



# The Pileated Post

VOLUME 10

NUMBER 8

NOVEMBER 1986

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

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, Flathead Bank of Bigfork meeting room. 7:30 Business meeting. 8:00 Program: Dan Casey promised to unearth a stunning film from the catacombs of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. We welcome suggestions from members of programs you would like to see in the future.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS PICKUP: Kalispell, DFWP, 10-12:00AM. Bigfork, Lakehills, 9-11:00 AM. Whitefish, RR Depot, 11-1:00 AM. Col. Falls, B&B, 11-1:00. Polson, B&B, 10:30-12:00 AM.

FIELD TRIP: Glacier Park Bald Eagles. Meet at Apgar Bridge around 10:00 AM. We'll have a ranger speak on eagle migration highlights.

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## EDITORS DESK

LEO KEANE

We're running a little behind this month here in the busy newsroom of the Pileated Post. In fact, when I rushed into the "office" yesterday from a five week stint on a job out of town I found the place in a shambles: stacks of bills and unanswered mail, loads of laundry, barren cupboards. Outside, the bird feeder hung askew and empty. It was pretty bleak. Today however, this first day of November, the coffee pot whistles, the fridge brims with pizzas and apples, what appeared to be a heap of dilapidated clothing now virtually smiles from the closet. The good mail is stamped and ready for action in the GO! file, while the less desirable has been dealt with appropriately. And that Yankee feeder stands at attention in anticipation for duty soon to come. So it is that time once again... I don sweats, stretch and limber up my fingers, and finally take a seat before this trusty, old Smith/Corona "bird" processor.

By way of apology then, if your newsletter arrives well into the month, after the meeting, past the sunflower seeds pick-up date, and you've already cleaned the canary's cage... well gosh, you've got to make hay while the sun shines, around these parts. Of course, a word from our President, Robin, (turn to page 2) is always timeless. And thanks Rod for covering the conservation beat as thoroughly as you do. It would be great to hear from the other chair persons every now and then to keep us up to date, and from anybody else who might have a story to tell or key insights from the world of Audubon.



The first wildlife we viewed upon entering California this fall was a soaring turkey vulture. As the miles passed, so did more vultures. Have ever noticed how they soar with their wings in a lazy "V" instead of on the horizontal plane, and they pivot from one wing to the other as if they are always slightly off balance.

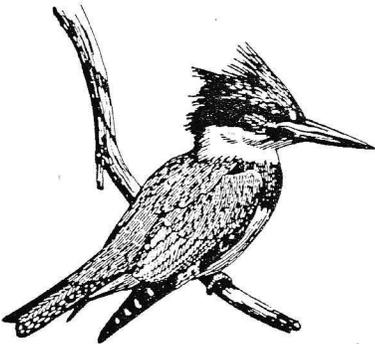
I have unusually fond memories of turkey vultures... such as discovering a night roost for about 60 of the beasts in a eucalyptus grove surrounding an old farm home near San Luis Obispo, California. A college classmate and I were rather awed at how the elderly occupants of the home loved and protected the birds, despite the incredible stench. One must realize that the roost began 30 feet from their kitchen door and stretched the whole length of the farm yard!

The most wonderful vulture phenomenon I've witnessed was at Christman, 1973, in Mulege, Mexico, located along the southern gulf side of Baja, California. An early morning stroll along the beach revealed turkey vultures doing the cleaning work of seagulls (who were absent). As the sun created rising thermals on the seaside cliffs, a funnel of about 1,000 vultures slowly wound its way above that winter roost at the plateau's edge. The funnel rose to a height where it appeared to be a dust cloud. We were unable to see the direction in which the birds dispersed. I always wonder if the few vultures passing through the Flathead Valley each fall are really "snowbirds" headed for a beachbum winter in beautiful Mulege.



#### WILD HORSE ISLAND STATE PARK UPDATE Robin Magaddino

During October I represented Audubon at a session for updating the park management plan for Wild Horse Island. To sum it up--no improvements or developments will take place at this time. The management objectives continue to stress preservation of the island's ecosystem. Recreationists are encouraged to disperse by lack of definite signing and maps, thus preventing the formation of permanent hiking trails or day use sites. The Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department deserves an applause for their management efforts.



HESS APPOINTED EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Craig Hess, a director of the Flathead Audubon Society, has been named as Public Education Coordinator for the Flathead River Basin Commission. Hess, a wildlife biologist, said, "It is a good commission and has been doing good work. My job will be to help communicate between the commission and the public".

The state funded commission promotes studies and makes recommendations to agencies and communities in efforts to protect water quality in the Flathead River Basin. The commission is composed of representatives of local, state and federal agencies which have responsibilities affecting the Flathead River system. There are also three public members on the commission.

Hess said that the part-time position is a two year appointment. His responsibilities will include preparing brochures on basin water quality issues, public service announcements, and public "breakfast seminars". "Next year," said Hess, "we plan a major symposium on Flathead Lake."

The public education position was funded by a grant from the Freshwater Foundation of Minnesota.

DFWP COOPERATES ON GRIZZLIES

Concern about the impact of upland game hunting on grizzlies within tribal reservation lands near the Mission Mountains, described in last month's newsletter, have been somewhat abated, reports Bob Ballou, president, Montana Audubon Council.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department failure to respond to Flathead tribal requests to close hunting in grizzly habitat had led Ballou to suggest a violation of the Endangered Species Act. "In the meantime," said Ballou, "after Audubon's concerns were expressed, the department has made a special effort to remedy the situation." Ballou indicated that the FWP officials have been cooperating with the tribe to lessen the possible impact of hunting on the Mission grizzlies. Hunters are being warned and signs have been posted in grizzly areas, he said.

Ballou said that the department's actions have been useful. "I believe that Audubon's concern had influence on the department's response. We acted as a catalyst in the situation."



HELP WANTED: Amateur or Professional, Experts and Aficionados...  
We need your brain power!

We are compiling a list of expertise in our organization that would be useful in addressing environmental issues. Although input could be minimal by the individual, the effectiveness of the organization could be immeasurably increased. Our Regional environmental priorities are Air, Water, Wildlife and Land Management. Recent examples of our involvement include evaluation of National Forest Management Plans, testifying at public hearings on the Cabin Creek Coal Mine and phosphate detergent sales in Flathead County, and effective encouragement to relocate a dumpster site from West Glacier in order to protect grizzly bears. In most cases an informational telephone call is all that is required, but any individual who would like to take a leading roll on an issue is welcome. Please drop us a letter if you wish to make your knowledge available. Thanks.

# Montana Audubon Legislative Fund

Bluebirds, grizzly bears and subdivisions.  
What could these items possibly have in common?

These are some of the issues that the Montana Audubon legislative effort will be working on during the 1987 Montana legislative session. This legislative effort is Audubon's voice at the capitol, working for wildlife and habitat protection in Montana.

Support for this effort comes mostly from donations by chapters and individual members. Last session, generous contributions from members covered almost half the legislative budget! This kind of support was wonderful. We need your help again. If we all work together we can make our voices heard at the legislature.

You will be getting a letter in November with more information on the legislative effort and details on how you can contribute. Remember, we need to raise this money before the session starts. Watch for that letter!

P. O. Box 924  
Helena, MT 59624



Got your deer yet? If you are going to the hills in pursuit of big game this hunting season you might be interested to see how your animal compares with the largest of each species ever taken in Montana according to Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks records:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Whole Weight (lbs.)</u>	<u>Dressed Weight (lbs.)</u>
Antelope	160	121
Black Bear	505	---
Grizzly Bear	1018	---
Mule Deer	453	340
Whitetail Deer	375	275
Elk	1012	812
Mountain Goat	310	212
Mountain Lion	176	---
Moose	1117	840
Bighorn Sheep	302	222



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CONSERVATION COMMENTS

ROD ASH--Conservation Chair

Flathead County Conservation organizations, including the Flathead Audubon, sponsored a candidates forum on environmental issues shortly before the November 4 election. The forum couldn't be covered as a news event since our newsletter was due out after the election. However, the meeting is still worth commenting on for its value as a barometer of the environmental feelings of Flathead County's politicians and of the cooperative efforts of area conservation organizations.

The meeting at the Outlaw Inn in Kalispell was well attended by candidates and the audience represented an excellent cross section from area conservation organizations. The meeting was chaired by Bill Bishop of Polson who described himself as "that rare bird--an ecofreak who is also a long time businessman". Formal questions were presented by Bob Ballou, of Flathead Audubon, and by a representative of the Sierra Club.

My impression of candidate response, both of incumbents and challengers, was that there was a general concern about conservation and an expression that we needed to work to keep a high quality environment.

All of the candidates responded favorably to questions about Flathead Valley water quality. They knew there were problems, they supported the Flathead Basin Commission, and they felt that local communities had a primary responsibility for maintaining and paying for water quality protection. The general consensus seemed to be that we needed better and more enforcement of existing water quality laws rather than more laws. (Editor's comment: What are the implications of this on the phosphate ban?)

There was general support from the candidates for some sort of legislation regarding timber harvest on state and private lands. There was agreement that more was needed to protect habitat values on non-federal lands.

The discussion of support for non-game species was inconclusive. Most candidates favored the concept of support for non-game but were uncertain as to means of financing. It was agreed that the non-game check off was not working well.

For me the greatest value of the forum was the opportunity to make our representatives aware that there is a vital environmental movement in the area and that there are those who feel strongly about the protection of our natural heritage. The dialogue was healthy for all of us, politicians and concerned citizens. We ought to continue such cooperation and perhaps have similar meetings during legislative sessions.



1986 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**Membership Application**

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Membership category preferred:

INDIVIDUAL/\$10       FAMILIAR/\$21

FAMILY/\$18       FAMILIAR/\$21

**INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP**

**\$20** is enclosed.

Bill me, please.      R26 TXCH8

CHECK PAYABLE TO: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAIL TO: BETTY ROSE  
1066 STEEL BRIDGE RD  
KALISPELL, MT 59901

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- Refuge

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Regular monthly meetings are preceded by an Executive Board meeting, the time and location of which are published in the preceding newsletter. The business meeting (7:30 PM) and program (8:00 PM) are held in the downstairs meeting room of the Flathead Bank of Bigfork. These are all open meetings and all interested people are invited to attend. THE PILEATED POST is published nine times a year, September through May, and is sent to all members of the Flathead Audubon Society as one benefit of National dues. For others who would like to receive the newsletter, cost is \$3.50/yr.

*★ Next Month: MIGRATION — send your most memorable experience of birds in migration and we'll publish it in December's POST!*



**FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
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