



The Pileated Post

VOLUME 14

NUMBER 9

DECEMBER 1989

Board of Directors Dinner Meeting, 5:00 PM at The Korner Kitchen in Bigfork. Open to all interested members.

Regular Monthly Meeting, Flathead Bank of Bigfork in the meeting room. 7:30 Business Meeting. 8:00 Program: In honor of the 90th Annual Christmas Bird Count we present "**Robocker on Birds**". Jean's slide presentation and commentary will guide you through a rogues' gallery of most likely to be seen on Count Day '89. From little brown birds to great blue herons, from kinglets to cormorants, Jean knows them all and loves to talk birds. This is an excellent selection of our chapter's bird slides.

FIELD TRIP: Late migrants and winter birds of lower valley. Dan Casey will lead this "by car" field trip to the sloughs, oxbows and backwaters of the lower valley. Good waterfowling. If you're doing the Bird Count this will be a warmer-upper. If not, do this instead! Meet at the Korner Kitchen in Bigfork at 8:00 AM. Back at lunch.

THE 90th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. Sign up at our regular monthly meeting or by calling Dan Casey at 857-3143. Dan will help you select a site within our count area (a 15 mile circle around Bigfork). On Count Day you spend the daylight hours censusing the birds in your specific area. After dark meet at the Bigfork Senior Citizens Center for our annual Christmas potluck, and for the grand total. A good, fun day, open to everyone.

1989 DECEMBER 1989						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
☾ FQ 5	☺ FM 12	☾ LQ 19	☼ NM 27		1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Vitronic Line

Printed in U.S.A.

Some comments we've heard from past Christmas Bird Counts:

- "Anybody get a snipe this year?"
- "Holy buckets!"
- "Who's idea was this?"
- "We saw 3000 coots."
- "Geese up the yin-yang!"
- "Where did all the crossbills go?"
- "The ham is delicious."

EDITOR'S DESK

Leo Keane

"Life is just a bowl full of cherries!" That's how I'm feeling this holiday season--appropriately high spirited. Why? Well, for starters, it was a successful hunting season. A whitetail buck came my way one snowy morning high on a ridge where I always hunt with my brother. Now this weekend we'll be putting him up in the freezer (the deer, not my brother!), and I'm thankful for venison another year. Then despite dire predictions, and some complacency on my part, I thoroughly enjoyed duck hunting again. Even bagged a few drakes! The great fun though was being in the field with friends and the incomparable thrill of seeing flocks tip toward our decoys and set in. I'll spare you any more hunting stories (I could go on) but if you don't hunt you just can't imagine what that does to your mind. It is beauty and adventure--what hunting is all about. So I am thankful Montana is so graced with abundant wild-life and wild places.

"I'm thankful that there are still adventures in life." This, from a friend of ours, spoken on Thanksgiving Day brought these thoughts into focus for me. It's precisely why so many of us choose to live in Montana, where the freedom of the hills is always out the back door. A day in the field does so much more than a high paying job for keeping your spirit alive and refreshed. I'm sure I'd shrivel up amidst the sanitized, homogeneous version of life in the big city. Sure we work hard to stay alive here in the land of rare opportunity, but then with the "solace of wild places" so near at hand we are always reminded of what really counts--a rich and varied life with abundant nature and the ever-more-rare opportunity for spirited adventure. As also Leopold said, "Of what value are a thousand freedoms without a blank space on the map to be free in."



Rabble-rousing in our National Forests

"Them versus us" seems to have become the nature of the debate over forest uses in the Flathead. The suggested division may be emotionally satisfying to some but it is certainly grossly misleading. This was brought to focus for me by a recent letter to the editor. The letter, from the point of view of a timber company forester, was moderate in tone but posed the issue of forest management as one between those who support wise economic use of the forest against those who want complete preservation of the forests.

The debate would certainly be more simple if the proponents could be so neatly categorized. Apparently that is the theory behind the green signs blossoming out in our area. In the context of the times, those who have a green sign must support any and all decisions, actions and opinions of any timber industry manager. While those who don't display, or who resent the signs, must be totally opposed to the timber industry.

As is usually the case, reality is much more complicated than this simple "them versus us" or timber harvest versus preservation categories suggest. In reality there are many, differing points of view about the wisest use and best management systems for our forests. There are those who believe even-aged management (clear-cutting) and maximum harvest provide the most good. There are others who believe that at our stage in the region's and world's environmental history natural values should take precedent over economic uses of the forests.

But there are also some private foresters and loggers who believe that forest lands can be harvested economically without heavy reliance on clear-cutting and that the long term health of the timber industry would be better served by reduced rates of harvest. There are also citizen conservationists who believe that while more wilderness should be protected, prudent timber harvest and a healthy, stable timber industry are legitimate aspects of our future.

Still other points of view could be defined. Water-users, sportsmen, guides and outfitters, lodge owners all have perspectives that would differ in some degree from those outlined above. The fact is, legitimate debate over forest uses and management can get really complicated.

Robert Reich, an economist, in describing American economic problems noted that "...the attempt to restore economic health will only be hobbled to the extent that citizens see themselves as members of differing warring factions each seeking to exploit the other--blue collar or white collar, small business or big, investor or consumer, under class or upper class".

Reich's warning about economic health can be easily translated to the controversy over our forests. To the extent that we see each other as the enemy, rather than as groups with differing but legitimate concerns, it will be difficult to solve our forest problems.

Therefore we need to direct our debate toward resolution of conflicts over specific forest areas and issues. We need to determine areas of agreement, and narrow down areas of disagreement. In other words, we need to seek reasonable solutions rather than become rabble-rousers.

PLEASE WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS: Aja Micah Cronin, Elizabeth Kuropat, Don Stolte, Richard Waldt, Annamarie Bateman and D L Blank of Whitefish; Rena Kanaley of Somers; David Kieffer of Libby; Jacqueline Macy of Polson; Anne Morley of Bigfork; Caroline Myhre of Charlo; Russell Owen of Troy; Ann Washatko and Malcom Thompson of Columbia Falls; Ellen Denny of Kila.

AND THESE TRANSFERS INTO OUR CHAPTER: Wayne Finney of Somers; A J Pajas of Libby and Ruby Wirtanen of Kalispell.

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Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana

An exciting and history-filled float trip down the Wild & Scenic Missouri River? A guide to the "hot" birding areas throughout Montana? Yes, these are two of the fundraising projects for the Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana.

The Fund was launched in 1987 through donations by members and contributions from the Chapters. Grants will be awarded once the principal exceeds \$20,000. These grants will help support a wide variety of wildlife projects, including:

- providing wildlife books to school libraries;
- restoring depleted wildlife (such as the peregrine falcon) to their former ranges;
- funding research of critically important wildlife and their habitats (e.g., the current Montana loon studies);
- helping to bring significant wildlife issues to schools, communities and organizations.

Operation of the Fund is directed by the Board of Directors appointed by the Montana Audubon Council. The Board is responsible for raising funds and for awarding grants.

Your contribution to the Fund will insure continued support for Montana's wildlife and natural communities. Only the earnings from your donation will be spent. There is a special satisfaction in knowing that such a gift will be part of a permanent and growing force for the benefit of wildlife.

A contribution can be made in many ways:

- **PLEDGES.** A pledge for planned giving helps budgeting and can add up to a significant contribution over time.
- **DONATIONS.** A cash donation is the simplest and most direct way.
- **WILLS.** Remembering the Fund in a will appeals to many people.
- **SECURITIES.** Donating securities or contributing the income from securities has also been successfully used.

Whatever works best for you will help wildlife. Your tax-deductible contribution should be sent to:

Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana
J.S. Kirkley, Treasurer
930 East Reeder
Dillon, MT 59725.



CORNELL LABORATORY of ORNITHOLOGY

• PROJECT FEEDERWATCH •

If you noticed a big drop in the numbers of birds at your feeder last winter you weren't alone. Thousands of observers contributing data to Project FeederWatch documented a decline in feeder activity that extended across the entire continent.

Pine siskins remained in their normal haunts in the 1988-1989 winter, after an amazing invasion the previous year to all parts of North America. Over 85 million siskins were estimated to visit feeders that winter, while the numbers in 1988-89 nose-dived to less than half that figure.

In eastern regions, conspicuous decreases at feeders were also seen for Common Redpoll, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal and most blackbirds. Pygmy Nuthatch and White-crowned Sparrow were in short supply west of the Mississippi.

How do we know all this? Over 7,000 people across North America brought their hobby of bird feeding to new heights, by participating in Project FeederWatch. They recorded bird sightings from their feeders for ten 2-day periods between November and April, and sent data to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for analysis.

But Project FeederWatch documents not only the numbers and kinds of birds at feeders, it also looks at the effects of weather, habitat and food supply. Many people in the eastern part of the continent blamed last winter's lackluster feeder attendance on the weather, suggesting that mild temperatures and lack of snow gave birds access to natural foods which reduced their dependence on feeders. Early indications from Christmas Bird Counts, however, are that the birds simply weren't there--even "in the wild".

Where were they? We know that tree-seed eaters such as siskins, redpolls and nuthatches exhibit large annual variations in winter range. And, in some cases, we know where these birds were last season. There was no lack of Pine Siskins in western regions, which also hosted grosbeaks and American Goldfinches in abundance. In addition, generous tree-seed crops in certain parts of Canada may have kept many finches in the northern boreal forest.

Most of the other birds missing from feeders last winter eat weed seeds, grain and insects, and these birds do not appear to have moved elsewhere. It is possible that the severe droughts of the past several years reduced breeding populations by diminishing their usual foods. The six-fold increase in avian predators at feeders last winter might support this hypothesis. If prey was lacking away from feeders, Sharp-shinned Hawks and other raptors might have been forced to concentrate on feeders. This coming winter's FeederWatch data may help answer this and other questions.

FeederWatchers are now embarking on a new season, and you are invited to join. You need not be an expert bird watcher to participate, but you must be able to identify birds that commonly visit your feeder. All you have to do is watch the birds at your feeders on one or two days every two weeks throughout the winter, and record the numbers you see on simple computer forms.

In return for your participation you'll receive two issues of "FeederWatch News", featuring helpful information about feeding birds and analysis of the abundance and distribution of birds in your region and across North America.

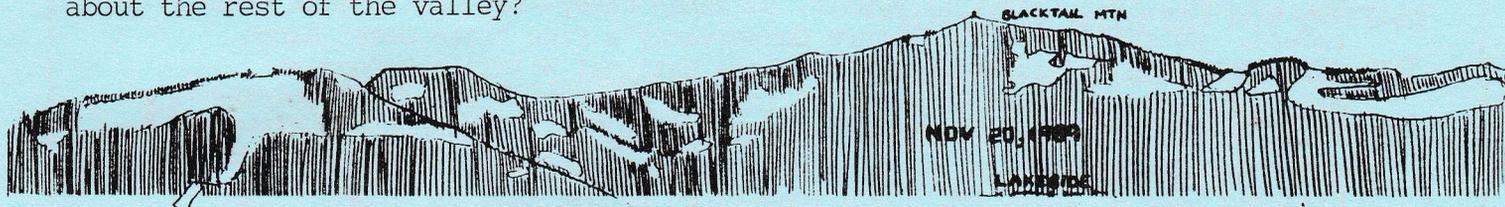
Join thousands of observers working together to monitor winter bird distribution across our continent. Simply mail your annual registration fee of \$9 with your name and address to Project FeederWatch, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850 (make checks payable to "Project FeederWatch").

THE SEASON'S FIRST AUDUBON SPECIAL, "RAGE OVER TREES," WAS THE SUBJECT OF AN INTENSE CAMPAIGN BY LOGGERS WHO DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR ANCIENT FORESTS. THE LOGGERS' PRESSURE CAUSED THE LOSS OF THE SHOW'S ADVERTISING, BUT SUPERSTATION TBS STILL AIRED THE SPECIAL. WRITE TO TED TURNER AND THANK HIM FOR STANDING UP FOR AUDUBON'S TELEVISION SPECIAL-- AND THE FREE EXPRESSION OF IDEAS: C/O SUPERSATION TBS, ONE CNN CENTER, ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30348-5366.



The Flathead Valley Becomes Ugly--Fairly Tale or Fact?

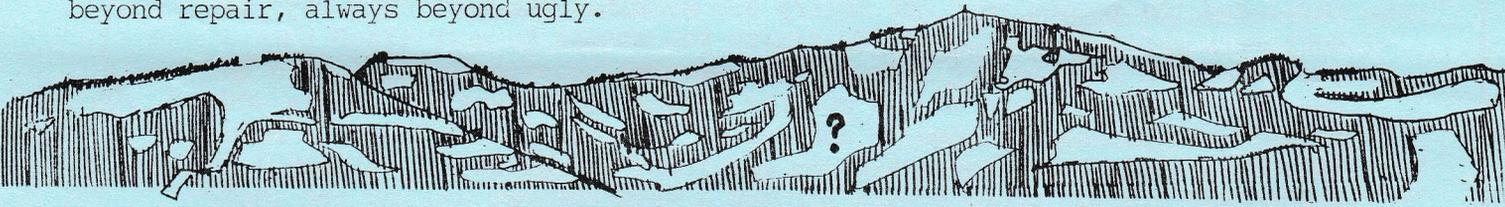
For several years there has been a movement to preserve a scenic backdrop to Kalispell--the face of Columbia Mountain from Jewel Basin to Columbia Falls. What about the rest of the valley?



Has everyone looked at the Blacktail Mountain area above lakeside since the snow fell? There are a lot of new clearcuts (and a lot more sold and planned). When I first saw it I had a gut wrenching feeling, as if my best friend suddenly acquired a severe face disfigurement. The time for clearcutting has ended!



I repeat, what about the rest of the valley; the rest of our country? Look in all directions of the compass. For a prediction of what could happen, travel to Hungry Horse Reservoir, the Yaak Country, or even up the Swan Valley. Where public outcry has been absent, late or weak, the forest land has been ravaged, sometimes beyond repair, always beyond ugly.



Forest diversity, reforestation, microclimate, wildlife, and sustained-yield are all important, but sometimes intimidating, issues for the non-professional. Visual blasphemy is something we can all respond to. Priorities of the people have changed this decade. We want to preserve the inspiring beauty that drew us to, or keeps us in, Montana. Clearcutting has accelerated on both public and private land in Montana. Less ugly logging systems are already in use. The clearcutting fad must stop immediately. Write a letter and copy it to anyone you think might be interested changing the way our forests are logged. Please let me know how you feel.

ADDRESSES

Plum Creek Timber Co. Inc,
PO Box 1957
Kalispell, MT 59901

Flathead National Forest--Supervisor
1935 3rd Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901

U.S.F.S. Regional Office
Supervisor, John Mumma
200 East Broadway
Missoula, MT 59801

Mt. Dept. of State Lands
Supervisor, Gary Brown
2705 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59801

Governor Stan Stephens
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Sen. Max Baucus & Conrad Burns
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Pat Williams, US House, Washington DC 20515

**GOING FOR BROKE:
A Montana Centennial "Big Day"
Susannah Casey**

According to the record currently published by the American Bird Association, the most species of birds seen in Montana in one day was 154. On Sunday, June 4th, 1989 our team of four birders--Jim Rogers, Sherry Jones, Dan Casey and myself, Susannah Casey--set out to beat that record. We started at The Nature Conservancy's Pine Butte Guest Ranch at 4:00 AM and we finished at Nine Pipes National Wildlife Refuge at midnight. During those 20 hours of intense birding we were able to find 157 species. The last two were, appropriately, owls--a great horned, spotted in silhouette on top of a power pole on the west shore of Flathead Lake at 10:30 PM, and a long-eared on her nest at Nine Pipes at 11:40. With about eight minutes to go we arrived at the dikes at Nine Pipes, hoping we'd here a pied-billed grebe. Instead we just listened to the wonderful cacophony of waterbirds and watched the stars in a perfectly clear Montana night.



The feelings of those final eight minutes, exhaustion and elation, summarize the joy of birding. The reason the four of us were at that spot, enjoying the incredible bird noises and stars, was the competition of a "Big Day". But no one in their right mind would put themselves through the rigors of a Big Day if it weren't for the wonderful diversity and beauty of the birds--and the total fun of birding.

For anyone not familiar with the term "Big Day", it is the official name for competitively birding a 24 hour period, following rules established by the American Bird Association. And it does take a lot of work to break the records. This was the third year that Jim and Dan did Big Days, and the second year for Sherry and myself. The term "Big Day" is certainly appropriate. When you finish you should be more tired than you have ever been before. And if the weather cooperates (as it did in our case), and you have scoped out the right route (ours was nearly 400 miles), and you have jumped in and out of your car for 20 hours or more on a real wild goose chase, AND you get lucky enough to find a Lewis' woodpecker exactly where it was perched a week before, you may get your name in the records. Whoopee! (Personally, I'm waiting for the endorsements.)

When at 2:30 AM I was finally crawling into bed, the sound echoing in my ears was that of the indomitable, ubiquitous American robin. Not so bad, really.

REPORT FROM THE SUNFLOWER SEED SALE

Now that we have another very successful Sunflower Seed Sale under our belts here's a quick look at the results: We sold 17 1/4 tons!, or 690 fifty pound sacks of seeds. We should gain a substantial profit, after the bills are paid, which will go directly into funding our chapter's programs and conservation projects. Thanks so much if you bought seeds from Flathead Audubon. We appreciate your support.

Kalispell bought 164 sacks. Thanks Dan and Susannah Casey for helping with deliveries.

Whitefish bought 153 sacks. Pete Metzmaker, Gail McGlothlin, Fern Cohen and Vi Stark held down the fort in Whitefish.

Bigfork bought 147 sacks. Thanks to Patti and Neal Brown for helping with deliveries there.

Condon area folks bought 89 sacks. Rod and June Ash were our go-fers.

Polson bought 75 sacks. Sharon Bergman and her sister (didn't catch the name) were our volunteers there.

Columbia Falls bought 58 sacks. Dale Wicks took care of deliveries there.

A huge THANK YOU! to all these volunteers who got our seeds distributed this year.

Tommie Clark, treasurer

Northwest Power Planning Council

WILDLIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

October 1, 1989

How much Northwest ratepayers should pay to reverse or lessen hydropower-related damage to wildlife populations or habitat is likely to be this year's controversy. In 1987, the Council approved and helped put in place two wildlife plans for Hungry Horse and Libby dams in Montana. It is reviewing proposals for wildlife lost at Grand Coulee and Albeni Falls dams in Washington, eight projects in the Willamette Basin in Oregon and plans for wildlife losses at the Palisades, Anderson Ranch and Black Canyon dams in Idaho.

The Council spent the first half of the year hearing comment from and consulting with interest groups on several policy questions regarding plans to improve conditions for wildlife affected by dams. Some parties questioned whether wildlife recovery measures could become too costly. And others questioned whether wildlife restoration should be the responsibility of ratepayers only, rather than shared among other dam users, such as irrigators and urban areas that benefit from flood control. Wildlife advocates pointed out that most wildlife losses have not been addressed since the federal dams were constructed.

In July, the Council entered rulemaking to amend wildlife portions of the fish and wildlife program.

The Council's proposed rule addresses the net impact hydropower dams have had on wildlife in specific areas. Mitigation can involve reclaiming wildlife habitat that has been impacted. Mitigation also can entail acquiring new habitat to replace land that's been damaged.

“Working with all the parties in the Northwest, we can put together a reasonable program to protect and rebuild fish and wildlife that preserves our low-cost electricity.”

—John Brenden, Montana

Here are the highlights of the Council's proposed wildlife mitigation rule:

- The rule proposes that calculations of wildlife losses, at the dams listed above, made by state wildlife agencies and Indian tribes will be the starting point for mitigation efforts.
- The rule presents three alternative ways to calculate the share of mitigation efforts that electric ratepayers should pay and invites the public to comment on which formula the Council should choose.

One formula would calculate the ratepayers' share based on the percentage of a hydropower project's costs that are reimbursed to the federal government from power revenues. A second would calculate that share based on the percentage of a project's joint capital costs that are assessed to hydropower. A third method would be based on the percentage of a project's annual joint operating costs that are assessed to hydropower.

- The rule sets an interim goal over the next 10 years of mitigating up to half the damage hydropower dams have done to wildlife in the region.
- The rule establishes an advisory committee—chaired by Council staff and including members from representative agencies, Indian tribes, utilities and conservation groups—to set generic priorities.
- The rule sets procedures for future mitigation plans with heavy emphasis on public involvement.

*Excerpts from: NORTHWEST POWER
PLANNING COUNCIL, 1989 Annual
Report, Portland, Oregon.*

1989/90 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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 Susannah Casey, Box 2922, Kalispell, MT 59901
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 756-6344

National Audubon Society

CHAPTER

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I'd like to join. Local Chapter:

FLATHEAD AUDUBON N 54 7XCM

Mail to: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
 Chapter Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 51001
 Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001

INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP

\$20

Name _____

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City _____

State _____ Zip _____

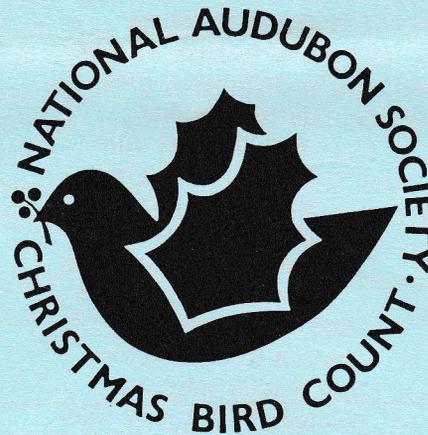
THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Regular monthly meetings are preceeded by an Executive Board meeting, the time and place of which are published in the preceeding newsletter. The business meeting (7:30) and program (8:00) are held in the 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 the National dues. For others who would like to recieve the newsletter, the cost is \$5.00 per year. Our address is FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 715, Bigfork, Montana 59911.

*SATURDAY, DEC. 16
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FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

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