



And the Winner Is ... the Sandhill Cranes!

In a race to the \$10,000 finish line, the FAS Flock has met its goal. Our mailbox has been full of donations large and small for one of the most worthy conservation causes the Flathead Valley has seen in many years. We received donations from all over the Flathead Valley, around Montana, and even from other states. Audubon members understand the importance of setting aside some spaces in



our increasingly congested Valley for birds and other wildlife to thrive.

The Flathead Land Trust is still fundraising to meet their goal for a conservation easement, so if you wish to further support their project, please visit their website at www.flatheadlandtrust.org.

Flathead Audubon is back to "business as usual." Any future donations will stay with our chapter to replenish our operations account, which took a back seat during the West Valley effort. We are very proud of our members' generosity. Thanks to each and every one of you!

Kay Mitchell, Flathead Audubon President

40 Years of FAS Newsletters Coming to Website and 40 Years of Newsletter Editors to be Honored in May

The Accipiter Express, Vol 1, # 1, March 1977, was the first issue of Flathead Audubon's newsletter -- two sheets of yellow paper, typing on both sides, stapled together.

It's fun to read. Topics include: March 1977 meeting Friday "at the Bigfork Grade School Cafeteria (Small Log Building)", 3 field trips (including a canoe trip), "bird course offered" at FVCC, "booth in ...B&B Variety Store to sell bird houses and feeders built by chapter members", chapter builds "six Wood Duck boxes [to] be placed at Swan River NWR."

To view the whole issue, go to www.flatheadaudubon.org; look under "Publications and Resource Links/Pileated Post" and click at the bottom for archived newsletters.

There you'll find not only the first issue, but all issues published in the first 10 years of FAS newsletters. And watch for more. Our goal is to eventually have all of the Flathead Audubon newsletters posted

on our website, March 1977 to present.

Looking through the older issues you'll see some basic changes: the number of issues published in a year grows from 3 (in 1977) to the current 9, and the page color changes from yellow to white to various shades of pink or blue, then finally to the current cream. Note also that Elmer Sprunger's iconic Pileated Woodpecker drawing doesn't appear on the masthead until 1978, and only after that does the name change from *The Accipiter Express* to *The Pileated Post* (check the September 1979 issue to see why).

But spending some time reading them reveals more. The full 40-year series of FAS newsletters chronicles the history of Flathead Audubon itself, including the development of FAS involvement in OS-NA, and the succession of FAS education projects that laid the ground for today's Conservation Education Program. *continued on page 9*

APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, April 10, 2017. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell, See page 3.

Monday, April 3, 2017. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Sunday, April 2, 9 AM-12:30 PM. Waterfowl and Land Conservation at the West Valley Ponds. See page 5.

Wednesdays, April 5, 12, 19, 26, 6-8 PM. Beauty of Birds. See page 7.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

What do you mean it's not a Thrush?

By Gail Cleveland

Ornithologist E. H. Forbush's observation about the Northern Waterthrush, made more than half a century ago, still applies: "It is a large wood-warbler disguised as a thrush and exhibiting an extreme fondness for water," according to the Boreal Songbird Initiative.

The Northern Waterthrush is predominantly brown with brown streaking on its breast and a narrow pale eyebrow. Because of the thrush in its name and the similar coloration to our Hermit and Swainson's Thrush, it is easy to assume that it is a member of the Thrush (Turdidae) family rather than a New World Wood-Warbler.

We tend to think of warblers as small, colorful birds that inhabit bushes and trees and are difficult to see. There are, in fact, three warblers that are brown with stripes on their breasts: Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush and the Ovenbird. The Ovenbird is a rare sighting in our area, while the Northern Waterthrush is quite common along streams, bogs and lakes. The Louisiana Waterthrush, very similar in appearance, makes the eastern and southern United States its breeding grounds.

These three brown birds of the wood-warbler family are considered terrestrial, whereas most of the other wood-warblers are considered arboreal. The ground-dwelling Northern Waterthrush gets its food below the forest canopy near the water's edge, eating both aquatic and terrestrial insects and invertebrates. It also walks rather than hops as most warblers do.

Most North American wood-warblers have separate plumages for the male and female. In order to attract a female, the male often has bright, colorful plumage. Like wood-warblers of Central and South America that do not migrate, the male and female Northern Waterthrushes have very similar plumage.

They nest on the ground creating a cup of moss and leaves,



©Kelly Colgan Azar

lined with fine plant stems, rootlets, hair, and moss. Finding a Northern Waterthrush nest is not easy as it is often placed in a small hollow or cavity under a fallen log.

The female lays four or five eggs. Because of the hazards of migrating to Central America and northern South America each fall and returning in the spring, the Northern Waterthrush, along with

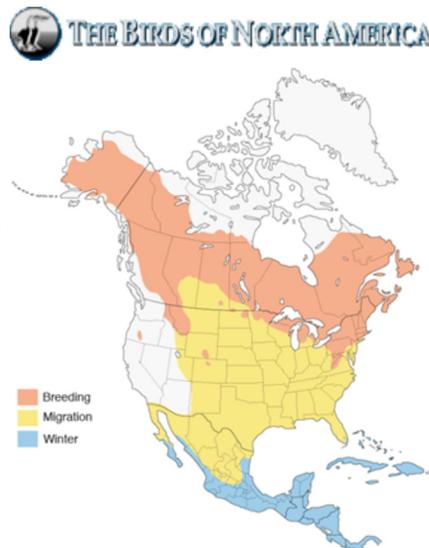
other migrating wood-warblers, has larger clutches of eggs than warblers that do not migrate.

The Northern in its name comes from the fact that breeding takes place in much of Canada and Alaska. It is estimated that 56% of the world population breed in Canada. Breeding dips down into parts of the northeastern U.S., but other than Alaska, the only breeding grounds in the Western United States are western Montana and northern Idaho. So it is a target species for our area.

Because of the brown plumage of male and female as well as the tendency to be on the ground or skulking in the middle of a bush or tree, it is difficult to see a Northern Waterthrush. However, the loud, ringing song of the male will help get a glimpse. During breeding season, the male will sing from the tops of trees and tall brush in its wet environment, outdoing other warblers in loudness, if not beauty. Sibley describes the song as "a series of loud, emphatic, chirping notes, loosely paired or tripled and generally falling in pitch and accelerating."

Two locations in our area that have consistently had singing Northern Waterthrushes in June are at the end of Whitefish Lake where Lazy Creek goes into the lake and at the Tally Lake Campground during Warbler Weekend, this year June 15-17.

Every year, I always look forward to the return of the elusive, but distinctive, warbler that looks like a thrush, singing his loud and clear streamside song, hoping to attract a mate.



April Program

Swan Valley Carnivores

by Adam Lieberg

Adam Lieberg with Swan Valley Connections will provide an update on the Southwestern Crown Collaborative Carnivore Project at the monthly Flathead Audubon Society meeting. His team has been monitoring rare carnivores since 2012 by obtaining more concrete data on their distribution, abundance and genetics. The project combined and developed a set of non-invasive survey techniques focused on monitoring multiple species across a large and diverse landscape. To date, the project has been successful in identifying 41 individual Canada lynx and 32 wolverines occupying the project area. More information on the project can be found at

www.swanvalleyconnections.org/forest-carnivores/.

Adam Lieberg works for Swan Valley Connections as a professional wildlife tracker, naturalist, and educator. He specializes in monitoring rare carnivores through a variety of non-invasive methods, including interpreting tracks and sign, collecting genetic samples, and running remote sensing camera traps. While

Adam spends a great deal of time collecting wolverine and Canada lynx scat for research purposes, he maintains that moose poop is the only kind he brings home and uses for incense. Adam believes it is a crime against nature to let a fresh track go by unnoticed on the trail, and enjoys teaching natural history to people of all ages and walks of life.

Join us Monday, April 10 at the Gateway West Community room in Kalispell at 7 PM. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, go to www.flatheadaudubon.org.



Steve Gniadek receiving the Conservation Achievement Recognition award from Gael Bissell and Cory Davis.

Conservation Educator's Corner

The Metamorphosis

By Denny Olson



This particular Northern Rockies winter demanded a bit of patience and self-reliance. Without proper clothing and an interest in snow-dependent pursuits, winters like this one can make edgy shut-ins from normally well-adjusted people. Uncommon cold and waist-deep snow established this winter near the end of the "temperate" spectrum, and turned the term "polarized" into a bad pun.

Casual looks outside through the windows can lead to casual conclusions about the advance of early spring. "Nothing happens until May," is an inclination even naturalists have to resist. We should know better. By the time the warblers arrive en masse and a bare-bones transparent forest drops its opaque green screen, a lot of spring has already happened.

An enterprising climatologist once calculated the rate of spring's advance to the north. It averages a half-mile per hour, or twelve miles each day – not supersonic, but not glacial either. In fact, it is walking speed. One thing is fairly clear. In the contiguous U.S., when we start walking with spring in southern Texas, we get to Northwest Montana dead last.

It might just be denial, but perhaps we could take heart by broadening our definition of "spring" a bit at this end of the latitudinal spectrum. Great Horned Owls, Great Gray Owls, and both kinds of eagles are already on their nests. Tundra Swans and Trumpeter Swans are out on open stretches of the Flathead River. Rough-legged Hawks are leaving for the tundra. Winter Redtails are moving north and being replaced by summer residents. Waterfowl of every kind are flooding into the open sloughs, staging and refueling. It's a great time to see wandering exotics like Eurasian Widgeons, Krider's Red-tail Hawks, or Ferruginous Hawks. Varied Thrushes stop in town to say "Hi" on their way to the old-growth at higher elevations. All the male resident woodpeckers are looking for that ultimate sounding board – hollow tree-tops, dead branches and tin roofs. Male Red-winged



Blackbirds have the marshes to themselves for a couple of weeks, and it is testosterone-riddled "fight club" until the girls arrive a bit later and make them a bit more genteel.

Killdeer are out in the open spots yelling their own name, their wheel-legs gliding them in straight, short lines, but random directions. Male Ruffed Grouse are drumming dress-rehearsals on their log and rock perches, and Spruce Grouse are noisily fluttering down from the trees, smacking their wings together twice behind their backs.

And the action isn't just aerial, it's terrestrial as well. The daytime thaws, supplemented by cold rains, crust the snowpack hard at night. Wolves, cougars, lynx and fox all love being able to get around. (Deer hate it.) Skate-skiers can abandon the trails and launch out over open places at speeds they couldn't reach earlier in the fluffy part of winter.

Snowshoe hares almost never completely match their background – brown or mottled against



white snow, or white against bare ground, it is all bad camouflage. Owls and lynx have to eat, too. If a curious human should venture out on the snow crust at midnight, find a small opening in the firs, and watch carefully under the moon shadows, a bizarre sight could be the reward. Male hares, full of themselves, and that well-known "toxin" testosterone, emerge from the shadows thumping their hind feet on the crust, bouncing in circles and sometimes flipping and twisting in the air with gymnastic gainers and dismounts.

All this silliness, of course, has to do with females. If the temptation is there to laugh dismissively, it's helpful to remember what life is like in our singles bars. Different pick-up lines, same silliness.

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SPRING FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!

All Flathead Audubon field trips are free and open to the public and are geared for all ages and levels of field experience. They are led by area biologists, retired professionals, and some of the best birders in the region. For all Field Trips, dress for the weather, bring binoculars or spotting scope if you have them, wear sturdy footwear, and drive and pull off the road safely. All drivers must have their own vehicle insurance. For more information, contact Kathy Ross at 837-3837 or Cory Davis at 257-3166, or the individual field trip leader listed below. Also, a free brochure, "Birding Hotspots of the Flathead" is available at the Flathead Audubon general meetings and on www.FlatheadAudubon.org.



WATERFOWL AND LAND CONSERVATION AT THE WEST VALLEY PONDS, Sunday, April 2, 9 AM-12:30 PM. This will be a joint field trip with Flathead Land Trust to visit several ponds in the West Valley area during waterfowl migration. We should see many of the Valley's waterfowl and shorebirds, and the tour will include a stop at a current easement initiative aimed at conserving some of these wetlands. Meet at the West Valley School (West Reserve Dr. and Farm to Market Rd.) at 9 AM, carpool from there and return to the school by 12:30 PM. Be prepared for any kind of weather, including footwear for walking on muddy roads. Depending on road conditions, we may need to walk a short distance (<1/4 mile) to viewing areas. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Please RSVP to Cory Davis at 406-257-3166, or [pi-ranga99@gmail.com](mailto:piranga99@gmail.com). Limited to 40 people.

SWAN RIVER NATURE TRAIL STROLL WITH ANNE MORLEY, every Tuesday in May, 10 AM. Meet Anne at Showthyme Restaurant by the bench between the Playhouse and Showthyme. It is a fun morning adventure filled with native plant information and many opportunities to ID birds, so be sure and bring binoculars! For more information contact Anne at 406-886-2242.

SPRING ARRIVALS IN THE SMITH LAKE AREA, Sunday, May 14, 8 AM-12 PM. Join Paul Rossi and Cory Davis for a spring morning of birding west of Kalispell. We'll drive Smith Lake Road looking for recently arrived sparrows, orioles, warblers, and other breeding migrants and then make our way to Smith Lake to look for waterfowl and wetland species. We should have a good diversity of habitats and species! Meet at the southwest corner of the Gateway Mall in Kalispell and we'll carpool from there. Bring binocs and scopes and appropriate weather gear. For more information contact Paul Rossi 406-253-7193.

EXPLORING THE CAMAS ROAD IN GLACIER PARK AND THE NORTH FORK OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER, Sunday May 21, 8:30 AM to mid-afternoon. Join Craig Hohenberger and Pete Fisher for an incredible day of birding along the Camas Road and looping back into Columbia Falls on the North Fork Rd along the Flathead River corridor. Diverse habitats will offer the opportunity to see an incredible number of different species from warblers and flycatchers to hawks and eagles with the possibility of catching a glimpse of an elusive Hawk Owl. Meet at 8:30 at the Columbia Falls "Park and Ride" at the junction of Hwy 206 and Hwy 2. Bring appropriate gear for weather, lunch, and optics. To sign up or for more information contact Craig, aso-leado2003@yahoo.com.

CELEBRATING MIGRATORY BIRDS AT THE COMMUNITY BIRD FESTIVAL IN PABLO AND BIRDING NINEPIPES AREA, Thursday, May 25, 11 AM to 6 PM. We will meet at the Harry Horn Parking Area in Wayfarer's Park (by the new FWP park office), Bigfork. From there we will carpool to the Ninepipes area in search of migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, nesting owls and hawks. Most of the day will be spent birding then we make a stop at the 5th annual Community Bird Festival which begins at 4 PM, sponsored by the Salish Kootenai College and CSKT Natural Resource Dept. This is a family oriented event to celebrate migratory birds and bring the community together. Many interesting displays, live birds and native culture make for a great learning experience as well as an entertaining celebration of birds. All ages will enjoy the experience and kids are encouraged to join. Refreshments are served at this event but please bring what you might need for lunch. To sign up or for questions, contact Kathy Ross at mtkat67@gmail.com or call 406-837-3837.

Look to the May Pileated Post for more information about these exciting summer field trips:

June 3, FAS Birdathon

June 15-17, Warbler Weekend at Tally Lake Campground

Southern border of Glacier NP and Eastside specialties

Discovering the Yellow Bay Bio Station with Doug MacCarter

Explore Wild Horse Island with Doug MacCarter

An Evening with Bats

Lost Trail Wildlife Refuge.....and more



wings
across the big sky
MONTANA
AUDUBON

June 9-11, 2017 Great Falls, Montana

Come join us for Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by the Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, June 9-11, 2017, at the Best Western Plus Heritage Inn in Great Falls. All festival activities will take place Friday through Sunday at the Heritage Inn, including registration, field trip departures, guest speaker presentations, meals, banquet festivities, our 40th Anniversary barbecue, and much more. The Heritage Inn is easily accessible from any exit to 10th Avenue South and provides easy access to all our birding activities and field trips.

Currently we have rooms blocked for festival-goers Friday and Saturday nights. Be sure to tell them you're with the Montana Audubon Bird Festival group to get the special rate! If you're planning to arrive early or late to take in the pre- and post-trips sponsored by the local chapter, the hotel will try to accommodate you at our contracted rate outside the block. We suggest you make your reservations soon by calling 406-761-1900 or 1-800-548-8256.

Our Festival Registration Brochure is scheduled to be mailed early March, with an online registration system active soon after. Use either system to register. The brochure is full of information on the festival events and all the field trips that will be available. If you are a volunteer or field trip leader with UMBA, contact Nora or Kay to get the special registration form to fill out and mail in or for details.

Here's a Sneak Peak at Some of our Scheduled Events for the Festival:

Keynote speaker - David Ringer from National Audubon – "Protecting Birds and the Places they Need, Today and Tomorrow."

Friday evening – Barbecue and celebration of Montana Audubon's 40 years!

Saturday afternoon – Montana Audubon staff will present information about their programs and work to conserve birds and their habitats, and to educate all ages on the importance of our conservation efforts.

Saturday and Sunday mornings - Educational field trips in and around Great Falls.

Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon has decided that they are unable to manage a Silent Auction this year, so the only items for bid will be the custom tours arranged by Montana Audubon. There will be a BIG raffle this year plus our fun basket raffles. Fun for All!

Stay tuned for more information on other special happenings at or around this festival event.

Pre-Festival and Post-Festival Field Trips

This year, Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Chapter (UMBA) is offering two Pre-Trips and one Post-Trip that are designed to extend your stay in Central Montana. As these trips are separate from the Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival, you register and pay for the trips directly to the UMBA Chapter. The Chapter will provide transportation from Great Falls and experienced leaders.

American Prairie Reserve: June 7 – 9, 2017

Few places on earth have as intact prairie habitat and ecosystems as the American Prairie Reserve and Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge. On this three day journey, view wildlife in rich environments, while learning about conservation and restoration efforts in the grassland region. Take a guided tour of the American Prairie Reserve. Enjoy a private excursion on Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge. Partake in a delicious dinner prepared on the Reserve.

InFARMation: June 9, 2017

The InFARMation Pre-Trip is a community Ag Advocacy Project to showcase Montana's rich agricultural production. The inspiration came from a similar project at Washington State University. Signs are placed in fields to identify the different crops growing in the area, helping to make the traveling public more aware of the agriculture around them.

Missouri River Float Trip: June 12, 2017

Join UMBA Chapter on an exciting birding adventure with beautiful mountain scenery on the Missouri River. This is a relatively leisurely float in the Wolf Creek Canyon area, with a fast current and a few riffles, with no rapids or white water. The cost includes lunch and transportation to the canyon. The trip is perfect for couples, individuals and families.

UMBA's website (www.umbaudubon.com) has a button on the main page with detailed information on the three trips.

TAX TIME ALREADY

Be sure to check the "Watchable Wildlife" box on your Montana tax form to support our feathered friends!

Curlew Volunteers Needed in the Mission Valley

Are you ready to hear the 'currleeee' of the Long-billed Curlew? Well, grab your binoculars and get ready, because this charismatic shorebird needs you. Montana's curlews will be trickling back next month and we want to keep tracking them in and around the Mission Valley!

We know that Montana and the Mission Valley harbor the very important grassland and wetland habitat that curlews rely on during breeding and migration. This species offers the perfect opportunity to involve citizen scientists, like you, to collect more details on local curlew hotspots. We are reaching out to ask you to join our great network of conservation partners in the Mission Valley by choosing an available survey route and getting out into the field!



It's easy. Survey routes consist of early morning road-side stops repeated every half mile. At each stop, you will get out of the car for five minutes and look and listen for curlews. Along the way you will collect important data on the time, habitat, and presence or absence of curlews. And, the great thing is that you only need to look for one big beautiful bellowing bird. So all you have to do is choose a route, catch up on Curlew identification and you are all set to go!

The best way to get involved is to visit our weebly website and view the routes available in the Mission Valley and Flathead Indian Reservation:

<http://missionvalleycurlews.weebly.com/>.

Here you will find survey details such as the protocol, data sheets, and route maps. You can also contact Amy or Janene if you would like us to send you a route packet. Feel free to take a partner, do a route more than once, or do more than one route. The Curlews are just waiting to be found!

To brush up on your Curlew identification before heading into the field visit Montana Audubon's webpage: <http://mtaudubon.org/birds-science/long-billed-curlew-initiative/> for a link to the Curlew's call and much more. Also visit Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All about Birds: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed_Curlew/id.

Surveys can start as early as April 8th, so get those taxes done early! For more information contact Janene Lichtenberg: janene.lichtenberg@skc.edu; 406.275.4896; or Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org, 406.210.9449

The Beauty of Birds

If you are a beginning or intermediate birder, a good jump start on learning about the amazing world of birds is available through the School District # 5 Community Education Programs. – Beauty of Birds is a series of workshops and a field study. The classes will highlight bird behavior, habitat, flight, migration and identification.

Instructors (so far – there may be more) will be Denny Olson on bird identification, binocular use, odd-ball bird stories and bird song; Montana Bird Lady Kari Gabriel and her live raptors; Bob Lee on bird flight--and Leslie Kehoe and Bob Lee leading a final-day field trip.



Class Dates: April 5, 12, 19, 26,
Class Times: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Location: Room 100, FHS
Fee: \$10.00 fee payable to School District #5 at time of registration

Contact Debbie Newman at Flathead High School, 751-3461, newmand@sd5.k12.mt.us to register! Check with Denny at: auduboneducator@gmail.com for more information.



Time To Prepare For The Bears

Montana's hibernating black bears and grizzly bears will soon be stirring. Adult males usually emerge first from winter dens in mid-March. When bears emerge from their dens, they are physically depleted and food is a priority. Bears are often tempted to go where raccoons and domestic dogs are getting into garbage. If these animals are already causing problems nearby, consider it an early warning that food attractants are available and need to be removed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' bear experts stress that conflict prevention steps can greatly reduce the chances of attracting black and grizzly bears.

FWP recommends bear resistant storage bins in communities and on ranches; electric fence systems to protect bee yards and sheep bedding grounds; random redistribution of livestock carcasses each spring; and educational programs for schools, communities, and organizations.

FWP's **Be Bear Aware** website at

fwp.mt.gov is an easy way for homeowners and landowners to assess what they need to do now to prevent bear conflicts. Go there for tips and tools on obtaining and using bear spray, safe camping and hiking, access to bear resistant products and a guide to other items that attract bears to a property.

from MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks



CAN YOU HELP? VOLUNTEER MONITORS FOR OWEN SOWERWINE ARE NEEDED

From Linda Winnie

Volunteer Monitors are needed to make monitoring visits to the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) throughout this coming summer.

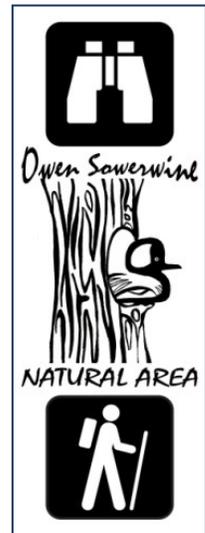
Monitors record their OSNA observations on the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form. This can be printed from the FAS website or picked up at an FAS meeting – as well as an OSNA trail map. The completed form is sent to Rick Mace (address on the form).

There are two ways to be a monitor:

1. Take an OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Form with you **whenever you visit OSNA.**
2. **Do a scheduled monitoring visit.** Sched-

uled Volunteer Monitors are needed for May through August. You can sign up for either the first half or the second half of any of these months, then make one monitoring visit to OSNA during that half-month

For more information or to sign up for a scheduled visit, contact me (755-1406 or lindawin@centurytel.net).



EARTH DAY!

Visit Flathead Audubon at the **3rd Annual Flathead Earth Day Celebration!** Saturday, April 22, 2017. 11 AM - 3 PM On the lawn at Whitefish Middle School (with the gym as an indoor backup in case of bad weather)



Flathead Earth Day Celebration is sponsored by Citizens for a Better Flathead and Glacier National Park Lodges. Flathead Audubon will be there with a booth and volunteers, some great family-friendly crafts and activities, and some roving bird interpretation by Professor Avian Guano!

40 years continued from page 1

It also offers windows into the beginnings of Montana Audubon and the history of conservation in the Flathead Valley.

We owe a big THANK YOU to the hard work-

ing and talented editors who produced this amazing series of newsletters. Their names and dates of service are listed below. We will be honoring these very special volunteers at our upcoming May potluck.

By Linda Winnie

Flathead Audubon Newsletter Editors

Dan Sullivan 1977&78

Steve Dagger 1978&79

Marcy Bishop 1980

Billie Firpo 1981

Stan & Janet Bones 1982&83

Thea Darwall 1984 & 85

Leo Keane 1985-90

Sharon Bergman 1990-98

Leslie Kehoe 1998-2003

Karen Nichols 2003-04

Kay Mitchell 2003-14

Bob Lee 2004-05

Linda Winnie 2005-present

John Hughes 2013-present

Lewis Young 2015-present

Metamorphosis continued from page 4

When the open water first appears, beavers finally get some relief from their cabin fever. For the entire winter, their routine has consisted of swimming out under the ice a few feet, grabbing a stick, and swimming back inside to de-bark the stick on their feeding platform just inside the lodge. The living room / bedroom in beaver lodges is small and communal, and often six or eight beavers share the space. Sedentary sleeping is the usual rule, but since their body heat is the only thing keeping their entrance ice-free, the coldest nights demand throwing a close-quarters party.

So the lesson here is that, despite appearances to the contrary, spring is well on its way. The Fox, Tree and White-crowned Sparrows will be singing at dawn before you know it. Western Meadowlarks are already playing their flutes. Honeycombed ice is tinkling in the waves, and male loons are already looking to land in the narrow open-water leads near the lakeshore. The other lesson should be apparent as well. *You won't be able to see all this unless you get out there.*

And get ready. When May erupts, you probably won't be able to keep up with it. We'll talk about that dizzying month next time.

FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO

The 28th annual Family Forestry Expo will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Ron Bunttemeyer Educational Forest located to the north of Kalispell along Trumbull Creek on Saturday, 6 May, from 9 AM — 3 PM. This is a free family event that offers hands-on understanding of the role that local forests play in our everyday lives. Expo visitors explore how the different parts of a forest are connected to make up a dynamic system, how people and all parts of the environment are dependent on one another, and how each affects the other.

There is a free "loggers lunch," demonstrations, exhibits, and a forest walk with many education-

al stops, including one run by Flathead Audubon Society. FAS has maintained a booth at the Expo for many years and are always looking for volunteers to help engage visitors. If you enjoy being outdoors on a spring day while talking to people of all ages about forests, and especially birds, please contact Denny Olson, the FAS Conservation Educator, at auduboneducator@gmail.com. Or you can grab him at the general meeting. Whether you are a volunteer, participant or just want to enjoy a day in the woods, everyone is welcome to come on out.

by Bob Lee

Montana Natural Heritage Program a Wealth of Information



Should you ever want to learn something about virtually any wildlife species in Montana be sure to check out the Montana Natural Heritage Program and their website: <http://mtnhp.org/>. Whether it's a bird, reptile, amphibian, mammal, butterfly, or snail they have it covered and they also do plants and wetlands. Their database includes information on species ranges, life history, seasonal occurrence, conservation status, and more.



pngimg.com

Wind Turbine Blades Could Decimate North America's Most Widespread Bat Species

From Bat Conservation International

Thousands of spinning wind turbine blades may be threatening the survival of one of North America's most widespread migratory bats, says a study published recently in *Biological Conservation*. While scientists and the wind industry have known for more than a decade that wind turbines kill bats, the research is the first of its kind to reveal how those fatalities may directly cause dire impacts on a whole population and future of a bat species.

"The hoary bat could be the next spotted owl. This species is headed for the emergency room if we don't act now," says Mike Daulton, Executive Director of Bat Conservation International.

The hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereus*, is the species most frequently killed by wind turbines in the U.S. and Canada. Although currently widespread across the continent, an estimated 128,000 are killed each year.

The study, which brought together international experts, academics and biologists from several federal agencies, looked at hoary bat mortality at wind energy facilities. It revealed that populations of the species may plunge by a staggering 90 percent over the next 50 years if no action is taken to curb the bat mortality.

"These findings are a wakeup call. Our study focused on the hoary bat, which has the highest observed fatalities. Other migratory bats also have high levels of mortality from wind turbines," explains Winifred Frick, Senior Director of Conservation Science for Bat Conservation International and lead author on the paper.

"We need to implement significant conservation measures to reduce mortality from wind turbine collisions and soon - effective conservation measures will help not just hoary bats but all bats that get killed by turbines," says Frick.

While this new research validates concerns shared by the conservation community and wind industry, the future is not all doom and gloom.

"Solutions are within our grasp. We have great hope that this is a problem that the conservation community, key government agencies and the wind industry can work together to solve," said Daulton.



CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from March 2017 Board Meeting

- Heard that the \$10000 fundraising goal has been exceeded for the West Valley Wetlands Project.
- Heard request from Flathead River Commission for financial support for flood modelling and mapping on the Flathead River. Board decided not to contribute money.
- Heard that the 2018 calendar project is progressing well and it is ready to go to print.
- Heard report that field trip attendance is up from last year.
- Held discussion on issue of inability to bird at the landfill now. Decided to postpone further action until BJ Worth returns as he can play a major role in this issue.
- Decided to do HawkWatch again this fall.
- Agreed to host the 2018 State Bird Festival as requested by Montana Audubon.

MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 8, 2017
Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street,
Whitefish
Program: Eric Greene on Ospreys
Doors Open 5:00 PM, Potluck Dinner 6:00 PM,
Meeting Begins 7:00 PM.
Be sure to arrive early enough to look over and bid on
silent auction items! Officers and Board Members will
be elected.

SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at
the Flathead Audubon May Potluck. Now's the per-
fect time to gather all of the valuable "stuff" that you
might be able to live without. Popular items at past
Silent Auctions have been bird books, outdoor gear,
art work, live bedding plants, homemade pies and
cookies and bird houses and feeders of all kinds.
This is your opportunity to be a Primo Recycler!

NOMINATIONS – ALREADY!!

At the May potluck, FAS will elect a President,
Vice President and some Director positions. It is time
to start thinking about the people that you would like to
see guide FAS for the near future. The person sitting
next to you at the last meeting is a good choice, and
the person sitting in your seat is also a good choice! If
you know of someone who would be a good leader,
please contact Bob Lee (270-0371 or
RML3@centurytel.net);
someone from the Nominations Committee will talk
with them about roles and responsibilities and get them
on the ballot. And anyone that would like to serve on
the Nominations Committee should also contact Bob.

*The conservation of natural
resources is the fundamental
problem. Unless we solve that
that problem it will avail us
little to solve all others.*



Theodore Roosevelt

SPECIAL GIFTS

I wish to help make Flathead Audubon's vision a
reality. Here is my contribution to the continued
success of our chapter.



- Eagle Donation, \$1000+
- Osprey Donation, \$500+
- Snowy Owl Donation, \$250+
- Merlin Donation, \$100+
- Kestrel Donation, \$50+
- My Own Vision, amount of my choice

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

- Education Programs
- Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- Scholarships and Grants
- Field Trips and Outdoor Events

I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please do not acknowledge my gift
in the Pileated Post

Please make checks payable to:
Flathead Audubon Society



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MISSION MOUNTAIN AUDUBON PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, 30 March: "Birds of the Mission Valley Wetlands" by Pat Jamieson- retired education specialist
from the National Bison Range. Polson Library Meeting Room, 7 PM.

Thursday, 27 April: "The Threat of Invasive Mussels in Flathead Lake" by Tom Banzak- aquatic ecologist at
the Flathead Lake Biological Station. Polson Library Meeting Room, 7 PM.



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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. Both meetings are open to all.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. For membership information or address change, please call Mike Fanning at 862-8070. To receive this newsletter electronically, email your request to: lindawin@centurytel.net. Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Denny Olson: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Kay Mitchell	kbmitch@centurytel.net	756-8130
Vice-President	Gael Bissell	gbissell535@gmail.com	261-2255
Secretary	Marylane Pannell	kuhlpan@cyberport.net	871-7613
Treasurer	Joe Batts	jbatts@me.com	844-0299
Past-President	Bob Lopp	boblopp@bresnan.net	752-7026

DIRECTORS

2015-2018	Lewis Young	68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917	889-3492
2015-2018	Doug MacCarter	dsmaccarter@gmail.com	602-663-8611
2015-2018	Jan Metzmaker	jmetzmaker@hotmail.com	862-7960
2015-2018	Jake Bramante	jake@hike734.com	250-8394
2016-2019	Cory Davis	piranga99@gmail.com	257-3166
2016-2019	Barbara Summer	parkview@cyberport.net	270-1285
2016-2017	Bob Lee	rml3@centurytel.net	270-0371
2016-2017	Kathy Ross	mtkat67@gmail.com	837-3837
2016-2017	Jill Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
2016-2017	Mike Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation	Lewis Young	889-3492
Education	Vacant	
Field Trips	Kathy Ross	837-3837
	Cory Davis	257-3166
Finance	Mike Fanning	862-8070
Donations	Mary Nelesen	755-7678
Hospitality	Lois Drobish	756-7405
Membership	Mike Fanning	862-8070
	Jill Fanning	862-8070
Owen Sowerwine	Linda Winnie	755-1406
Natural Area	Bob Lee	270-0371

Newsletter	Linda Winnie	755-1406
	John Hughes	261-2506
	Lewis Young	889-3492
Nominations	Bob Lee	270-0371
Program	Bob Lee	270-0371
Publicity	Jan Metzmaker	837-0181
Sales	Jill Fanning	862-8070
Refuges	Kathy Ross	837-3837
Website	Jake Bramante	250-8394



MONTANA AUDUBON
 P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949 www.MTAudubon.org
 Interim Executive Director: Norane Freistadt norane@mtaudubon.org
 Board Member representing FAS Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY
Membership Individual or Family

Basic Membership ————— \$25
 Pays for newsletter and operating costs

Supporting Membership ————— \$40
 Extra \$15 funds local projects such as
 Conservation Education and
 Owen Sowerwine Natural Area

Additional Donation of \$ _____

To: Education Fund
 Owen Sowerwine Fund
 Wherever needed

Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Email _____

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