



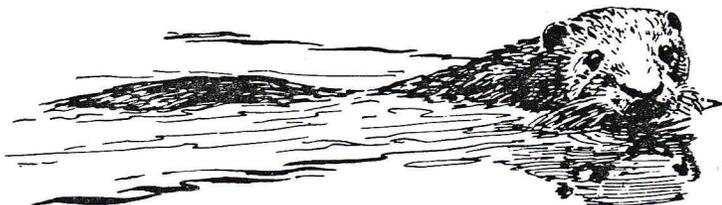
The Pileated Post

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1 JAN. 1986

1986		JANUARY						1986
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT		
L. Q. 3rd	N. M. 10th	F. Q. 17th	1	2	3	4		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
26	27	28	29	30	31	F. M. 25th		

BOARD OF DIRECTORS dinner meeting 5:30 PM at Streeters Korner Kitchen, Bigfork. Open to all interested members.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, Flathead Bank of Bigfork meeting room. 7:30 PM Business meeting. 8:00 PM Program -- Flathead Chapter member Stan Bones, an engineering technician for the USFS on the Swan Ranger District and a coordinator of the NW Montana Avalanche Warning System will present a film "Swept Away" and speak on avalanche awareness.



Lucky birders Elly Jones and her partner saw RIVER OTTERS on the Swan Christmas Bird Count day.

EDITORS DESK

LEO KEANE

Thanks so much for the gratitude which many of you have expressed as I begin my stint here in the busy newsroom of The Pileated Post. It certainly is a challenge which I look forward to with both eagerness and a small degree of trepidation—not uncommon feelings when one is on the brink of a new experience. Of course it wouldn't be nearly so much fun if it were all that easy. My goal is to keep The Post as enjoyable to read as it has been under the guidance of Thea Darwall. She certainly earned our confidence, and I hope to as well. A tip of the hat to Robin Magaddino for steering us through the Straits of Upheaval and Transition. Not only was the December newsletter especially artful, but Robin has stood by my side as I've taken over at the wheel. Much appreciated.

Please, all readers, feel free to submit for publication announcements, informational highlights, conservation news, artwork, stories, commentary, and especially bird sightings familiar or unusual from your own excursions afield. I'll be happy to take it from there,

Christmas Bird Count December 21, 1985

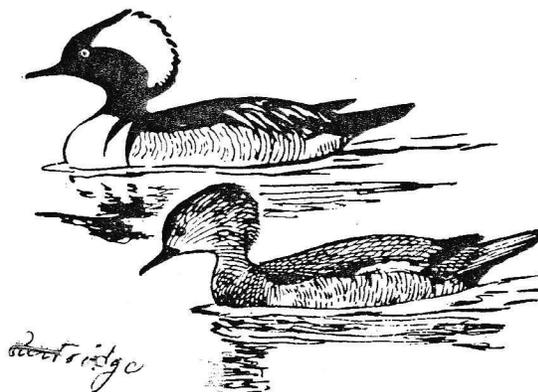
Sky: overcast, ceiling 300 feet
Temperature: low to mid twenties Fahrenheit
Winds: light and variable
Snow cover: 12-15 inches old frost snow

All said and done my vote for the highlight of Christmas Bird Count day would have to go to the baked ham at the post CBC potluck. Not to say that we didn't have a great time tramping around in the woods and fields.

My team reported for breakfast alert and ready for action at 7:00 A.M. sharp, and after several cups of extra strength, high-test, Euro-Blend coffee apiece we found ourselves even more alert and ready to match wits with the most elusive of natures' feathered brigades. To be specific we found ourselves putting along Riverside Road directly south of Creston and east of the Flathead River-- a region crawling with sloughs, thick with weedlots and long forgotten homesteads, a quadrant of dark impenetrable spruce bogs, fog enshrouded uplands and unnamable creeks. In short, God's country. Bird heaven. But on this the first day of winter, the shortest day of the year, and with our friend Mr. Sun lost somewhere out beyond the fog to boot everybody seemed to be peacefully napping except for we bird-brai... ah, birwatchers.

Well not quite everybody. Several squadrons of white-winged crossbills made short work of a Douglas fir as we inspected the carnage at some distance through our field optics, admiring their brilliant regalia and noting the diagnostic wing bars, these being the first white-winged on our life lists. And further along we had to pull out the big gun--a Bushnell 20x-60x spotting scope-- to observe a platoon of hooded mergansers ensconced far below us within a secret backwater of the Flathead. Such demure and mysterious birds. Then too we did roust that occasional band of greenheads, a handfull of goldeneyes, and one beleaguered snipe. But in the end our count included no invaders from the far North, or for that matter, any of our own more seldom-seen inhabitants. No snowy owl, no watchful shrike.

We burned up plenty of ammo, though, in the form of calories, accomplishing a thorough survey of our territory and enjoying a brisk day out-of-doors. So a warm fire back in town, hot cider, and a smorgasbord of toothsome dishes, from that juicy baked ham to apple pies, was truly a dream come true, and a perfect beginning for the Christmas season.



Below is a list of species known to occur within our Christmas Bird Count boundaries and the numbers of each actually seen that day.

<u> </u> Common Loon	<u> </u> Chukar	<u>10</u> Pygmy Nuthatch
<u> </u> Red-throated Loon	<u> </u> Gray Partridge	<u>4</u> Brown Creeper
<u> </u> Red-necked Grebe	<u> </u> Bobwhite	<u>5</u> Dipper
<u> </u> Pied-bill Grebe	<u>173</u> Turkey	<u> </u> Winter Wren
<u> </u> Western Grebe	<u> </u> Sora	<u> </u> Long-billed Marsh Wren
<u> </u> Horned Grebe	<u>20</u> American Coot	<u> </u> Varied Thrush
<u> </u> Eared Grebe	<u> </u> Killdeer	<u>1</u> American Robin
<u> </u> Double-crested Cormorant	<u>1</u> Common Snipe	<u> </u> Western Bluebird
<u>3</u> Great Blue Heron	<u>15</u> Herring Gull	<u> </u> Mountain Bluebird
<u> </u> American Bittern	<u> </u> California Gull	<u>4</u> Townsend's Solitaire
<u>21</u> Tundra Swan	<u>12</u> Ring-billed Gull	<u>36</u> Golden-crowned Kinglet
<u>339</u> Canada Goose	<u>83</u> Rock Dove	<u> </u> Ruby-crowned Kinglet
<u> </u> Snow Goose	<u>14</u> Mourning Dove	<u> </u> Water Pipit
<u> </u> Gadwall	<u>1</u> Gull sp.	<u>192</u> Bohemian Waxwing
<u>317</u> Mallard	<u> </u> Screech Owl	<u>50</u> Cedar Waxwing
<u> </u> Green-winged Teal	<u>6</u> Great Horned Owl	<u>4</u> Northern Shrike
<u> </u> American Wigeon	<u> </u> Snowy Owl	<u>25</u> Starling
<u>150</u> Canvasback	<u> </u> Hawk Owl	<u>26</u> House Sparrow
<u> </u> Greater Scaup	<u> </u> Pygmy Owl	<u> </u> Western Meadowlark
<u> </u> Northern Shoveler	<u> </u> Barred Owl	<u> </u> Yellow-headed Blackbird
<u> </u> Wood Duck	<u> </u> Great Gray Owl	<u>84</u> Red-winged Blackbird
<u>202</u> Redhead	<u> </u> Long-eared Owl	<u> </u> Northern Oriole
<u> </u> Ring-necked Duck	<u> </u> Short-eared Owl	<u> </u> Rusty Blackbird
<u>167</u> Lesser Scaup	<u> </u> Boreal Owl	<u> </u> Brewer's Blackbird
<u>250</u> Common Goldeneye	<u> </u> Saw-whet Owl	<u>718</u> Evening Grosbeak
<u>20</u> Barrow's Goldeneye	<u>2</u> Belted Kingfisher	<u>5</u> Cassin's Finch
<u>21</u> Bufflehead	<u>21</u> Common Flicker	<u> </u> House Finch
<u> </u> Ruddy Duck	<u>7</u> Pileated Woodpecker	<u>27</u> Pine Grosbeak
<u>5</u> Hooded Merganser	<u>22</u> Hairy Woodpecker	<u> </u> Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
<u>143</u> Common Merganser	<u>22</u> Downy Woodpecker	<u> </u> Hoary Redpoll
<u> </u> Red-breasted Merganser	<u> </u> Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker	<u>314</u> Common Redpoll
<u>1</u> Goshawk	<u> </u> Northern Three-toed Woodpecker	<u>142</u> Pine Siskin
<u> </u> Sharp-shinned Hawk	<u> </u> Horned Lark	<u>21</u> American Goldfinch
<u> </u> Cooper's Hawk	<u>1</u> Gray Jay	<u>208</u> Red Crossbill
<u> </u> Red-tailed Hawk	<u>5</u> Blue Jay	<u>179</u> White-winged Crossbill
<u>2</u> Rough-legged Hawk	<u>16</u> Steller's Jay	<u> </u> Rufous-sided Towhee
<u> </u> Golden Eagle	<u>31</u> Black-billed Magpie	<u>71</u> Darkeyed Junco ^{8 Slate-backed Oregon}
<u>17</u> Bald Eagle	<u>171</u> Common Raven	<u>50</u> Tree Sparrow ^{11 Pink-sided}
<u> </u> Marsh Hawk	<u>138</u> Common Crow	<u>2</u> Harris' Sparrow
<u> </u> Gyrfalcon	<u> </u> Pinon Jay	<u>5</u> White-crowned Sparrow
<u> </u> Prairie Falcon	<u> </u> Clark's Nutcracker	<u> </u> White-throated Sparrow
<u> </u> Peregrin Falcon	<u>240</u> Black-capped Chickadee	<u>12</u> Song Sparrow
<u> </u> Merlin	<u>42</u> Mountain Chickadee	<u> </u> Lapland Longspur
<u> </u> American Kestrel	<u> </u> Boreal Chickadee	<u> </u> Snow Bunting
<u> </u> Blue Grouse	<u>24</u> Chestnut-backed Chickadee	<u>1</u> Others Fox Sparrow
<u> </u> Spruce Grouse	<u>2</u> White-breasted Nuthatch	
<u>1</u> Ruffed Grouse	<u>19</u> Red-breasted Nuthatch	
<u> </u> White-tailed Ptarmigan		
<u> </u> Sharp-tailed Grouse		
<u>20</u> Ring-necked Pheasant		

67 species, 2 races

TOTAL - 4928 BIRDS

Also seen count weeks: Horned Lark, Gray I

It is difficult for people to put time and space into perspective. This is especially true when considering the arrival of Halley's Comet. Tracing the orbit of the comet next to known human history provides a unique opportunity to gain that perspective. Step back into your own history and ask yourself what you were doing (or what you might be doing) in:

- 1948 - The comet was at its furthest point from the sun (3 billion miles). It was rounding the most distant curve of its long elliptical orbit and was once again traveling towards the center of our solar system. The speed of the comet was about $5\frac{1}{2}$ mps.
- 1957 - The first space satellite "Sputnik" was launched.
- 1961 - Yuri Gagarin was the first human to orbit the earth.
- 1966 - Halley's Comet crossed the orbit of Neptune, heading our way.
- 1969 - Neil Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon.
- June 1983 - Halley's Comet passed Saturn's orbit.
- October 1984 - Just outside the orbit of Jupiter, the sun's radiation began to melt the outer layer of the frozen comet. Sublimation occurred as the frozen substances converted directly to a gas. As a result a cloud of gas formed around the frozen nucleus. This is called the coma. It will grow larger and larger as the comet nears the sun.
- November 14, 1985 - The comet was seen as a fuzzy ball (due to the coma) directly below Pleiades.
- November 29, 1985 - The comet passed the orbit of Mars. At this point solar winds were strong enough to begin to blow the gas cloud back from the head of the comet forming the tail.
- January 1, 1986 - HAPPY NEW YEAR! The comet passes the orbit of earth. The first two weeks of January will be the best time to observe the comet. Find the Square of Pegasus. Then find the lower righthand star. Drop below the star and search the area of Pegasus' head for a "piece of lint" which is the comet.
- February 9, 1986 - The comet is now at its closest point to the sun, somewhere between Venus and Mercury. The speed of the comet has been steadily increasing as it approached the sun, to 35mps.
- March 21, 1986 - The comet passes the orbit of earth on its outbound flight. Observers should be as far south as possible and they should look low in the southeast during the early morning hours.
- April 11, 1986 - The comet will be at its closest distance to the earth on its outbound flight.
- April 23, 1986 - The comet will pass the orbit of Mars. The first week of April will be the best time to observe the comet during its outbound flight. By mid-April the comet is no longer visible in the early morning sky, but becomes visible later in the month low in the southeast after sunset.
- Early May 1986 - Using binoculars or a telescope you might be able to get one last look at the comet...this time around.
- March 12, 1987 - Comet passes the orbit of Jupiter.
- October 1988 - Comet passes the orbit of Saturn.
- 1994 - The comet will pass the orbit of Uranus.
- 2010 - The first commercial flight to the moon will begin. TICKETS??
- 2024 - Halley's Comet will again be at its furthest point from the sun, rounding the curve which will bring it back toward the sun.
- 2061 - Halley's Comet will once again appear in the skies of earth enroute to its appointment with the sun.

Source: "Return of the Comet", Dennis Schatz, Pacific Science Center.



BALD EAGLE UPDATE

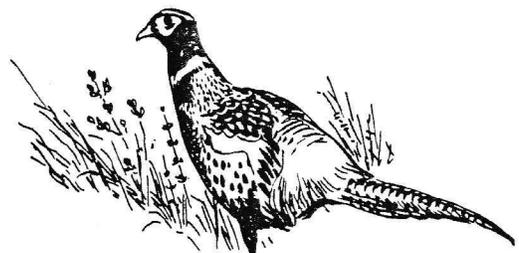
ROBIN MAGADDINO

The Montana Bald Eagle Working Group was hard at work during the last breeding season. A total of 51 eagles were fledged out of 33 nests. Twenty-nine other nests were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons including nest destruction, no eggs layed and inexperienced adults. Two new territories were developed in the upper portion of the Flathead and one of these fledged two young. In fact, 35 of the young eagles were produced in NW Montana. A Bozeman graduate student began habitat analysis of bald eagle nesting sites last fall and will finish next summer. Biologists at the USFS office in Missoula prepared computer models to discover why eagles choose one area over another as a nesting territory. Incredibly, they did find quite a difference between the used and unused areas. The Bald Eagle Management Quidelines developed by the Working Group are now on the way (hopefully) to their first printing. A new slide/tape program is available for viewing by schools and organizations. Contact me, Robin Magaddino, at 837-4294 for more information .

PROPERTY FOR SALE (birdwatchers delight)

Two acres of land bordered on one side by Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge and on three sides by state waterfowl management areas. The home has two bedrooms, large living room, dining room and kitchen, bath and back porch. Heats with baseboard electric and a wood stove. Other features include a two car garage with shop, and an original log house built in the '20's. A satellite dish also goes with the property. Price is \$85,000. Mail inquires to:

Aleth Koch
Rt 1, Box 117B
Charlo, MT 59824
(406) 644 2842



The Second Annual Nongame Symposium will be held in conjunction with the Wildlife Society meetings, Wednesday, February 26, 1:00-9:00 P.M., Ramada Inn, at Billings. The program includes speakers, slide shows and displays on nongame wildlife (Project Wild, the new Heritage Program, the Montana Loon Survey, cormorants, bats) and a panel discussion on the future of Montana's Nongame program. For more information and full agenda contact :

Kristi Dubois
 c/o Mt. Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
 P.O. Box 67
 Kalispell, Mt. 59903
 755-5505 ext. 207

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