







The Pileated Post

VOLUME 11

NUMBER 9

MAY 1987

Hurray! No Board of Directors meeting this month. See you in September back at the Korner Kitchen in Bigfork.

1987	MAY						1987
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	 FQ 5	 FM 13	 LG 19	 MAY 2	1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
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24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30	

SPECIAL LAST MEETING OF THE SEASON, the annual May Potluck. Lone Pine Visitor Center, 6:00 PM Bring something delicious and your own high spirits. We will hold elections for several positions of officers and directors, and conclude with a showing of the brand new Montana film "The Last Parable" which is getting rave reviews from naturalists and conservationists. All welcome! Join us for an enjoyable early summer's evening.

FIELD TRIPS: Birthday Walk, Wild Horse Island and Nature Photography. See April Newsletter for descriptions.

EDITOR'S DESK

LEO KEANE

There is a robin in my yard. I'm watching him snatch worms. And for all the world it looks as though he's watching me (that critical eyeball), but then he flips a pine cone and pulls up an earthworm. Never fails to amaze me. After 35 years of robin watching I'm still impressed with this singular aptitude for locating worms. As a kid it was old Mrs. Leonards (Mrs. Leonards was our next door neighbor and the worlds foremost authority) whose explanation made the most sense: they can hear the darn things! Of course. Tilting an ear groundward, as they do, and that cocksure eyeball kidward, usually, it is the very small sound of worm skin against dirt granuals which they hear. Thirty five years and thousands of robins later I'm not convinced Mrs. Leonards wasn't right. It's either that or X-ray vision--which is slightly less believable.

Still, it is reassuring to see robin redbreast out in the yard. He makes me feel like the world is in order. His yellow bill, speckled throat and attentive stance are so familiar, so unchanged from the robins of many summers. Evolution, then, must be imperceptibly slow. This is fortunate. Our lives are full enough of discontinuity, changes upon changes. And this twinkling of an eye that accounts for half a lifetime... Well, it's good to take a walk in the yard now and then, to slow down to the pace of nature, share a moment with a fellow creature. There is no hurry out here. Life unfolds in its own way, heedless of my coming and going.

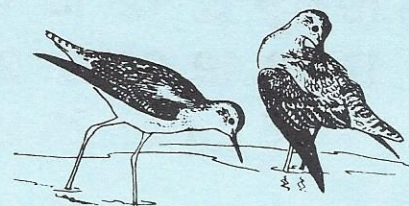
Just a reminder that this is the last issue of the Pileated Post for this season. September's newsletter will be our next issue. Meanwhile, we're planning an eventful summer (very much so!). Here's wishing you the same.



Pleasant Valley of the Fisher River

Our first field trip of the season was unexpectedly full of unusual sightings. We left Kalispell bright and early at 7:30 heading for Happy's Inn. Enroute we planned a stop at Middle Thompson Lake where we hoped to see a flock of avocets. Although the avocets never materialized, we were surprised by three wild turkeys crossing the road near Lower Thompson Lake, and were awed by a bald eagle chasing what appeared to be a large owl across Middle Thompson. It was a wonderful spot and an inspiring beginning to our day.

We then headed down the highway to Happy's Inn where we met our trip leader Marge Swanson and her colleague Jean Habeck, both from Libby. After introductions all around, Marge led us up through the woodlands and praires of Pleasant Valley. In flooded fields and pothole lakes we saw many species of ducks and shorebirds: both greater and lesser yellowlegs, phalaropes, blue-winged, green-winged and cinnamon teal, redhead and American wigeon, just to mention a few. And then in one dry prairie setting we found a white variety of the flower shooting star! This is a color none of us had ever seen before. What a great surprise.



Finally our stomachs won out over our binoculars and we settled into a pleasant lunch overlooking Lynch Lake, which was made all the better with treats of fruit and cheese provided by Marge and Jean. As we were enjoying our meal a solitary sandhill crane flew by. We had been hoping to see sandhills since they are known to nest in the area.

Proceeding toward Island Lake after lunch, we were surprised by a pair of tundra (whistling) swans which appeared very much at home by a small stream. We thought we had reached our quota of unusual sightings when Jean Habeck spotted a snow goose flying over Island Lake, in close proximity to a flock of cackling geese--a race of small Canada geese.



After Island Lake we drove on for Dahl Lake (named after Betty Rose's uncle and the site of her girlhood home). We were hoping to see more sandhill cranes but they didn't appear.

We did, however, have a fantastic view of a merlin on a beautiful, moss-covered snag. This little falcon obligingly stayed on it's perch while all five of our cars drove by.

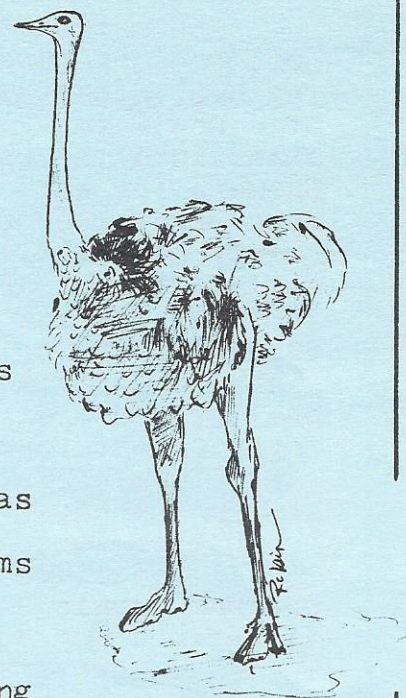
At the end of the trip, by the shores of Bitterroot Lake, we all agreed it was a glorious day, worth repeating. We saw better than 70 species and enjoyed beautiful weather and great company.

Trip participants included: Don and Ellen McKenzie, Bob Rose, Betty Rose, Jean Robocker, Elly Jones, Rosalind Yanishevsky, Al Cronk, Nanda Tenham, Larry Schwedes, Clint and Dot Borne, Leo Keane, Ruth Strid and Gail Leonard. Marge Swanson and Jean Habeck were joined by Hilmar Hansen and Art Sheldon of the Libby Bird Club.

A hearty thankyou to Marge and Jean for sharing their knowledge of a very beautiful Pleasant Valley of the Fisher River.

BIRDATHON 87

BIRDATHON is the largest fund raising event of the year for local chapters. Participants in BIRDATHON challenge sponsors to pledge a certain amount for each bird species identified in a day of bird watching. Flathead Audubon has designated June 6 as BIRDATHON 87 for our chapter. Jim Rogers is BIRDATHON Coordinator. Contact Jim at 887-2492 if you'd like to participate in BIRDATHON, either as an observer/counter, or as a sponsor. Sign-up forms will also be at the May Audubon potluck. Challenge yourself to a fun day of bird watching while raising dollars for conservation. Remember: June 6th, BIRDATHON 87.



Our financial statement was printed in the February newsletter, and reprinted here due to the omission of allocations listed under Local Education.

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.

Local Education

Glacier Institute scholarships	500.
Grizzly bear books to Cnty. Library	200.
Natural history books to Bigfork School	400.
AUDUBON ADVENTURES to 15 schools	300.
Total Local Education	1,400.

WILDLIFE AND THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM
Ken Walcheck

The nation took a historic step forward in the fight against soil erosion (and the renewal of wildlife habitat) last year when the U.S. Department of Agriculture began implementing key provisions of a new Farm Bill. The law, passed by Congress late in 1985, authorized the creation of a Conservation Reserve Program by paying farmers for each acre of highly erodible land that they take out of crop production and replant to soil-saving vegetation. By November, nearly nine million acres of land had been placed in the reserve. Montana placed around 350,000 acres into the reserve.

The new law also contains a "sodbuster" provision that penalizes farmers who plow and plant fragile grasslands without approved plans to control wind and water erosion. The Farm Bill also says that by 1990, all farmers must have soil-conservation plans for their entire farms or they will lose federal crop subsidies and other farm assistance. Through the conservation reserve, the government hopes to retire as much as 45 million acres from crop production--about 10 percent of U.S. farmland--by 1990.

In addition to reducing erosion, the Conservation Reserve Program promises to benefit wildlife. In contrast to farmland that is retired for one season in order to regulate harvests, land enrolled in the conservation reserve must be kept in soil-saving vegetative cover for at least 10 years, and cannot be grazed or cut for hay.



The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks became a cooperator in the Conservation Reserve Program by providing \$20,000 to the Division of Forestry's State Forest Nursery in Missoula, administered by the Department of State Lands, to provide free trees and shrubs to farmers and ranchers enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. To be eligible for trees and shrubs, participating landowners must put their Conservation Reserve acres into wildlife habitat as

part of an approved Soil Conservation Service plan. Individual Conservation Reserve contracts, because of limited funding, were limited to \$1,000 worth of trees and shrubs, which were issued on a first-come first-served basis. During 1985, tree-shrub orders for 35 landowners were approved. All of the \$20,000 was utilized in 1986, and this spring approximately 80,000 trees and shrubs in the form of shelter belts and windbreaks for wildlife will be planted in eastern and north-central Montana.

The Department is hoping for additional funding during 1987 so that additional areas of the state, which were not covered last year, can be included in the program. It is also hoped that landowners will find that planting trees and shrubs will provide long-range financial and wildlife advantages that other cover practices cannot match.

Editor's Note: I talked with Bob Martinka who is the Program Leader with the Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Resource Division. He indicated that landowners who cannot participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (check with your Soil Conservation Service agent if you are a cropgrower) may still purchase trees and shrubs for wildlife plantings at a very reasonable rate through the Dept. of State Lands. Your County Extension agent can furnish details.

* WILD HORSE ISLAND FIELD TRIP UPDATE *

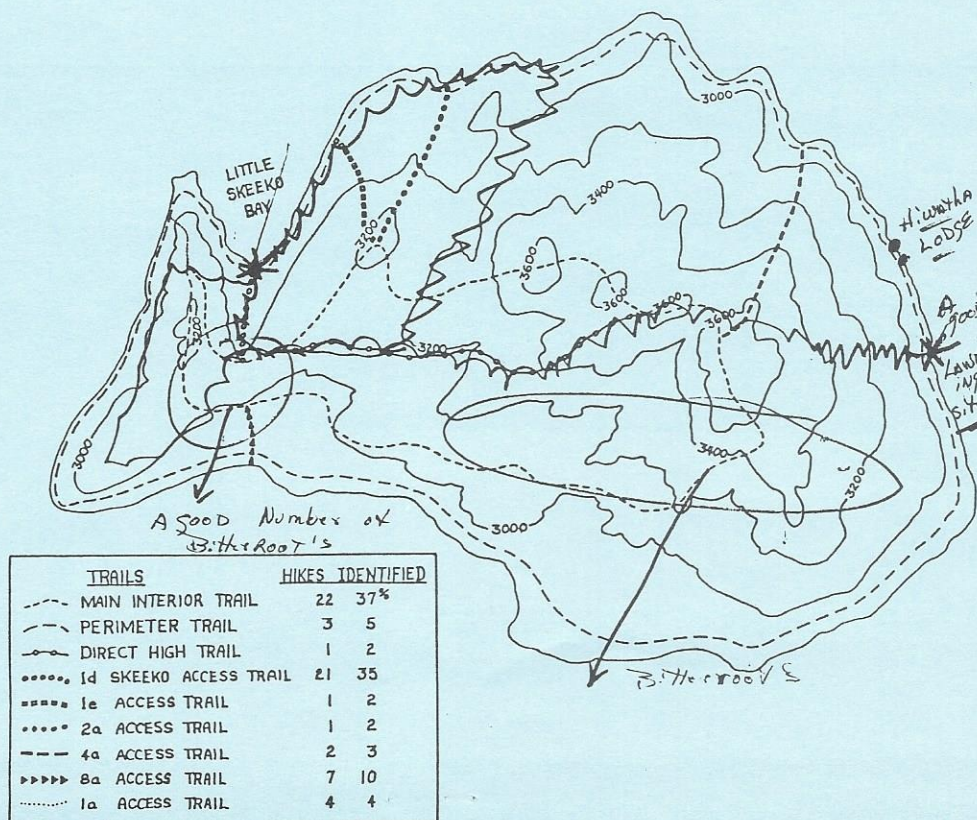
Since last month I've been able to confirm arrangements for our Wild Horse Island field trip. The lake level is rising, so May 16 will still be the scheduled date. We will plan to meet at Rosauer's parking lot at 8:00 am to carpool. Those coming from the area to the south should plan to meet us at Rainbow Landing in Big Arm at 9:00am, (phone 849-5501). There isn't a sign for Rainbow landing, but it is right next door to Big Arm Resort, which does have a sign on the Hiway. If the weather is poor (very windy or rainy) we will reschedule the trip for May 30. We will probably still go on May 16 if it is a grey day or slightly drizzly. Cost is \$5.00 per person for the boat ride.

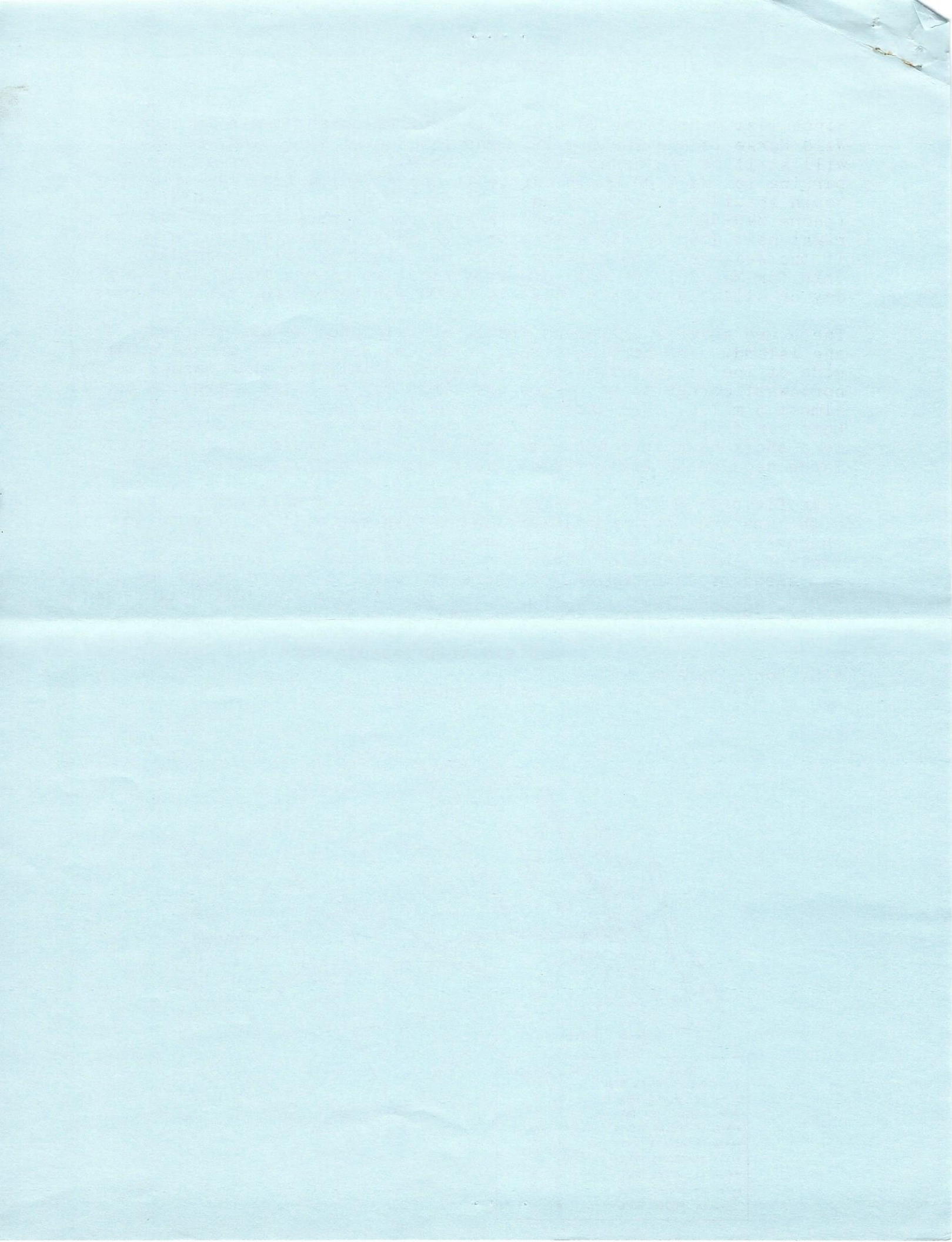
There are several different trails to take once we are dropped off on the island. For hardier souls, we can be dropped off on the southwest side of the island, climb to the highest point, and then wander to the northwest corner to be picked up. This may be quite strenuous and is almost 5 miles. For those interested in a less difficult walk, the boat can drop you off and pick you up at the northwest corner. There is a short hike up a moderate incline, which should bring you to a large section of Bitterroots. This walk is approximately 1 mile.

This field trip will be largely self-guided. I will provide everyone with maps and bird and flower lists, then you will be free to go wherever you want to on the island. We just need to coordinate pick-up times ahead of time with the boat driver. Try to look at the map ahead of time and decide where you want to go and about how long you would like to stay. To sign up for the field trip, call Gail Leonard at 862-5807 or contact me at the May potluck.

Field trip Coordinator- Gail Leonard

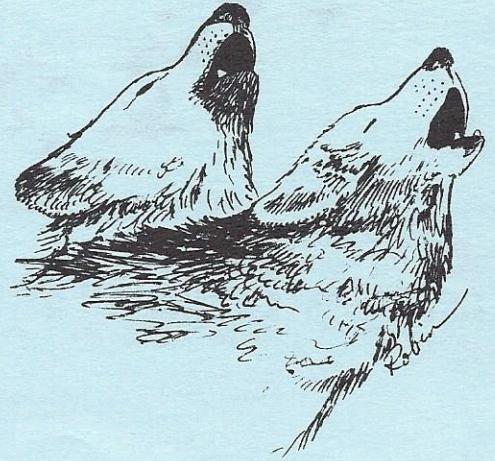
P.S. Don't forget -
a sack lunch and good hiking shoes!





WOLF UPDATE

The "Magic Pack" of timber wolves that are making a stand in the North Fork/Glacier Park area are the focus of increased attention this year. Diane Boyd, leader of the Wolf Ecology Project, explained at a recent Montana Wilderness Association meeting that the bad news for conservationists is the pack is now reduced to seven individuals from last year's high of thirteen. She speculates that some of the wolves have filtered northward into British Columbia. The concern is that the Province's recent reopening of the wolf season to hunters and trappers will further reduce the pack, while the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks refuses to become involved in the recovery of a wolf population in Montana. This is very disheartening in light of the gains wolves have made in the past few years to reestablish their former range within the northern Rockies.



The good news, according to Hank Fisher of the Defenders of Wildlife, is that the Defenders, as well as the National Audubon Society, will continue to prioritize wolf recovery for both the Glacier and Yellowstone ecosystems. Meanwhile, the Wolf Ecology Project continues to monitor the "Magic Pack" and hopes to see some denning occur yet this year. Flathead Audubon will keep abreast of the most current wolf movements and inform membership when timely political action is needed.

BIRD SIGHTINGS ~

LOREN KREK REPORTS OF A WAYWARD SNOW GOOSE FREQUENTING THE FLATHEAD RIVER NEAR HIS HOME IN COLUMBIA FALLS.

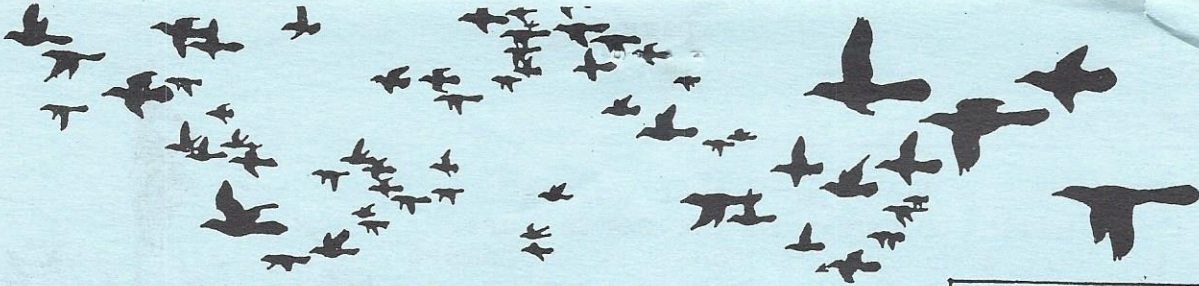
JOHN BISSEL OF THE BOOTJACK LAKE AREA NEAR WHITEFISH CLAIMS HE'S THROUGH WITH MOSQUITOES SINCE HE BEGAN ENCOURAGING BARN AND CLIFF SWALLOW NESTING AROUND HIS HOME.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

YOU CAN BE A SPONSOR!

What is AUDUBON ADVENTURES? It is a monthly environmental education program for the elementary grades three through six. Each participating teacher receives a leaders guide and an information filled mini-newspaper for each student. It costs \$20 per year for each classroom to receive AUDUBON ADVENTURES, and this chapter is raising its sponsorship to 15 classrooms next August. However, we have a waiting list of over 20 classrooms wishing to be included in the club.

Do you have a child or a friend in one of these grades? Do you know of a rural school in NW Montana which needs this additional resource? Please consider sponsoring your favorite classroom, or one from our list, next school year. Send your \$20 sponsor fee to the Flathead Audubon Society by July.



1986 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

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

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 857-3738
 837-6615

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 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
 257-8130
 257-6645
 887-2492

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 Education Jim Rogers, Box 984, Polson, MT 59860
 Field Trip Gail Leonard, 2175 Houston Dr., Whitefish, MT, 59937
 Hospitality Susannah Casey, 265 Breezy Pt., Somers, MT 59932
 Library Nancy Trembath, 6065 MT Hwy 35, Bigfork, MT 59911
 Membership Betty Rose, 1066 Steel Bridge Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901
 Newsletter Leo Keane, 2175 Houston Dr., Whitefish, MT, 59937
 Program and Publicity Dan Casey, 265 Breezy Pt., Somers, MT, 59937
 Refuge Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt 1, Charlo, MT 59825
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 862-5807
 857-3143
 837-6298
 755-0852
 862-5807

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 preceeded 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		
Membership Application		
<input type="checkbox"/> 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		
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT/518		
<input type="checkbox"/> My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill me, please.		
N54		

CHECK PAYABLE TO: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
 MAIL TO: BETTY ROSE
 1066 STEEL BRIDGE RD
 KALISPELL, MT 59901

GALA MAY POTLUCK
DETAILS PAGE ONE



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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