



the Accipiter Express

Volume 3, Number 2 ***** March, 1979

CONCERN OVER AREA DEVELOPMENT

Much of the talk at the last meeting centered around proposals by area businessmen for developing private land in and around Bigfork. Flathead Audubon Society board member, Jack Whitney summarized for those in attendance the proposed golf-course/marina project which had been the subject of a public meeting in Bigfork on February 9. This project would involve the construction of an eighteen hole golf course, a marina facility and several hundred family and townhouse dwellings on recently purchased acreage near the confluence of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake.

Various people at the meeting expressed opposition to the proposal siting the area's history of flooding, the potential loss of wildlife and waterfowl habitat and the potential loss of agricultural land. Many people present were familiar with the area and stated that it is presently rich in birdlife.

A motion was passed to formally oppose the project. A committee was formed headed by Jack Whitney and Steve Dagger to prepare a resolution stating F.A.S.'s objections and to make certain that the appropriate planning agencies are contacted.

SWAN RIVER ISLAND PROPOSED AS SITE OF A DANNY ON MEMORIAL

At the February meeting conservation chairman, Rick Trembath, moved that the chapter formally sponsor the Swan River Island site as a memorial to the late Danny On. Danny was an F.A.S. member and a renowned nature photographer. His slide show presentation at one of last year's meetings drew the largest crowd ever to attend one of the local Audubon Society programs.

The Swan River Island site is approximately 300 acres in size. It is predominantly old growth timber with much deciduous brush where the island borders the Swan River, Gildart Creek and Porcupine Creek. The island is currently being deferred from management by the Forest Service for study as a natural area.

F.A.S. WORKING TO EXPAND PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Flathead Audubon Society has undertaken activity in five areas to try and foster an awareness of and active participation in conservation of natural resources in Flathead and Lake counties. Programs are held in conjunction with monthly meetings that highlight an important conservation issue or are simply informative and educational. Field trips are also sponsored to nearby areas of interest with knowledgeable trip leaders. Community projects such as maintenance and creation of nature trails and the bulk purchasing and distribution of plants and sunflower seeds are in the works.

F.A.S. also has a substantial library on birds and natural history which is available on a loan basis to any interested party. Many of these books are large well-illustrated volumes not often found in public libraries. A slide file is being compiled of birds and other interesting natural history items. This too is available for loan to interested individuals or organizations. Requests for use of the slide file should be made to Cheri Seli - 837-4889. Information regarding the library can be obtained from Helen Dresen - 844-3559.

CONSERVATION NOTES:

by Rick Trembath

- According to a January 21 news article in the Missoulian Flathead County recently recieved Land and Water Conservation Fund money from the Montana Department of Fish and Game. The money is intended for use on a 16 acre tract on the Stillwater River. Anyone having an interest in this area or subject should contact the Flathead County Parks Department for further information.
- The Flathead Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association is actively working toward a North Fork wilderness in the Tuchuck/Mount Hefty area. This is located near the Canadian line. To obtain further information regarding the status of this area you can write: Montana Wilderness Association, Flathead Chapter, 325 4th Avenue West, Kalispell, Montana 59901.
- The state Department of Natural Resources has proposed logging in the McGregor/Thompson area west of Kalispell. Local conservationists are opposed to the idea. For further information contact Friends of McGregor lake, c/o Dave Sime, Marion, Montana.
- The Forest Service's recommendations for all areas that are currently roadless were recently released. All such areas on the Flathead National Forest were classified as areas suitable to multiple-use. Roading and logging can be undertaken in these areas provided it is economical to do so and still protect soil and watershed resources.

Possible Eagle Problem. Reports reaching the National Audubon Society indicate that lead poisoning of waterfowl from swallowing lead shot is also a problem for scavenging bald eagles that may eat poisoned ducks. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is already phasing out use of lead shot in areas susceptible to lead-shot problems, permitting hunters to use only steel shot in such areas. The society has turned its information over to the federal agency which, in turn, has promised to undertake studies to determine how serious the problem may be for eagles.

- From the Audubon Leader

- The Flathead County Commissioners and the APO (Areawide Planning Office) have much say so in what happens in the Flathead Valley. Attend their meetings and make your views known. There ain't no use complaining about things you could be changing.

MORE ON THE LOWER FLATHEAD RIVER DAM PROPOSALS:

Within the next few weeks our Montana Congressional delegation will be considering the next federal budget. In that budget is a \$173,000 appropriation for continuation of the hydro electric studies on the lower Flathead River being conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

We must let our Congressmen know how we feel about these studies soon if our views are going to have any weight on their decisions. Please write a letter to each of the delegation (addresses below) as soon as possible giving your reasons for opposing the funding request.

Senator John Melcher
1121 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Max Baucus
5327 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Pat Williams
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Ron Marlenee
128 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The winter report for American Birds is due at the office of the regional editor March 10. Please send your daily checklists for December, January, and February to Wanda Jamieson before this date: For those people who do not keep daily checklists, your unusual observations would be welcomed.

Unusual observations include sightings of seldom-seen birds (great gray owl, barred owl), unusually large numbers of a species (10,000 mallards were observed on Flathead River above Kerr Dam February 7, 1977), lack of a species (has anyone seen a pygmy owl this winter), birds that arrive early (a yellow-bellied sapsucker arrived February 20 last year), birds that stayed late (red-tailed hawks have been seen in December and January this winter), and rare birds (Elly Jones at Swan Lake had a male brambling at her feeder November 19 to December 3).

We have about 8 people who faithfully keep daily checklists. We've gained some and lost some since we started keeping records in March 1975. The data is very good but would be more accurate if more people would keep checklists. This is what a checklist looks like:

(Day of Month)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18, (etc)
Canada goose										✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Mallard							✓										✓	✓
Rough-legged hawk						✓		✓									✓	✓
Great horned owl													✓				✓	
Common flicker	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bohemian waxwing	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓						✓	✓
Snow bunting			✓										✓					✓

Observer's Name _____ Month Observed _____

Checklists may contain only the five or six birds that daily visit your winter feeder, or they may contain the 50 or 60 birds seen on weekly spring field trips. If the birds are seen at a place other than your residence, indicate in what area they are seen. It does not matter if you miss several days of listing during the month. Please list the birds in field guide order. Use 8½" x 11" paper--it fits in a three-ring binder for convenient storage. Include your name and address, and mail your checklist at the end of the month to Wanda Jamieson or bring it to the next Audubon meeting.

If keeping a checklist does not interest you, perhaps you would help by noting the spring arrival dates of birds in the following list. Send this list by June 5 to Wanda Jamieson and the arrival dates will be used in the spring migration report. Please include your name and address.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| osprey _____ | bank swallow _____ | MacGil. warbler _____ |
| Am kestrel _____ | r-w swallow _____ | com. yellowthroat _____ |
| common snipe _____ | barn swallow _____ | Am. redstart _____ |
| black tern _____ | cliff swallow _____ | meadowlark _____ |
| mourning dove _____ | house wren _____ | y-h blackbird _____ |
| common nighthawk _____ | gray catbird _____ | r-w blackbird _____ |
| b-c hummingbird _____ | varied thrush _____ | b-h cowbird _____ |
| rufous hummingbird _____ | Swainson's thrush _____ | western tanager _____ |
| caliope hummingbird _____ | veery _____ | chipping sparrow _____ |
| Lewis' woodpecker _____ | mtn bluebird _____ | Other: _____ |
| y-b sapsucker _____ | cedar waxwing _____ | _____ |
| eastern kingbird _____ | solitary vireo _____ | _____ |
| western kingbird _____ | red-eyed vireo _____ | _____ |
| willow flycatcher _____ | warbling vireo _____ | _____ |
| western wood pewee _____ | yellow warbler _____ | _____ |
| v-g swallow _____ | Audubon's warbler _____ | _____ |
| tree swallow _____ | Townsend's warbler _____ | _____ |

MARCH

THE 12TH 6:30 PM: REGULAR BOARD MEETING *
7:30 PM: CHAPTER BUSINESS MEETING
8:30 PM: PROGRAM: 'BIRDS OF OUR LIVES', A THIRTY MINUTE COLOR FILM ON BIRDS OF THE NORTHEASTERN U.S.

APRIL

THE 8TH 6:30 PM: REGULAR BOARD MEETING
7:30 PM: CHAPTER BUSINESS MEETING
8:30 PM: PROGRAM: A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME WILL SPEAK ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS

THE 13TH 6:30 PM: REGULAR BOARD MEETING
7:30 PM: CHAPTER BUSINESS MEETING
8:30 PM: PROGRAM: TO BE SCHEDULED

*Unless otherwise noted all Flathead Audubon Society meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Audio-visual room of the Bigfork Elementary school. Call 837-5303 for more information.

RARE BIRD SIGHTED AT SWAN LAKE

By Wanda Jamieson -

A "mystery" bird appeared at Elly Jones's feeder in Swan Lake November 19 through December 3. Elly noticed the very shy finch-like bird feeding with a flock of juncos. As the bird became braver it used the bird bath, and cracked and ate sunflower seeds on the large feeder shooing away other birds.

The bird was slightly larger than a junco. It had a grayish head fading into light brown over the crown, a brown back, and a brown notched tail. Two dark stripes ran from mustaches over the crown down the back of its head. It was rust-colored on its breast and under its chin. The wings were almost black, heavily lined. Two wing patches showed--one rust and one white. The bird had a very definite white rump patch, and a white lower belly with a few spots on its sides. Its legs and bill were grayish.

Elly was baffled by this bird--it could not be found in any of her field guides. About a month after its first appearance Elly finally found a picture of the bird in an older edition of Audubon Western Birds. It was a male brambling, a European mountain finch.

The sighting of this bird is a first in Montana. However, first sightings are usually only accepted if a specimen is collected. If a specimen is not collected, a good photograph may be accepted as evidence. Elly did not realize she had such a rare bird in her yard until after its disappearance. She had not been able to photograph the bird.

The recent publicizing of the proposed golf-course/marina near Bifgork has intensified the controversy regarding the desirability of continued area growth. Proponents of the development feel that it is economically, politically and socially desirable and have appealed to the area public for acceptance and support. Many area residents, however, feel that such development will erode environmental and cultural values. How should this conflict over use and development of private lands be resolved?

Evidence in favor of constructing the golf-course/marina and its subsidizing housing is based on the assumption that benefits to the area economy will accrue that offset any negative impacts of the resulting growth in population or alterations of the existing environment. In addition, new services will be provided to the community. This analysis would likely prove true - in the short run. And, apparently, that is all that concerns its proponents.

Given the size and location of the proposed development it would not be conducive to long term community stability. Good agricultural land would be lost irretrievably. Productive farming of such land is compatible with wildlife and floodplain characteristics of the area. Increased employment due to construction of the development would be a boom and bust situation. Thereafter, the economy would fluctuate seasonally and would be increasingly dependent on tourism and leisure activities. Such dependency would cause the community to suffer if the percentage of personal income needed to meet food, fuel and shelter costs continues to rise. Energy needs for the area would increase and a corresponding effect on utility rates is likely. Air and water quality standards for the valley would also become harder to maintain necessitating increased public expenditures and restrictions on private activities.

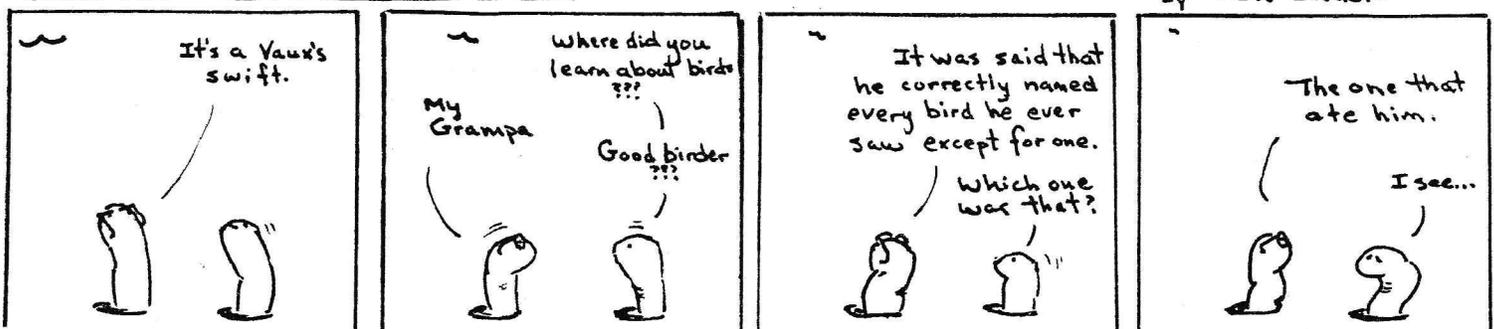
So where does that leave resolution of our land use conflict? Do we let the private land owner do as he pleases? Do we let the dollar dictate what is socially desirable? The dollar is definitely an index to what society holds important but how reliable is such an index when surveys reveal that more American homes have televisions than have plumbing? Maybe allocation of land use has too long been a puppet of Keynesian economic theory - a theory which is based on the premise of continual growth of goods and services and does not adequately consider resource limitations and abstract human needs.

Since the businessmen proposing the golf-course/marina have asked for the community's views on their project let them hear loud and clear - such growth is not desirable, nor is it inevitable. Long term community stability would best be served by maintaining good farm and grazing lands, well-dispersed waterfowl, fish and wildlife habitat, small-scale local industries and services, and well-built energy efficient homes and transportation facilities designed for year-round usefulness. The Flathead Valley is a good place to live because of its natural surroundings. The emphasis should be to live in balance with that environment - not to mold it to suit our whims and financial aspirations.



BOOKWORMS

by Pete Dader



Non-Profit
Organization
Postage Paid
Permit No. 3
Bigfork, Montana
59911



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY
DIRECTORY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marcy Bishop, Polson
Rick Trembath, Bigfork
Elmer Sprunger, Bigfork
Jack Whitney, Bigfork

OFFICERS

Wanda Jamieson, President
(837-5303)
Cheri Seli, Vice-president
(837-4889)
Betty Rose, Secretary
(755-0852)
Lillian Tubb, Treasurer
(837-4323)

STANDING COMMITTEE HEADS

Conservation: Rick Trembath
(837-6298)
Education: Nancy Trembath
(837-6298)
Field Trip: Marcy Bishop
(883-4146)
Hospitality: Cheri Seli
(837-4889)
Membership: Darlene Solberg
(982-3253)
Newsletter: Steve Dagger
(no phone)
Librarian: Helen Dresen
(844-3559)

THE ACCIPITER EXPRESS

Published bimonthly and distributed to Flathead Audubon Society members in Lake and Flathead Counties. The policy of the newsletter is to keep the membership informed regarding Chapter activities and to provide a medium for communicating conservation efforts and philosophy. Articles of interest, drawings, letters and/or criticisms are welcomed. Contributions should be mailed to:

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY
BOX 715
BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911
attn: Newsletter Editor

Non-member subscriptions may be obtained by sending your name and address along with \$1.00 to cover postage and handling.