

The Accipiter Express

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY - BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911

JANUARY, 1978

CHAPTER MEETING: Held at Bigfork Grade School Library
Business - 7:30 P.M. Program - 8:00 P.M.

January 9 (Monday): A portion of our program will be devoted to the issues surrounding the East Lake Shore Management Plan and the various management alternatives. It is hoped a spokesman from the Forest Service will be present.

February 13 (Monday): Program to be announced. Please check your newspapers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

January 8 (Sunday): Regular board meeting at Rick Trembath's home, 7:00 P.M.

EPA Public Meetings: The EPA will hold meetings to discuss the Flathead River Basin Environmental Impact Study. The Congressionally authorized study will be conducted over the next five years and it is anticipated that this study will provide additional data, analyses, and management guidance for the use of government and private interests.

Meetings: 5 January, 1:30 P.M., Colt 45 Room of the Outlaw Inn, Kalispell, Mt.
13 January, 9:30 A.M. in the Lake Co. Courthouse Conference Rm., Polson, Mt.
13 January, 1:00 P.M. in the Eagles Hall, Kalispell, Mt.

CHAPTER LIBRARY AVAILABLE: Irene Gembala, Bigfork Elementary School Librarian, has been nice enough to provide the Chapter with shelf space for the Chapter's books, publications, and miscellaneous materials. In return for the shelf space the Chapter's materials will be available to the school's students and staff. Members may check out or return books at Audubon meetings or during regular school hours and may check them out for up to a month. We solicit suggestions from you for books and materials to be purchased by the Chapter. You are encouraged to donate books, field guides, etc. to the chapter library. You may also make monetary gifts specifically earmarked for the purchase of books or educational materials. The library shelf has long been needed to provide general access to chapter materials by members and it is hoped you will take full advantage of it.

SLIDE LIBRARY: As a chapter project we are building a slide collection which when complete will have photographs of all birds and mammals that occur within the Flathead (and while we are at it why not flowering plants, trees, landscapes, reptiles, etc.). For birds, we need photographs of the adults (both sexes if the species is dimorphic), immatures and the nest and eggs of each species. A list will be available at chapter meetings for your inspection. If you have slides you can donate or permit to be copied to fill the gaps it will be most helpful. The Chapter will pay for the cost of reproduction. Photographs need not be works of art but must be good enough for identification purposes.

We know there are a number of photography buffs within our group who can add to and improve our present collection. Please do so! Others who are interested in building the collection may make monetary gifts for the purchase of slides of animals which are difficult to photograph.

Obviously this is a long term project but we already have a good start. The slide collection will have numerous uses, particularly as it becomes more complete. We have already used it to review birds expected to be seen on the Christmas count. It will be helpful in reviewing birds expected to be seen on field trips, in confirming identifications and in learning bird identification. The collection will aid in the production of programs presented by the Chapter to other organizations & schools in the valley.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT BEST YET! The Flathead Audubon Society participated in its fourth Audubon Christmas Bird Count on December 17. The 7.5 mile radius count area centered around Bigfork was censused by 34 birders in the all-day census. The count day ended with 69 bird species recorded. This is the highest count total since the Bigfork Christmas Counts began.

Large numbers of Mallards and Canada Geese were observed in the closed-to-hunting area along the north shore of Flathead Lake. Whistling Swan were observed as well as numerous mergansers and goldeneyes. The large number of Ring-necked Pheasants indicated a highly productive year for these birds. The presence of northern birds such as Rough-legged Hawks, White-winged Crossbills, and Redpolls not seen last year correlates with the more intense winter this year. Most of the area's birds of permanent residence were well represented in the count. A landmark for many years, the Bald Eagle nest located about one mile north of the Sportman's Bridge on the Flathead River was discovered fallen from natural causes. It is hoped the eagles will find a suitable nest site nearby. The count day ended with the count tally and potluck dinner attended by about 40 people. Thanks to Lillian Tubb for an excellent job of organizing the potluck. Following is a list of the bird species recorded.

Common Loon 2	Common Snipe 1	White-breasted Nuthatch 9
grebe, sp. 2	Herring Gull 4	Pygmy Nuthatch 24
Gt. Blue Heron 11	Ring-billed Gull 26	Brown Creeper 18
Whistling Swan 43	Gull, sp. 5	Dipper 10
Canada Goose 1325	Rock Dove 32	Winter Wren 1
Mallard 4040	Mourning Dove 7	Long-billed Marsh Wren 2
Pintail 1	Pygmy Owl 5	Robin 2
N. Shoveler 2	Belted Kingfisher 5	Townsend's Solitaire 4
Wood Duck 1	Common Flicker 43	Golden-crowned Kinglet 43
Common Goldeneye 255	Pileated Woodpecker 8	Bohemian Waxwing 174
Bufflehead 18	Hairy Woodpecker 16	Cedar Waxwing 8
Hooded Merganser 8	Downy Woodpecker 31	Northern Shrike 1
Common Merganser 108	Northern 3-toed Woodpecker 2	Starling 14
Goshawk 1	Gray Jay 2	House Sparrow 33
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1	Blue Jay 2	Blackbird, sp. 1
Accipiter, sp. 1	Stellar's Jay 20	Evening Grosbeak 422
Rough-legged Hawk 14	Black-billed Magpie 101	Cassin's Finch 10
Buteo, sp. 1	Raven 101	Pine Grosbeak 156
Bald Eagle 21 ad, 2 im	Crow 8	Common Redpoll 116
Marsh Hawk 4	Clark's Nutcracker 8	White-winged Crossbill 29
Ruffed Grouse 3	Bk-capped Chickadee 205	Pine Siskin 59
Ring-necked Pheasant 68	Mtn Chickadee 46	Dark-eyed Junco 5
Gray Partridge 11	Chestnut-backed Chickadee 13	Tree Sparrow 22
Am Coot 13	Red-breasted Nuthatch 27	Song Sparrow 5

Birds seen count week but not count day included: Horned Grebe, Mallard-Pintail Hybrid, Cooper's Hawk, Gt. Horned Owl, Snow Bunting.

Total no. of species seen count day 69; approx. no. of individuals - 7832
Count Compiler: Daniel Sullivan

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MARKED BALD EAGLES: Riley McClelland and Dave Shea working for the Park Service have captured and marked a number of Bald Eagles along Lower McDonald Creek this fall. These birds are marked with numbered yellow wing tags, one on each wing. They are also banded with a standard FWS leg band. This tagging program is hoped to give information on the origin and migration patterns of the McDonald Creek eagles. Anyone sighting these birds please contact Dan Sullivan, Wanda Jamieson or Bald Eagle Project, Glacier N.P., West Glacier, Mt. 59936.

PEREGRINE FALCON RELEASED: Recently the Canadian Fish and Wildlife Service released 80 Peregrine Falcons in Alberta. Since these birds are migratory it is felt that many will move through Montana and can be expected to be seen anywhere in the state. These birds are marked with leg bands - a silver FWS band on one leg and a black band with lettering on the other. If you see one of these falcons please note place, date, time and other pertinent details. Contact Dan Sullivan or Wanda Jamieson.

EAST SHORE PLANNING UNIT: The Swan Lake District of the Forest Service has recently completed the draft land management plan of the east shore of Flathead Lake. Public comment is being sought until January 30th.

The proposed plan states: "The management objectives will be to produce the maximum amount of timber possible, retain a high degree of visual quality as seen from first order viewing points and maintain water quality to state standards." The following is taken from the Environmental Impacts section (pgs 151-155) of the Land Management Plan. Since these quotes are out of context and are selected to emphasize the adverse effects you are encouraged to read the entire plan.

Approximately 62 miles of permanent roads will be constructed for timber harvest. (Approx. 5200 acres within the unit meets criteria as a RARE II roadless area - editor's Note). Road construction will result in both visual and physical impacts. Removal of the vegetative cover and disturbance of the soil mantle will increase the potential for soil erosion. Road construction, especially across streams, will cause a temporary increase in turbidity of the water. This will last only a few days. The spring runoff from snow melt and heavy rains can also cause increased turbidity from any area which is not stabilized or revegetated. These adverse effects will be minimized by timing construction activities to coincide with low stream flow.

As a result of easier access, increased recreational activities and their associated impacts can be expected. Recreation users will encounter one another more frequently and thus the opportunity for solitude will be reduced. There will be increase in garbage, littering, and the marring of trees. Some favored recreation sites may be over-used. These impacts will be controlled by regulating and limiting use where necessary. Additional funds may be needed to adequately protect the resources.

The closing of some roads to motor vehicle use will minimize vehicle use, noise, air pollution, wildlife disturbance, poaching, road surface deterioration, road maintenance and total human use.

Road construction will make the planning unit more accessible for mineral exploration and mineralized veins might be exposed in road cuts. Additional roading may be necessary if mineral deposits are located.

A change in the appearance of the planning unit will result as the plan is implemented. The viewing quality will be altered in some instances. Timber harvest special uses, prescribed burning, construction of roads, skid trails and firelines and silvicultural activities such as thinning will be visible from surrounding highways, other access routes, and viewing points.

Physical impacts from increased water yield may be decreased water quality and increased quantities which may degrade stream channels.

Burning will still be necessary on most of the area and will have temporary adverse effect on air quality because of the smoke it creates.

The risk of man-caused fires will increase as more areas become accessible. Fire prevention efforts will be increased to help offset this increased risk.

Dust from logging operations and other traffic will affect air quality primarily along main haul roads in July, August, and September.

Noise from equipment and machines cannot be avoided.

The East Shore Planning Unit, like the rest of the Mission Range, is highly visible from widely separated points in the Flathead Valley. Retaining this visual quality should be a primary consideration in any land use decision.

Water from creeks and springs is abundant along the shore and is used as a domestic and irrigation source. Few people who use the water for house-hold use feel any need to treat it. Logging activities and increased human use may no longer permit use of this water supply without purification.

In general the East Shore Unit consists of old growth timber and yet has little history of fire. No major fire has ever been known to occur. Since 1945 only 33 fires have been suppressed. The accumulation of natural fuels is classed as light to moderate. In spite

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of the fact that the area is heavily hit by summer lightning storms few fires occur primarily because of the high precipitation and gentle, rolling topography.

The plan states the area has more species of birds than any other planning unit on the Flathead Forest. About 45 species of mammals, 200-250 species of birds and several species of reptiles and amphibians have been noted on the planning unit. Because of the old growth timber, cavity nesting birds are especially common along the East Shore. Pileated Woodpeckers which are particularly abundant on the planning unit, as well as other cavity nesters, would be adversely affected by a land management plan designed "to produce the maximum amount of timber possible". Pileateds require large areas of dense, old growth forest to provide food and shelter and large dead trees, preferably larch or ponderosa, for nesting, roosting, drumming and other activities. Management practices which require the felling of snags only to be burned as slash and indiscriminate firewood cutting are serious threats to primary and secondary cavity nesters if the East Shore goes under an intensive management plan.

High visual quality, need to preserve water quality, lack of a major forest fire hazard, and highly diverse wildlife populations are a strong inducement in developing a management plan that will maintain the present qualities of the East Shore area.

The Chapter and several chapter members have copies of the Management Plan available. Copies are also available at the Forest Supervisor's office, the Swan Lake District Office in Bigfork, and local libraries. Please send comments to: Forest Supervisor, Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 438, Kalispell, Montana 59901.

NONGAME LEGISLATION: After more than a year of hard work, the "Nongame Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1978" (H.R. 10255) is coming close to becoming a reality. The Bill, which is designed to provide matching money to State agencies responsible for fish and wildlife management, will benefit all wildlife, especially those nongame species for which money has not been generally available.

It has wide support among the national conservation organizations and the National Audubon Society testified in favor of this type of legislation in both House and Senate. The House is moving more quickly than the Senate and it appears that they they will have their Bill (H.R. 10255) ready for new hearings by the second week in December, 1977.

We anticipate that they will ask for public input at that time. Please consider supporting the following provisions of the Bill:

1. Matching grants to the States for-
 - A. Comprehensive wildlife planning on a 90% Federal-10% State basis.
 - B. Program implementation on a 75% Federal-25% State basis.
2. Plan standards requiring-
 - A. The vesting in the designated State agency of the overall responsibility for the development of the management plan.
 - B. The identification of fish and wildlife within the State.
 - C. The determination of the range and distribution of the population of significant fish and wildlife populations and the extent, location, and carrying capacity of the habitats for such populations.
 - D. The determination of the extent, location and carrying capacity of significant fish and wildlife habitats.
 - E. The determination of those actions which must be taken to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats determined to be significant and the estimated time and cost required to effect each such action.
 - F. The monitoring, on a continuing basis, of the State's fish and wildlife.
 - G. That plans be for a period of not less than 5 years and be based upon projections of the desires and needs of the public for a period of not less than 3 years.
 - H. That plans be updated at intervals of not more than 3 years.
 - I. That the public be provided reasonable opportunity to make its views known, and considered during the development, revision, and implementation of the plan.
3. That States may be able to use in-kind contributions as part of their matching share (e.g. volunteer help in conducting a wildlife survey).
4. That not more than 10% of State matching contribution in any one year may come from hunting, fishing and trapping license monies.

- 5. That not more than 25% of a grant may be used to carry out law enforcement, extension, and information and education services.
- 6. That monies not spent under this program revert to the Migratory Conservation Fund to acquire habitat.

Section 11 of the Bill, as written, provides funding via Congressional authorization. The National Audubon Society has strongly endorsed the use of a small excise tax on items like certain recreational equipment and bird seed because an excise tax would provide a stable source of funding, thus permitting the States to develop long range programs. (The preceding taken from a letter by Steven Young, National Aud. Soc., Washington D.C. Representative.)

Please write letters supporting this important legislation. Write our congressional delegation especially Rep. Baucus at this time. Also Robert L. Leggett, Chairman of the House Subcommittee of Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, whose subcommittee is hearing this Bill. (Address: House Office Bldg., Wash. D.C. 20515)

NONGAME PROGRAM IN MONTANA: Currently in Montana the nongame budget is a meager \$30,000 supporting only one nongame biologist and what few programs can be funded with the remaining money. Clearly this program is inadequate for a state the size of Montana. Nongame wildlife needs deserve greater funding not only because of the increasing numbers of people enjoying them but also because of the steady loss of wildlife habitat from developments and land management practices which seldom give serious consideration to wildlife that does not have immediate economic value.

Lovers of nongame animals, however, must begin to put their money where their interest is. Big game, game birds, and fish have received most of the money for wildlife management because millions of people are willing to pay for hunting and fishing licenses and permit excise taxes on equipment related to their interest. Nongame enthusiasts must support their interests by purchase of nongame wildlife stamps (\$5.00) and supporting legislation for excise taxes on nongame related equipment which would be ear-marked for nongame management. We can no longer take our nongame species for granted but must actively support programs and sound land use practices to maintain them. Daniel Sullivan

LOWER FLATHEAD DAM PROPOSALS: The Army Corps of Engineers released a studygram in December. The study gram listed organizations, groups, and individuals that made comments to the Corps during the public meetings held in March 1977 and it gave brief summaries of those comments. Although it is difficult to judge positions from such brief summaries the following is a fair appraisal of pro, con and undecided. Organizations (i.e. - Power companies, conservation districts, timber interests, state agencies, chamber of commerces, enviornmental organizations) 34 total: pro dam development - 29%, against - 15%, undecided or without comment at that time - 56%. Individuals (73 total): pro - 17%, Against - 68%, Undecided - 13%. The Corps stated that it will likely hold meetings in late winter or early spring 1978 "to discuss results of preliminary studies and the desirability of conducting more detailed studies of any hydrosites that show development possibilities." The studygram stated that "power studies conducted so far indicate that hydropower capacities would be less than indicated" in earlier statements by the Corps. Please keep informed on this issue and plan to attend the Corps' next public meeting. Written and/or oral statements are strongly encouraged.

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to Elmer Sprunger for doing such a superb job on the Flathead Audubon Society's letterhead! Please take a look at the magnificent Pileated Woodpecker design Elmer created at the next meeting if you haven't already seen it. Thank-you, Elmer!

CONGRATULATIONS RICK AND NANCY! Best wishes and a life time of happiness is wished to our new Audubon President, Rick Trembath and our Treasurer, Nancy Paul, on the occasion of their wedding day, December 30, 1977!

GREY-HEADED ROSY FINCH: A DIFFERENT SPECIES THAN THE GREY-CROWNED:

Dr. Richard Johnson of Washington State University has very extensively studied Rosy Finches in many parts of their breeding ranges in northwestern North America for over 10 years. One of his recent conclusions is that the Grey-headed form, which is illustrated both in Peterson and Robbins et al. as a race of the Grey-crowned, should be regarded as a distinct species. It is likely that the American Ornithologists Union Committee on Nomenclature which rules on what are species and what are races will adopt Johnson's recommendation because he has studied the problem so thoroughly. The two kinds of Rosy Finch apparently occur in mixed flocks throughout Montana in fall, winter, and spring, but only the Grey-crowned nests in the state. Its Montana breeding range includes the Mission, Swan, and Cabinet Ranges and Glacier National Park and continues north in the Rockies to eastern Alaska. The Grey-headed nest farther west in the Cascade and Coast Ranges of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and north into central Alaska. Older publications referred to the Grey-headed bird as Hepburn's Rosy Finch.

When serious bird watchers see a flock of Rosy Finches they should look for both kinds and attempt to record the relative abundance of each species, because most Montana records have not discriminated between the two. Several observations of mixed flocks have been reported to me in October, November, and December of 1977 in the vicinity of Missoula.

P.L. Wright, Zoology
Univ. of Mont., Missoula

BLACKPOLL WARBLER FOUND IN KALISPELL was banded in West Virginia. This warbler is known in western Montana from only a handful of spring records, but one carrying a band flew into an open window at the home of Fore Taylor of Kalispell on May 17, 1977. The number on the band was reported to the National Bird Banding office in Bethesda, Maryland by Jim Cross of the Fish and Game Department. Word came back that the bird had been banded as a first year male at Davis, West Virginia on September 9, 1976. Although this species nests all across Canada and into Alaska its main migration routes are east of western Montana. From recoveries of this sort it becomes increasingly clear that warblers which are out of their normal ranges in the spring migration are often first year birds that are disoriented. P.L. Wright

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