



The Pileated Post

VOLUME 11





NUMBER 4

APRIL 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 PM Business
meeting. 8:00 PM Program--Hank Fisher from
the Defenders of Wildlife will discuss the
biological and political dynamics involved
with the reintroduction of timber wolves in
Montana including Yellowstone Park and the
Glacier/Bob Marshall ecosystem. Hank's grasp
of the subject and expressive style will make
for an interesting discussion of a controver-
sial subject facing Montana conservationists.

PLEASANT VALLEY FIELD TRIP, Buttrey's parking
lot, 7:30 AM. Details inside.

| 1987 APRIL 1987 | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|-----|-----|--|--|
| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
| |  FQ 6 |  FM 13 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |  LQ 20 |  NM 27 |

EDITOR'S DESK

LEO KEANE

Alright Auduboners, be honest now, when was the last time you went bird watching? Sounds like an academic question for nature buffs like us doesn't it, but then I'm not referring to the garden variety of bird watching which we habitually do--stationed by the window, as I am now, observing the customary bustle of juncos and chickadees about the feeder. No, when's the last day you spent afield with a trusty pair of binocs and your well-thumbed field guide in pursuit of the elusive and seldom seen? How long since you've checked a new species on your life list? Speaking for myself, bird watching has become incidental to other outdoor interests. I always have the bins along on canoe trips and ski tours, but usually stuffed somewhere in the pack, and that oddball warbler or soaring buteo never seem to wait around while I sort through apples and raincoats for the optics.

With bird watching season coming into full swing, we have the opportunity this year to revitalize the hobby which brought us all to Flathead Audubon. Our new field trips coordinator is Gail Leonard who has returned to the club after a two year hiatus to pursue graduate studies in Billings. Gail brought me to my first chapter meeting in the fall of '84 when she lived in Kalispell. Returning now, Gail offered to organize a schedule for this spring and summer. I'm impressed with the results. From April through June, on most any weekend, you should find expeditions out toward wild and beautiful places, or to fields and farms close to home.

Rub elbows with some birding pros, bring along a flower guide too and join up for one or two or several trips afield this summer. We'll see you there!



FIELD TRIPS '87

This year we have a number of interesting field trips in and around the Flathead Valley, all led by competent and enthusiastic birders. Everyone is welcome on all the field trips, just be sure and wear sturdy footwear and bring rain gear, binoculars, field guides, and a sack lunch if appropriate. Smiles are also highly recommended !

April 25: Pleasant Valley of the Fisher River

This will be a day long field trip to the Pleasant Valley, led by experienced Libby birder Marge Swanson. We should see lots of waterfowl, shorebirds, and some warblers. On past trips to this beautiful, remote area we have seen sora rails, American bitterns, and Wilson's phalaropes. Meet at the northwest corner of Buttrey's parking lot in Kalispell at 7:30 am, or at Happy's Inn at 8:30 am. Bring a sack lunch and a spotting scope if you have one. This is a special opportunity to see a hidden valley close to home. If you have any questions call Marge at 293-5330.

May 9: Ruth White's Birthday Walk

Meet at Kootanai Gallery in downtown Bigfork at 2 pm for a leisurely walk up the Swan River canyon to the home of Jack and Ruth White. Ruth will have her loom house open on our arrival at her house. This is a fun walk for all ages, about 2 1/2 miles in length. For more information you can call Ruth at 837-6157.

May 16: Wild Horse Island

Though the details are still being worked out at press time, we plan to do a tour of Wild Horse Island, starting at the southeast end and walking to the north end. If we are lucky we should see lots of Bitterroot and other spring flowers. We will charter a boat, either from Yellow Bay or Big Arm, which should cost each participant about \$5. This will be a full day field trip and those who plan to participate will need to bring a sack lunch and rain gear. If you feel you may be interested in participating, please contact Gail Leonard or Leo Keane at the next Audubon Meeting, or call 862-5807 after 5 pm. Fish, Wildlife, and Parks will supply us with plant and bird lists, as well as maps. This should be an exciting trip ! Full details in the next newsletter.

May 23: Nature Photography with Jan Wassink

Noted Flathead Valley nature photographer and Flathead Audubon member Jan Wassink has generously agreed to lead a photography field trip. Jan will be setting up a blind in the Lower Valley area and assist amateur photo-buffs. There will be a Friday night pre-session for discussion of technique and a Saturday morning field session. Meet at Rosauers parking lot south of Kalispell at 7:30 pm Friday night and at 7 am Saturday for these sessions. If you have questions call Jan at 752-2569.



June 6: Mitten, Lubec, and Dog Gun Lakes in the East Glacier area

This is a joint field trip with the Montana Wilderness Association, led by East Glacier resident Lou Bruno. This is an automobile/hiking tour of three productive waterfowl lakes in the foothills of the Badger-Two Medicine area. We should see breeding ducks, geese, grebes, rails, and shorebirds. Bring a sack lunch and meet at the Flathead River Fishing access site in Columbia Falls at 7:30 am or at the Glacier Village Cafeteria in East Glacier at 9 am. Call Lou Bruno at 226-9294 for more details.

June 13: The Rose property west of Kalispell

Join us for a ramble through woodlands, creek bottoms, and meadows, led by Betty Rose. We should see Swainson's and Hermit thrushes, warblers, finches, and a red-tailed hawk's nest. This trip is a good opportunity to work on field identification of bird songs. Meet at Buttrey's parking lot at the west end of Kalispell at 8 am. For more information call Betty at 755-0852.

June 27: Robocker's Farm

This will be an evening walk, from 7:30 -9:30 pm, led by Jean Robocker around her farm east of Kalispell. There will be a variety of birds which we will be able to view during their evening feeding. Speaking of feeding- be sure and wear insect repellent and protective clothing, because it's not just the birds who are hungry. Robocker's farm is at the end of Monford Road, on the east side of the Flathead River. If you have any questions call Jean at 755-2751.

July 18: Swan Refuge Canoe Trip

We'll paddle from Porcupine Creek to Swan Lake through the National Wildlife Refuge. This trip is suitable for beginning paddlers and we will take some time for basic instruction. Good chance to see abundant bird life as well as the new Nature Conservancy addition. Beautiful bottom land woodlands. Meet at National Forest Swan Lake Access site at 9:00 AM. Call Leo Keane at 862-5807 one week ahead of time to reserve a place and arrange for canoes.

LAWRENCE PARK AND ITS FRIENDS
by Brent Mitchell

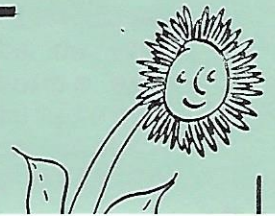
In June of 1984 the Kalispell City Parks Committee met to establish a plan for an almost abandoned parcel of city property on Valispell's north side..a place known as Lawrence Park. The proposals were: 1) to expand the Buffalo Hills golf course into the area, or 2) establish baseball and soccer fields there, or 3) to establish the area as a family park and natural area.

On July 11th 1984 eight people met in the basement of the First Baptist Church to formulate a plan for the park/natural area proposal. This plan consisted of leaving a portion of Lawrence Park- the riparian area along the Stillwater River- as a natural area while adding a nature trail, and developing open areas of the park into sports fields and picnic areas. This committee of citizens became the Friends of Lawrence Park. We've come a long way since July of 1984. The Friends of Lawrence Park is still an active group, currently most involved in a fund raising effort to acquire \$26,000 to begin the renovation of Lawrence Park.

Support from Flathead Audubon Society, Flathead Wildlife, and other conservation groups has been consistent over the past two plus years. Efforts to draw more interest, more money for the matching fund drive and broader community involvement are increasing. Those of us who frequent the area realize that this is the last area inside Kalispell that supports a diverse riparian wildlife habitat, while offering family recreation without detriment to either. Kalispell Public Schools, scouting groups, and conservation organizations and individual citizens frequent Lawrence Park for field trips and to enjoy a quiet, wild place. And even though the Park is within the city limits, many supporters are from the county and surrounding communities. The Friends of Lawrence Park are dedicated to rebuilding a unique park that the city can be proud of.

SHEDDING LIGHT ON SUNFLOWER SEEDS

I am doing a study to determine if there are any physical differences between the striped and black sunflower seeds sold by our Audubon chapter. In addition



WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN NEEDS THE AUDUBON PERSPECTIVE

Cary Lund, Last Chance Audubon Society

Recognition and protection of Montana's wildlands began with the creation of Yellowstone National Park over 100 years ago. The establishment of Glacier National Park to protect that area from development gave future generations, ourselves included, a priceless storehouse of wildlife and plant communities. Likewise, the later establishment of the Bob Marshall Wilderness and other Montana wilderness has added to our storehouse of wildlife and natural communities. Many of the leaders and supporters of the national park and wilderness movements were people who, as observers of birds and other wildlife, shared common concerns for the natural realm and who believed that preservation of nature was necessary to man's physical and spiritual existence.

The current wilderness debate in Montana unfortunately lacks the Audubon perspective. The issues that our congressmen are caught up in are ones of hikers versus motorcycles, snowmobiles, logging, mining and oil and gas development. The critical values of wilderness are not just recreational in nature. We will fail to preserve such areas as the Rocky Mountain Front, the Gallatin Range, the North Fork of the Flathead, and the West Pioneers unless our fellow citizens and the decision-makers in Congress are made aware of the critical values in wildlife, plant communities and water quality that these wildlands provide to our daily lives in Montana.

We of Audubon can bring this perspective to the debate. Personally, we can be effective by calling or writing all of our congressmen, by expressing our concerns to our friends and public leaders, and by encouraging an open, fair and factual debate. When we write or talk, we can express our personal knowledge and insights. In our modern era, with the natural realm at man's mercy, we need to exercise restraint by setting aside enough areas and land area that the natural dynamics of natural ecosystems are not ruined. The pileated woodpecker and grizzly and their habitats are just as important to the continued existence of life on earth as is man.



RED ROCKS AT RISK

The BLM has just released its draft "Centennial Mountains Wilderness Study/EIS". The Centennial Mountains lie just south of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and Lima Reservoir, which like the refuge is important habitat for trumpeter swans and other waterfowl.

The BLM proposes recommending about 26,000 acres, all in Montana for wilderness. Although but a fraction of the over 90,000 acres in MT and Idaho tentatively identified for a conservationists' wilderness proposal, the BLM's proposal will undoubtedly be contested in hearings and in the comment record by timber, snowmobile and some agricultural groups. It is important for conservationists, and especially Auduboners, to speak out for wilderness protection in the Centennials. As refuge Manager Barry Reiswig has stated, development in the Centennials south of Red Rock Lakes "would finish off the refuge," since siltation is already a major problem.

Copies of the document, which is well organized, well written, and contains much useful information about the area and wilderness studies generally, may be obtained from the Butte District Office--BLM, P.O. Box 3388, Butte, MT 59702.

Many Montanans are familiar with the sight of bluebirds returning to nest in the spring and decorating the newly green roadsides and pastures with their eye-catching splash of blue. It's a scene that ushers in a time of growth and renewal for the awakening countryside.

Most observers will recognize the mountain bluebird, which is widespread and quite common throughout our state. Bright blue backs and more pastel underparts distinguish males, while females are less obtrusive in their gray to dusky-blue plumage.

Other observers will note a different species in which the male sports a red breast, a clear indication of a close relationship with our most familiar thrush--the robin. This is the western bluebird, the range of which includes only the western part of the state where it overlaps with the more familiar mountain bluebird.

Western bluebirds are becoming more common and more regularly encountered in some portions of their range now than they were just a few years ago. European house sparrows, introduced in the mid-1800s, and starlings, introduced in the 1890s, caused a tremendous decline in all bluebird species. As these introduced species spread westward across the continent, they occupied nesting cavities used by bluebirds, thus forcing the native species out. The result was a decline of bluebirds in the wake of increasing house sparrow and starling populations.

In an effort to correct the mistakes of past generations, concerned citizens have been strategically placing nest boxes to attract nesting bluebirds. Nest boxes are designed to exclude starlings and are located to limit occupancy by house sparrows. The holes of the bluebird boxes are 1 9/16 inch in diameter, which is too small for starlings to enter, and the boxes are placed away from barnyards and other areas frequented by sparrows.

Results, to date, have been encouraging. In the western part of the state, the western bluebird has made remarkable gains. Participants in the nest box program report over 1,200 western bluebirds fledged from nest boxes in 1986 alone. (Over 7,000 western and mountain bluebirds combined were fledged in nest boxes in 1986--Ed.)

Unlike house sparrows and starlings, bluebirds are highly beneficial to man's agricultural activities. Bluebirds consume large numbers of harmful insects and their larvae. Bluebirds forage on the ground in open areas, so pasture and croplands are ideal foraging habitats. The insects they feed on are primarily ground-dwelling insects which are most likely to cause economic damage. This is quite in contrast to the habits of their exotic competitors, which are generally regarded as agricultural pests.

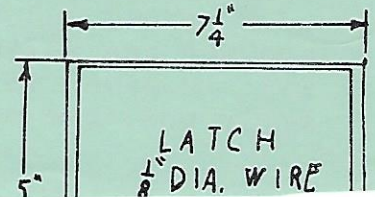
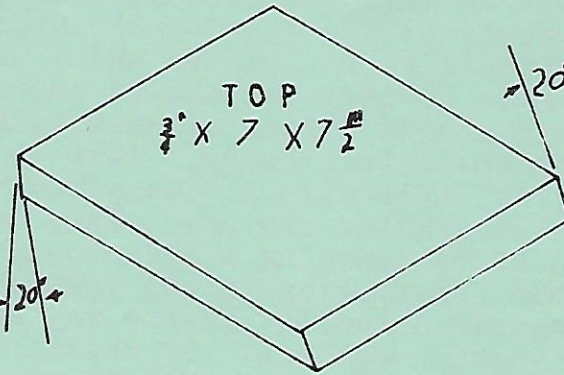
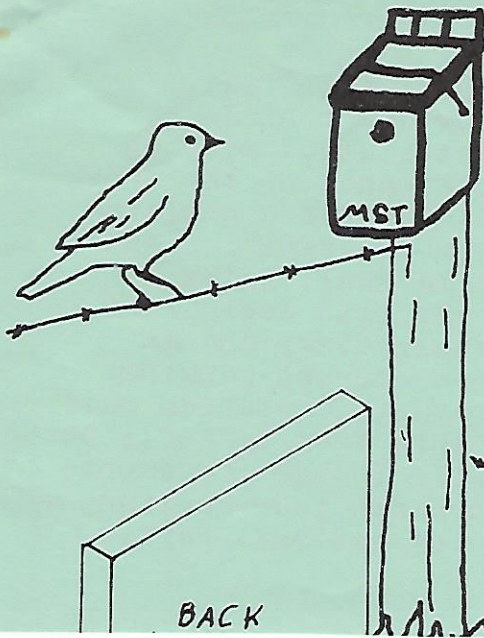
Not only do bluebirds provide economic benefits, they also provide an intangible aesthetic benefit to the environment. Their beauty and song are reminders of the inherent quality of life which is so much a part of Montana. Without bluebirds, our world would be just a little bit duller and a whole lot less interesting.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Nongame Wildlife Program includes a project to facilitate placement of nest boxes by interested persons. This project is supported by funds from a Nongame Checkoff on the Montana Income Tax forms. You can share with bluebirds and other nongame species by designating a gift to the program on your 1986 state income tax return. Make a check and share with wildlife!

Mountain Bluebird Trails

BLUEBIRD HOUSE

ART AYLESWORTH
PO BOX 794
RONAN, MT 59864



BE A WISE OWL! We are still searching for just the right combination of enthusiasm and curiosity in a few smart birds to accept scholarships to this summer's Glacier Institute. Join us for a day, or several, at the old Quarter Circle Ranch on the banks of the sparkling Middle Fork. Listen while Dr. Lex Blood explains how Glacier's dynamic geology has shaped the "Crown Jewel" of the Rockies. Hike into remote alpine cirques with Marshall Noice to photograph resplendent wild flowers. Take to the wild North Fork for a beautiful float trip with Dr. Rosalind Yanishevsky and an in depth study of streamside ecology. Many more courses ranging from tracking a wolf to teaching a kid about nature. Expenses paid by Flathead Audubon for applicants who return this form by April 24 and who are motivated to learn. Anyone may apply though preference will be given to Audubon members. Go ahead, broaden your horizons-- apply now, and spend a few summer days in Glacier National Park.

MONTANA AUDUBON COUNCIL SPRING MEETING

HELENA, MONTANA

Fri, May 1 1:00-5:00 pm Northern Rockies Action Group
 Fund Raising Workshop
 Lewis & Clark Library
 7:00-9:00 pm Dessert Extravaganza
 1823 Highland Ave.

Sat, May 2 6:45-9:30 am Field trip to Asarco Pond
 Meet at Albertson's
 10:00 am-? pm Business Meeting
 Lewis & Clark Library
 Lunch on your own
 4:00-5:30 pm Field trip to Spring Meadow Lake
 Meet at the Lewis & Clark Library
 6:30 pm Banquet
 Speaker - TBA
 Coach House East/Black Angus

Sun, May 3 7:00 am?-? Field trip to Little Prickly Pear
 Creek
 Meet at Albertson's

If you are interested in staying with a Last Chance Audubon Society member or would like more information about the meeting, please call Sue Jackson, President at 443-4486.

Registration Form: Montana Audubon Council Spring Meeting

YES, I am interested in attending:

☐

NRAG Fundraising Workshop - no charge

☐

Business Meeting - \$5.00 registration fee

☐

Banquet - \$11.00

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Chapter: _____ Amt Encl: _____

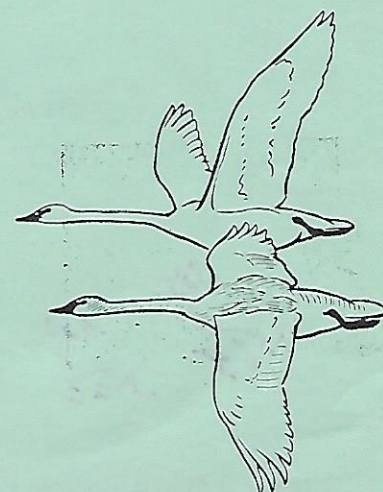
Please return completed form and payment no later than April 15, 1987. Make checks payable to Last Chance Audubon Society and mail to:
 Last Chance Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 924
 Helena, MT 59624

MARCH BIRD SIGHTINGS

LAZULI BUNTING: Lou Bruno and Harriet Marble called in the first sighting of this migrant in early March. They spotted it while skiing up at the Izzak Walton Inn near Essex.

THREE-TOED WOODPECKER: Gail Leonard of Whitefish observed this reclusive woodpecker feeding among bug-killed lodgepole near her feeder.

TUNDRA SWANS: Bob Conway surely got this year's closest look at these beautiful birds when he nearly collided with a flock while landing at the Kalispell airport! He estimates he came within 30 feet before diving under the flock, which flew on without skipping a wing beat.



1986 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------|
| President | Robin Magaddino, 2100 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-4294 |
| Vice President | Jack White, 1235 Swan River Road, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-6157 |
| Secretary | Barb Baxter, 255 Oldenburg Rd., Somers, MT 59932 | 857-3738 |
| Treasurer | Tommie Clark, 231 Pine Needle Lane, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-6615 |

DIRECTORS

| | |
|---|----------|
| Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt.1, Charlo, MT 59825 | 644-2365 |
| Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901 | 257-8130 |
| Craig Hess, 370 3rd Ave. W.N., Kalispell, MT 59901 | 257-6645 |
| Jim Rogers, Box 984, Polson, MT 59860 | 887-2492 |

CHAIRS

| | | |
|---------------|---|----------|
| Conservation | Rod Ash, Box 957, Condon, MT 59826 | 754-2289 |
| Education | Jim Rogers, Box 984, Polson, MT 59860 | 887-2492 |
| Field Trip | Gail Leonard, 2175 Houston Dr., Whitefish, MT, 59937 | 862-5807 |
| Hospitality | Susannah Casey, 265 Breezy Pt., Somers, MT 59932 | 857-3143 |
| Library | Nancy Trembath, 6065 MT Hwy 35, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-6298 |
| Membership | Betty Rose, 1066 Steel Bridge Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901 | 755-0852 |
| Newsletter | Leo Keane, 2175 Houston Dr., Whitefish, MT, 59937 | 862-5807 |
| Program and | | |
| Publicity | Dan Casey, 265 Breezy Pt., Somers, MT, 59937 | 857-3143 |
| Refuge | Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt 1, Charlo, MT 59825 | 644-2365 |
| Schools/Clubs | Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Rd., Kalispell, 59911 | 755-2751 |

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 card -

INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP
\$20

☐ STUDENT/S18

☐ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed. N54

☐ Bill me, please.

CHECK PAYABLE TO: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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.

★ FIELD TRIPS GALORE!

★ GLACIER SCHOLARSHIPS DUE APRIL 24!

★ BLUE BIRD NEST BOX PLANS!



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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