourmet's delight is fed in copious amounts to the young birds four times a day. Weight, measurements and other data are taken daily. Once the young are able to feed on their own they will be returned to the refuge and released.

Spring Bird Sightings:

European Widgeon, 24 March, Church Slough, Ladd Bjorneby
Turkey Vulture, 17 April, McManamy Draw, Steve and Wanda Jamieson
Ferruginous Hawk, 9, 25 May, Lower Valley Road, Mae Sudan
N. Phalaropes, Late May, Egan Slough, Ladd Bjorneby
Gt. Horned Owl, 1 Adult & 2 Fledglings in a Kalispell City Park! May, Barbara Fenner
Barred Owl, 9, 15, 16 March, Glacier Nat. Park, Jane Kapler; 10, 19 March, Bitterroot Lake, B. Fenner
Long-eared Owl, Late May, Egan Slough, Ladd Bjorneby
Black-chinned Hummingbird, regular at feeder at Mae Sudan's near Ferndale (other sightings of Bk.-chins are much desired.)
Bluejays (2) 25 March, near Egan Slough, Jean Robocker
(5) 3 April, Bigfork, Taffee Dunlap
Western Bluebird, 29 May, Lakeside, Jac Brewer (other sightings are desired).
Purple Finch at Jac Brewer's feeder this spring (for others believing they have P. Finches take care in your I.D., they are easily confused with the Cassin's Finch. Refer to Jac Brewer if you think you have them. She has had good experience with them while living in the eastern U.S.)
Harris' Sparrow during winter and spring 'til 2 May, E. of Kalispell, Betty Rose
Lincoln's Sparrow, 17-19 April, E. of Kalispell, B. Rose; 2-3 May, Swan Lake, Elly Jones
Please send check-lists and unusual sightings (with good descriptions) to Wanda Jamieson (note change of address in directory.)

A BIRD HISTORY - THE GOLDENEYES: Barrow's Goldeneyes (Bucephala islandica): Barrow - John Barrow (1764-1848) - An englishman who is best known for his involvement with N.A. Artic exploration. Bucephala - ox-head: probably referring to the bird's heavy-headed appearance. islandica - Iceland: probably referring to where the bird was first seen.

Common Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula): clangula - little noise: named for the whistling noise made by the wings during flight.

Field I.D. On the water the goldeneyes give the appearance of floating lightly on top of the water with little of the body below the surface, much like a feathered fishing bobber. The male C. Goldeneye's head is peaked with a sloping forehead and a circular white eye mark in front of the eye. At close range and good light the head shows a greenish gloss. The breast, belly and sides are white and in combination with the white wing patch and white greater coverts the bird gives the appearance of being predominately white with a dark back and head. The male Barrow's has a crown that is long and flattish with an abruptly rising forehead. The white eye mark in front of the eye is crescent shaped and at close range the head has a purplish gloss. Like the Common, the Barrows breast, belly and sides are white but the wing patch and coverts show less white giving it darker sides. In flight the two species cannot be safely separated except a close range. The females of the two species cannot be separated in the field except during the breeding season. During this time the female Barrow's has an all-orangish bill. The female Common has a black bill with a yellow tip. In flight the goldeneyes' wings make a whistling sound which under good conditions can be heard up to 1/2 mile and is distinct enough to identify the birds as goldeneyes.

Life histories of the two species are similar. Most goldeneye begin breeding in their second year. Courtship activities begin in mid to late winter and most birds are paired when they arrive on their breeding areas.

Goldeneyes are cavity nesters and females tend to return to the same cavity each year. Trees such as aspen, cottonwood, Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine are frequently used. Besides typical woodpecker cavities the goldeneyes may use bucket cavities which are open at the top. Nest sites are usually within 100 feet of water but can be as far as 500 yds. Goldeneyes will also use man-made nest boxes.

An average clutch is 9 eggs ranging from 5-15 eggs. Incubation lasts 28-34 days depending on weather conditions. The female leaves the nest 1-4 times a day to feed. The male takes no part in incubation and usually abandons the female during the second week of incubation.

The young hatch within a 4-6 hr. period and leave the nest after 24-36 hrs. The young, with the female calling, jump from the nest cavity fluttering to the ground. The fall from the nest cavities, which average 23 ft, rarely injures the young birds. The young, following the hen, walk to the nearest water. They attain flight ability at about 8 wks.

Animal food makes up 75% of the goldeneyes' diet and consists of aquatic insects and larva, crustaceans, and mollusks. Few fish are eaten. Plant food consists of a variety of pond weeds and their seeds.

Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes are frequently seen on open water throughout the valley during the winter. Barrow's can be seen predictably at Lake McDonald and lower McDonald Creek in late fall and early winter. Barrow's have nest at Daphnia Pond, 3/4 mile south of Bigfork, for the past several years.

DIRECTORY: Pres., Dan Sullivan, Yellow Bay, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (982-3281)
Vice-Pres., Newton Reed, 1230 Mont. 209, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (837-4494)
Sec., Wanda Jamieson, 1340 Willow Glen Dr. #11, Kalispell, Mt. 59901
Treas., Nancy Paul, East Shore, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 ((837-4152)
Membership, Karen Sullivan, see above
Program & Publicity, Rick Trembath, East Shore, Bigfork, Mt. 59911

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY
BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911