



The Pileated Post

VOLUME 11

NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1987

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: Guest speaker, Dennis Flath, nongame biologist for the Mt. DFWP since 1974, will present an overview of nongame research in Montana with a closer look at recent data from raptor survey routes. This should be an excellent primer for the Nongame Symposium.

THE THIRD ANNUAL NONGAME WILDLIFE SYMPOSIUM, Cavanaugh's Motor Inn, Kalispell. Begins at 8:00 in the morning through 8:00 in evening. Wide range of interesting topics. See inside.

FEBRUARY

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EDITOR'S DESK

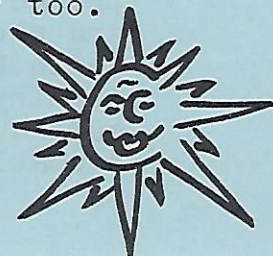
LEO KEANE

It's Super Bowl Sunday! Always one of the three best ski days of the winter. By noon the slopes will clear and a vast silence will return to the high alpine as skiers flock toward TV sets at the lodge and downtown. But have you noticed the startling coincidence? Ullr rarely fails to bless Super Bowl Sunday with a most special reserve of champagne powder and sparkling atmosphere. It's a skier's paradise out there! Powder pigs and pinheads, schussboomers and mogul mashers, the dyed-in-the-wool and the bona fide are taking to the hills just about now with robust smiles and skis ablazin'.

As luck would have it, today is exceptionally blessed. Outside we've got the most rarefied air and freshest, coldest powder in two months--and, to my great dismay, inside a newsletter deadline looming alarmingly soon. Otherwise I'd be up to my fanny pack in sitzmarks too! But business before pleasure as we say, so...

Well, January never fails to generate plenty of business what with congress and the state legislature in session, the Nongame Symposium coming up, as well as a calendar full of reminders. We'll try to bring you abreast of the latest information on these accounts in this, the February newsletter. And, when all is said and done, hopefully we'll still have room for something "birdy" too.

Lastly, and speaking of birds, we're already dreaming up ideas for summer field trips. Maybe it's spring fever a month or two early, but actually, to be "ready for action" when the migration begins we best have our plans in order. Any good ideas out there? Any trip leaders willing to step forward? Please think about it, and keep in touch.



CONSERVATION COMMENTS

ROD ASH

The 100th Congress of the United States will have convened and President Reagan will have given his State of the Union address by the time this newsletter reaches you.

Let us fervently hope that both the new Congress and the President will give high priority to the environmental issues that face this nation. Frankly, I have much more hope that Congress will see our environmental concerns with a clear perspective than I expect from the President. Military buildup, domestic budget cutting and reducing taxes seem to be the President's priorities while environmental issues seem to be of little concern to him.

Congress, on the other hand, intends to put a Clean Water act on the President's desk and Congressional leadership seems committed to its passage and, if necessary, to an override of the President's likely veto. It would be absurd if a nation able to find billions to spend on military causes couldn't find the funds to protect the very essence of life--air and water.

Another Congressional priority should be the prompt passage of a new Clean Air act that will lead to conclusive action on acid rain. Too many of us seem to think that acid rain is a problem confined to the New England region. In reality most areas of the nation, including the Northern Rockies, face the disaster to lakes and forests that the Northeast has realized. Obviously, the time for more studies is past. The time has arrived for action to prevent the pollution that causes acid rain. A Clean Air bill before the House of Representatives, supported by 160 members, has the endorsement of the National Audubon Society. Our own Congressman Pat Williams, with an excellent environmental record, has not yet become a co-sponsor of this legislation. Audubon members desiring to preserve the living waters of our mountain lakes should ask Congressman Williams to add his name to the list of sponsors.

The new Congress will face other old problems such as wilderness legislation, acceptable National Forest programs, and grazing on wildlife refuges, for which Audubon members expect solutions. The Montana State legislature, engulfed in a budget and tax crisis, also will be facing environmental problems of a diverse sort.

So it looks like a busy spring for those of us who desire the preservation and enhancement of our natural resource/wildlife heritage. When you get a call for action, please respond.

GLACIER PARK MANAGEMENT

ROBIN

Conservation leaders from around the Flathead were welcomed to the home of Gil Lusk, Glacier National Park Superintendent. We discussed the Going-to-the-Sun Road reconstruction (we look forward to reviewing the Environmental Impact Assessment when it is developed), aircraft overflights (National Parks do not have protected air space, but they're working on it), trout limits and closure of certain spawning sites, and development along the North Fork. Mr. Lusk traveled over 20% of the parks' back-country trails this past year and plans to cover the rest in subsequent years. He is definitely happy with Glacier and we'll probably have a long, fruitful association with him.

NONGAME SYMPOSIUM--KALISPELL

Flathead Audubon Chapter members will have a chance to hear wildlife experts discuss the future of nongame species in Montana at this upcoming Kalispell gathering.

The Third Annual Nongame Wildlife Symposium will be held at Cavanaugh's Motor Inn on February 11. Registration for the meetings will be from 8:00-9:00 AM. Sessions will continue until 8:00 PM.

The symposium will focus on results of original nongame wildlife research in Montana. Morning discussions will include: ferruginous hawks, western blue bird recovery, deer mouse telemetry and Montana Christmas Bird Counts presented by our own Dan Casey. Nongame wildlife in old growth forests will be featured in an afternoon panel discussion. In the evening, Larry Thompson, a guest speaker, will present "Foibles of a Field Biologist" from 7:00 to 7:30 PM. Thompson will be followed by the premier showing of a new Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks film, The Last Parable, from 7:30 to 8:00 PM.



A small registration of no more than \$3.00 will be charged.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT: FLATHEAD CHAPTER NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY-1986

REVENUE

Membership	1,451.
Checking Acc. Interest	224.
Birdathon	807.
Book Sales	188.
Sunflower Seed Sale	15,279.
Donations	306.
Newsletter	17.
Total Revenue	18,272.

Assets

C.D.'s	10,000.
Checking	2,367.

EXPENDITURES

Operating

Gifts and Speakers	365.
Sunflower Seeds	8,570.
Book Purchases	125.
Membership	90.
Permits	60.
Administration	400.
Newsletter	1,600.

Projects

Glacier Institute	360.
Bird Study Skins	136.
Chair and Table Carriers	296.
Loon Research	200.
Nongame Advertising	178.
USFWS Goose Nest Boxes	100.
Total Expenditures	12,480.

PROJECTED ALLOCATIONS-1987

State of Montana

Nonspendable Audubon Fund	1,000.
MT Audubon Leg. Fund	1,000.
Audubon State Dues	150.
MEIC	100.
Total State Allocation	2,250.

Local Projects

Adopted Refuge	225.
Ninepipe non-game survey	200.
Candidates Night	50.
Non-game advertising	200.
Blue Bird Nest Boxes	25.
Friends of Lawrence Park	500.
Total Local Allocations	1,200.

Research

McClelland/eagle research	200.
Harmata/eagle banding	100.
Total for Research	300.

Flathead Audubon Chapter

Bird Study Skins	200.
Slide projector	400.
Partial Projected Allocations	600.

THE ROBOCKER FARM:
One More NATURE CONSERVANCY Conservation Easement

Last month concluded a four year negotiation with the Nature Conservancy to create the Robocker Conservation Easement. Beginning with a "suggested form" for a Deed of Conservation Easement, the steps were many and varied. The property is 160 acres bordering Flathead River and Egan Slough. A documentation report was prepared which included: the location and property history, purpose of our granting the easement, our farming methods, the land use including that of adjacent properties, soil description and productivity, hydrology, and agricultural crops. There was complete photo documentation, and finally, a description of the native vegetation (exciting note of several rare plants), and of the wildlife: birds (we have recorded more than 140 species on the farm), game and nongame mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish. Tables were prepared with climatological data, cultural features of Egan Slough and the water quality analysis. While only one end of Egan Slough is included in the easement, the Nature Conservancy obtained interest agreements with most of the other property owners around Egan Slough as the future of three rare plants will depend upon the water quality of the entire slough.

Those of you who have "birded" at the farm know that we have such a nice varied habitat for birds and other wildlife. It is the purpose of our easement to allow for continuation of responsible agricultural practices, while offering protection and preservation of these wetlands and woodlands--in perpetuity.

The Nature Conservancy is not the only private agency involved in easements, but was the right one for our purposes. There is nothing "public" about the easement. It is a legal, private agreement between ourselves (and all future owners of the property), and the Conservancy.

The easement deed is filed with our property deed and ensures that the land will never be divided. While the land will be used, it will not ever be misused. We hope the farm won't be the only undeveloped land in the Flathead Valley in 100 years. 200 years? 500 years? 100,000 years?

Jean Robocker

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ROBIN MAGADDINO

"Best wishes for the New Year to all of you from your National Audubon Society staff in New York and nationwide. I am enthusiastic and confident about the potential for Audubon in the months and year ahead. With your help we can influence the future course of the nation and help provide leadership for establishing a stronger global environment."

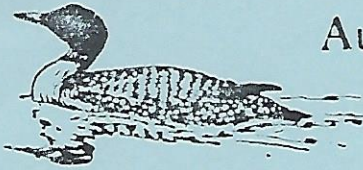
Peter A. Berle, President, NAS

Thus reads the opening statement of Peter Berle's fourth President to Presidents letter. As we strive for protection of our NW Montana environment, it is easy to forget that we are part of the second largest environmental action group in the nation, with over 500,000 members and a fiscal '87 budget of 26.5 million dollars.

Although each environmental organization has its own areas of expertise, the practice of networking with each other has increased our effectiveness tremendously. At a local level we've been at this for years. The recent meeting with the Superintendent of Glacier National Park, the financial support of the Montana Environmental Information Center, and the formation of an inter-organization legislative action phone tree are examples of this networking effort. We can only raise our own level of competence by gleening the best from other environmental groups, no matter how extreme, single-minded or passive they might seem to us. We likewise give them our best efforts.

Mr. Berle states that one priority for NAS this year is to strengthen the international network of like-minded organizations in other countries. Perhaps through the efforts of he and his staff we will help to establish a stronger global environmental movement.

Montana Audubon Legislative Fund



P.O. Box 924
Helena, MT 59624



1987 Montana Audubon Legislative Agenda

The following is a list of the top Audubon priorities for the 1987 Legislature. Sponsors are listed for those bills we know about. We will update this list as things develop.

1. Nongame Wildlife Checkoff. SB177. Sponsors: Senator Bill Yellowtail and Rep. Jack Sands plus 12 other cosponsors. If this legislation is not reinstated, the checkoff will be taken off the tax form. We are asking for three things:
 - a. We will ask that the checkoff be reinstated without a sunset clause.
 - b. We will ask that the nongame program be supplemented by hunting and fishing license fee dollars.
 - c. Lastly, our bill proposes to get rid of the charges the Dept. of Revenue imposes for administering the checkoff.
2. The Montana Heritage Program. The Heritage Program investigates and maintains a database on species of special concern and significant natural areas.
3. Subdivision Reform. Our main emphasis is on finding ways to protect riparian habitat and reduce the amount of winter range that is subdivided.
4. Grizzly Bear Hunting. Sponsor: Rep. Paul Rapp-Svrcek. We will support the Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks effort to restrict the grizzly bear hunting quota to one bear per lifetime.
5. Endangered Species Nominations. HB 266. Sponsors: Rep. Bob Ream and Senator Judy Jacobsen. We would like to simplify the process, revising the law to read that the Dept. FWP can submit a nomination directly to the legislature for approval.
6. Natural Areas Legislation. Sponsor: Rep. Dorothy Bradley. The state's Natural Areas Act was established in 1974 but has been dormant since then. We will support efforts to expand and fund the state's Natural Areas Program.
7. Illegally Taken Wildlife. HB 329. Sponsor: Rep. Bob Ream, Rep. Orval Ellison, and Senators Ed Smith and Al Bishop. We are initiating legislation to set up civil penalties for illegally taken wildlife. Penalties range from \$10 for game fish, \$25 for nongame birds, \$300 for raptors, and \$1000 for endangered species.
8. Game Damage Compensation. Some farmers and ranches would like the state to pay for crops that game animals eat. This movement needs to be watched to ensure that any compensation system is a reasonable and responsible one.

AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: CONTINUED

Ninepipe

The December 21 Christmas Bird Count at the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge was a great success. Although we were one short of last year's species (56 vs 57), we feel we did well with 12 counters and the less than ideal weather. Of the 56 species observed, there were 2615 individuals. Heavy fog stayed with us until about noon.

Raptors featured in this count. Record highs for roughlegged and redtailed hawks, and an immature peregrine falcon observed while catching a hen mallard! One team recorded a "nonconfirmed" for a gyrfalcon, and a local falconer (these people are good on raptors), who did not participate as a counter, positively identified a gyrfalcon resting in a tree outside his picture window! We believe our high meadow vole population can take the credit.

Many thanks for the good turnout from the Five Valleys Chapter.

Bob Ballou-coordinator



Libby

The Libby Bird Club counted 63 species and 2000 individuals, including a meadowlark which "winters" in a barn and an eared grebe which is a new species for the Libby Count.

BIRD SIGHTINGS (Please call in noteworthy bird sightings to the newsletter editor, 862-5807, and we'll get it into the next Pileated Post.)

- ** Jan Metzmaker identified a goshawk swiping pigeons of the viaduct in Whitefish. The bird apparently brought one of these luckless pigeons into her yard and ate it!
- ** Hal Trost and Kris Lierboe report of four pileated woodpeckers congregating in one old larch tree next to their home north of Whitefish. This could very likely be a family group.
- ** The Great Falls Tribune reported a rare yellow-billed loon sighted at Giant Springs by Charles Marlen of Great Falls. The yellow-billed loon nests in the lakes and rivers of Arctic tundra and winters along the north Pacific coast. The sighting was confirmed by Margaret Adams of the Missouri Breaks Chapter.

CONGRATS!! It looks like Flathead Chapter member Jan Wassink may be on his way with a career in wildlife photography--he had more of his photos published in the last special photo edition of Montana Outdoors than any other shutterbug. Real good work Jan!

HOW ABOUT THE HOME WHERE THE CARIBOU DO ROAM?

from PETER BERLE

The Regan Administration has recommended that 1.5 million of the 2.0 million acre coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska be opened to oil and gas leasing. They are also trading away subsurface rights to the Alaska Natives Corporation in order to expedite oil and gas development. The 100,000 porcupine caribou herd uses this area as calving grounds. It is important habitat for polar bear, grizzly bear, wolves, wolverine, snow geese and peregrine falcons. The National Audubon Society is opposing this mainly on the grounds that this development is not consistent with the conservation purposes for which the Refuge was established by Congress.

*Make plans now to attend:
THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
~ NATIONAL CONVENTION ~
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON
AUGUST, 1981
details next month.*



WILDLIFE HABITAT PROJECTS ENDORSED

Proposals to enhance wildlife habitat in areas influenced by the Hungry Horse and Libby hydroelectric projects have been endorsed by the Flathead Audubon Society.

Projects submitted to the Northwest Power Planning Council by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for wildlife mitigation "will increase and maintain viable populations of big game, aquatic and terrestrial furbearers, and waterfowl within the Flathead and Kootenai River systems" said a letter to the power council from Robin Magaddino, president of Flathead Audubon.

Magaddino's letter also noted that proposed protection of black bear and grizzly bear habitat in the North and Middle Forks of the Flathead River will help insure the wild and scenic character of these areas and protect critical river bottoms.

The Northwest Power Planning Council has been given authority by Congress to finance projects designed to recover some of the losses of wildlife habitat caused by the construction of Northwestern hydroelectric projects.

1986 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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President
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Robin Magaddino, 2100 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911
Jack White, 1235 Swan River Road, Bigfork, MT 59911
Barb Baxter, 255 Oldenburg Rd., Somers, MT 59932
Tommie Clark, 231 Pine Needle Lane, Bigfork, MT 59911

837-4294
837-6157
857-3738
837-6615

DIRECTORS

Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt.1, Charlo, MT 59825
Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901
Craig Hess, 370 3rd Ave. W.N., Kalispell, MT 59901
Jim Rogers, Box 984, Polson, MT 59860

644-2365
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Nancy Trembath, 6065 MT Hwy 35, Bigfork, MT 59911
Betty Rose, 1066 Steel Bridge Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901
Leo Keane, 2175 Houston Dr., Whitefish, MT, 59937

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887-2492
844-3784
857-3143
837-6298
755-0852
862-5807

Dan Casey, 265 Breezy Pt., Somers, MT, 59937
Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt 1, Charlo, MT 59825
Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Rd., Kalispell, 59911

857-3143
644-2365
755-2751

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 preceeding 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.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY	
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★ NONGAME SYMPOSIUM IN KALISPELL
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FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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