



President's Column

THIS FLOCK JUST WON'T FLY IN A STRAIGHT LINE

Nature is messy. It thrives on principles, not order. Sometimes we try to impose order, by lists, field guides, and occasionally cages. That doesn't make anything more orderly except us. You have to agree that humans are pretty ridiculous in trying to control something that has been working just fine, thank you, for longer than we have existed on this planet.

We do better when we learn about nature's principles – biodiversity, interdependence, climate science, diurnal and circadian rhythms, adaptation and others – and give up our obsession with control. When we finally understand the principles, the natural world makes more sense (more sense, not more order). And being outdoors starts to feel more comfortable and interesting.

Not everybody has the opportunity to learn about the principles that guide nature. Lots of people go through life without ever understanding what's going on outside their window. That's the reason we have a lively, interactive Conservation Education Program. We expose, explain and challenge people of all ages to "get it" and to start feeling good about being



on the other side of the window. It's kind of like that with our Flathead Audubon Board. If you look through the window during board meetings, it looks pretty messy. We thrive on principles, not order. New people come onto the board expecting to be "assigned" to projects or committees, to follow the rules, to do as directed. We disappoint them in that, but the good ones figure it out and start learning the principles that guide our Flathead Audubon chapter – conservation, respect, work ethic, educational sharing, acceptance of diversity, interdependence, courage, humor.

Being president of this chapter has stretched me further than I thought I could go. Somewhere in the last 4 years, I gave up being orderly. The principles of this group are much more important than rank or marching in straight lines. I'm pleased to have served you. You have a very strong team coming in to take the lead. I think you will be pleased and I know you will be supportive.

Summer is on our doorstep. I hope you accept the challenge to get on the other side of the window. Nature is there for you!

Kay Mitchell, President

THANKS AGAIN TO ALL OUR DONORS THIS YEAR!

THIS IS YOUR LAST PILEATED POST UNTIL SEPTEMBER

Check our website during the summer for happenings and news.

MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, May 6, 2019. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. All welcome.

Monday, May 13, 2019. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street, Whitefish. All welcome. See page 3.

Thursdays in May 2019, Swan River Nature Strolls, 10 AM. See page 7.

Saturday, May 18, 2019, Smith Lake Bike and Bird Tour, 9 AM-noon. See page 7.

Saturday, May 25, 2019. 7 AM-noon. Birds of Glacier Park. See page 7.

Friday-Sunday, May 31-June 2, 2019. Warbler Weekend at Tally Lake. See page 7.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

American Avocet

by Linda de Kort

Several years ago our neighbor and I stopped by West Valley Ponds on a sunny May morning. The ponds were filled with migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. I immediately recognized two of my favorites: Ruddy Ducks with their distinctive blue bills and American Avocets with boldly patterned black and white wings and up-turned bills. I tried in vain to describe them to my friend and then remembered our Montana Audubon License Plates. I wiped off the mud stains and there were the clear images; she then knew immediately what to look for.

We have spotted American Avocets on their wintering grounds in Baja, Mexico as well. Unlike the breeding birds seen here in Montana in spring and summer with rusty necks and heads, the non-breeding birds have a grayish white head. They generally have this winter plumage from September to February. The males and females in both plumages can easily be distinguished because the female's bill is shorter and curvier. These handsome birds stand 16-20 inches tall and have very long grayish blue legs. They can weigh up to 11 ounces and have a wingspan of around 28 inches.

American Avocets fly from their wintering grounds in Mexico and the southern U.S., defying border walls and edicts, arriving in our valley around the end of April to the end of May. The return flights in the fall are generally from the first of September to the first of October. Their breeding range stretches from Texas to Canada. Some of the Avocets we spot in our valley will stay here, breed and raise their young. They seem to prefer shallow alkaline wetlands; West Valley ponds, waterfowl production areas and Conservation Easements along the north shore of Flathead Lake are prime nesting habitat.

Courtship displays are quite elaborate involving crouching and bowing; the male will then preen himself with water and splash frantically. It is quite a spectacular dance, and following copulation, they briefly cross their bills and/or intertwine their long necks.

They stay together for a single breeding season and raise one brood together. Both male and female build the next, incubate eggs and care for the young. They nest in areas with little vegetation and seem to favor islands. They make a scrape in the ground and line it loosely with vegetation and feathers. The female will lay 3-4 greenish brown spotted eggs in sequence, and both parents will incubate for 23-25 days. The chicks hatch at the same time and already have down, open eyes and within a day are able to walk, swim and dive under water to escape predators. At four weeks, they acquire feathers that look like non-breeding adults and are then able to fly.

The call of the Avocet is loud and shrill, especially when an intruder (such as skunk, fox, harrier, raccoon) approaches their nest. They crouch on the ground to distract the intruder from the nest; if that doesn't work, they fly directly at the intruder with outstretched necks. They often nest in colonies so several adults might be involved in these noisy attacks.

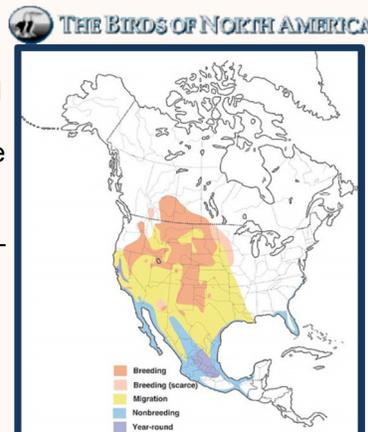
Diet is varied and consists mainly of water beetles, midges, brine flies, fairy shrimp, daphnia, amphipods and seeds. They have also been seen to consume fish. They have several feeding methods. They can use their long pincer like beak to pick prey from the water surface or mud. They also forage by touch in murky water, sweeping their long bill rhythmically from side to side, filtering the smaller prey. In deeper water, Avocets can be seen up-ended like a duck to reach the food below. They are also adept at snatching flying insects from the air.

Avocets have been known to live 9 years in the wild. Their main threat, even more so than predation, is habitat loss. Wetlands were drained extensively in the twentieth century, and this species was completely eliminated from its eastern range. Some of our remaining wetlands are contaminated with selenium that leaches from the soil following irrigations; this can reduce hatching success. Methylmercury, associated with the burning of coal, may also lead to chick deaths.

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photo by Frank de Kort



May Program

Birds of Ghana: A West African Experience

presented by **Dan Casey**

Long-time Flathead Audubon member Dan Casey will be the guest speaker at the FAS meeting on Monday, May 13 at the Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street. Doors open at 5 PM with a potluck dinner at 6 PM. Dan joined seven other folks from Montana and Oregon on a 15-day tour of Ghana with Ashanti African Tours in January 2018. The trip was organized and co-lead by Jeff Marks of Montana Bird Advocacy, with part of the cost helping to fund work on Montana bird species. The group found more

than 380 species of birds, focusing on the endemic species of the Upper Guinean forest. Dan will share photo and video highlights of the trip, along with information regarding the culture, history, wildlife, and role of ecotourism dollars in this "Gold Coast" country. Be sure to arrive early to look over and bid on silent auction items. Officers and board members will be elected. Please bring a dish to share, your own plates, utensils, and cups. The meeting is free and open to the public.



MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 13, 2019

Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street,
Whitefish

Program: ***Birds of Ghana*** by Dan Casey

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.

Please bring your own plates, utensils, and cups.

SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at the Flathead Audubon May Potluck. Now's the perfect 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!

Give while you shop!

Here is an easy way you can help your chapter, with no cost to you and in a short time.

Amazon Smile: Typing "smile.amazon.com" is quick and easy. Click on the link and either put in your email address and Amazon password or click Create an Account. Designate Flathead Audubon Society as your nonprofit of choice. You won't receive spam or marketing emails and a portion of the amounts you spend is rebated to Flathead Audubon.

Are these huge money-makers for Flathead Audubon? No, but we are very careful with our funds,



so every penny counts. Thanks for helping out!

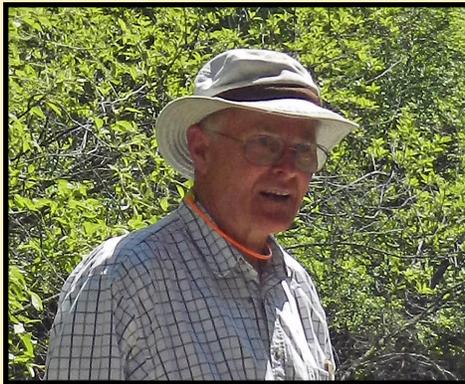
Richard Kuhl, Walking Man

Richard A. Kuhl – a man with a long stride and longer vision – died on March 17. A wilderness ranger, educator and conservationist, Kuhl left his campsites and community better than he found them.

Richard was born in 1938 in rural New Jersey. After college and the military, he traveled North America by Greyhound bus and foot. He worked for the Forest Service building trail and fighting wildland fires. He spent time in the Kootenai National Forest and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and developed an enduring love and commitment to wilderness. In 1966, he backpacked the Appalachian Trail (2,200 miles from Georgia to Maine).

Richard was often seen marching across Kalispell on his way to and from conservation meetings or his job as a math tutor at Flathead High School. To me, Richard embodied the essay *Walking* in which Henry David Thoreau describes walking outdoors as a mediational and intellectual pursuit benefiting mind and body alike.

Richard was introspective and cerebral but also drawn to working with others, particularly helping young folks or for a cause. He ran for the Montana Legislature twice, a Democrat who ran close races in part of the state that leaned heavily Republican. He served on the boards of the local chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association, Flathead Audubon and Flathead Land Trust. He spearheaded Friends of Lawrence Park in Ka-



Richard at work in Owen Sowerwine
photo by Linda Winnie

lispell, which transformed a neglected gravel pit and dumping grounds into one of the flagship city parks in Montana. He was recognized with a “Golden Glove” award from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for his hand-to-hand combat against knapweed at Lone Pine State Park. He served on Friends of the Flathead County Library.

Richard served as a very active member of the Flathead Audubon Board from 2008-15 and was Co-Chair of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Committee for four of those years. Physically strong and skilled, he enjoyed hard work at OSNA, clearing trails, bucking and hauling away downed trees, mending fence, posting signs and pulling weeds.

Richard and Marylane Pannell were married in 1980 and lived in Kalispell. Richard continued to work as a wilderness ranger at the Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Selway-Bitterroot from late spring into the fall. Kendra and Walker were born in 1981 and 1983. The family spent their first summers in the wilderness at Moose Creek and Fish Lake Ranger Stations, 20 miles from the nearest road.

Richard was preceded in death by his son Walker Pannell Kuhl. He is survived by Marylane Pannell, daughter Kendra Pannell Kuhl (Luke Oltrogge), grandchildren Clara and Connelly Pannell Oltrogge. He is also survived by many grateful friends and neighbors, myself included.

by Ben Long

Volunteers Needed to help with Owen Sowerwine Management

Flathead Audubon has been managing the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area for over 20 years. A vital part of our management effort is the feedback we get from volunteers who tell us what they observe when they visit Owen Sowerwine.

It's easy to be part of this Volunteer Monitoring program. Just take an OSNA Monitoring Form with you when you go to Owen Sowerwine, and record what you observe there. Fill out only the parts of the form that apply to the parts of OSNA you visit. The form has check boxes that guide you on what to look for, and space for written comments on what you see and learn. The completed form is sent to Kay Mitchell (mail and email addresses on form). Kay keeps a record of all this information, and lets our On-the-Ground Manager, Rick Mace, know of any management needs reported.

You can get the form (and an OSNA trail map) from the FAS website (www.flatheadaudubon.org/conservation/OSNA), or pick one up at the May potluck meeting. This summer, there will also be copies of the form available at the kiosk near the Treasure Lane entrance to OSNA, and at the sign board near the Greenridge entrance. Please call or email me if you have any questions. Thank you Barb Boorman for keeping those brochure holders filled!

For this summer, we will not be scheduling monitoring visits. We'll be watching to see if we get enough monitoring reports without them.

And THANK YOU to ALL who help with OSNA Monitoring!
by Linda Winnie



Candidates for Officers and Board of Directors

At the May meeting, FAS will elect the President, Vice-President, and several Director positions. Nominees (with biographies) for these positions are:

President —Gael Bissell : Four years ago, when Kay Mitchell was selected as President, Flathead Audubon was a very productive Chapter delivering outstanding monthly public programming, field trips, and newsletters; overseeing our Conservation/Education Program; managing the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area; building a new website; helping with Christmas Bird Counts, and raising the funding required by these activities. Since that time and under Kay's sound and effective leadership, we have not only improved and expanded many of these programs, we have also significantly added many new endeavors. We now manage annual Jewel Basin Hawk Watch in conjunction with the Flathead National Forest and many partners; we reorganized Raptor Day into the wildly popular Birds of Prey Festival each fall; we also raised \$10,000 for the new West Valley Ponds Viewing Area and we created our "Ambassadors" program to help with our student and senior outreach and education.

Building on our successes and with Denny Olson's help as our "new" Conservation Educator, we want to expand our educational efforts to give many of our elementary kids opportunities to get out into the "field" using both our new Outdoor Classroom at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and the new West Valley Bird Viewing Area. I am optimistic that with many partners such as Flathead Land Trust and the school districts, help from our members (especially retired science teachers) and the community, Flathead Audubon will take our Conservation Education Program to the next level, hook our kids on birds and habitat, and really begin to make a difference in how our youth appreciate and understand the natural world.

As President, I would use my experience of 30+ years at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks where I worked with a diversity of partners to conserve habitat and my years of work with various non-profits to help our Chapter make this new effort both successful and effective. I believe it will be important to maintain our core programs while we make this transition; it will be important to let more folks in the community know what it is we do, to become aware of our efforts, and join in our projects. It will be important for Flathead Audubon to also begin to secure a strong financial base so that we can sustain our programs.

Our past presidents and boards have built this Chapter into a cohesive, visionary, effective, and inclusive Chapter and I hope I can fill Kay's big shoes during my term and help our Chapter move forward.

Vice-President —Cory Davis : Cory Davis grew up in northern California at the base of Mt. Diablo and moved to the Flathead Valley in 2003. Alt-

hough he grew up spending summers on the road camping with his parents who were schoolteachers, he did not become a bird nerd until getting his Bachelor's Degree in Biology at UC Santa Barbara and working at the campus Vertebrate Museum. After graduation, Cory went on to live the life of an itinerant field ornithologist working jobs in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon, Washington's Olympic Peninsula, the sky islands of southeastern Arizona, Alaska's interior, and Belize. He finally got tired of living out of his car and went on to get an M.S. degree in Biology from Arkansas State University where he studied the effects of forest fragmentation on songbirds around McCall, Idaho. He also spent four years in a PhD program at Montana State University researching the effects of land use change on national parks, though that degree still eludes him.

In his current position as a Research Associate in the University of Montana's W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Cory coordinates a group of partners from NGOs, local agencies, and private citizens that work closely with the Forest Service to implement forest restoration on several local National Forests. He coordinates a monitoring program looking at the effects on wildlife, vegetation, aquatic systems, and socioeconomic conditions resulting from Forest Service management actions. He also works with local school groups and community members to help monitor forest conditions and water quality. He currently resides in Whitefish, with his partner Michelle and her daughter Lucy, where he enjoys cross-country skiing, mountain biking, playing pickleball, and brewing beer to share with friends.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Margaret Parodi: I have a Master's degree in Geology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton and worked as a professional geologist in the oil and minerals industries for 7 years. I then ran my own geological and geophysical consulting firm (with my husband) in the North Idaho region for 15 plus years. I am now employed part time for an artist in Bigfork doing framing, shipping, and sales work.

Will Beyer: I am a semi-retired overseas maintenance, mechanic contractor and licensed Montana water well contractor. I moved to Montana in 1975 where I attended the University of Montana, and the Missoula VoTec. This brief education propelled me from the hay fields of the Missoula Valley and White Sulfur Springs to Tioga, North Dakota, and finally Kalispell, Montana, in 1982. Since 1999 I have

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Conservation Educator's Niche

By Denny Olson

**"You've Come a Long Way, Baby
(and still have a ways to go)"**

Despite our recognition that women have played a very important role in our knowledge of science (see last month's column), the background shows that cultures, and prevailing thought, do not change overnight. Gender inequality is still the norm in our country, and even worse in some others. In education and career choices, girls and women are very underrepresented in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) subjects, with one interesting exception. (More on that in paragraph four, below.) In K – 12 education, girls achieve at the same or slightly higher rates than boys, and they enroll in STEM classes at nearly the same rates. But something begins to happen toward the later years of high school, and the trend continues at the bachelor's degree level in college. The higher the level of STEM advanced placement or graduate school course, the fewer women participate in these subjects.

From the National Science Foundation: Women earned 57.3% of bachelor's degrees in all fields in 2013 and 50.3% of science and engineering bachelor's degrees. However, women's participation in science and engineering at the undergraduate level significantly differs by specific field of study. While women receive over half of bachelor's degrees awarded in the biological sciences, they receive far fewer in the

computer sciences (17.9%), engineering (19.3%), physical sciences (39%) and mathematics (43.1%).

In the workforce, the trend continues:

35.2% of chemists are women

11.1% of physicists

and astronomers are women;

33.8% of environ-

mental engineers are women

22.7% of chemical

engineers are women

17.5% of civil, archi-

tectural, and sanitary engi-

neers are women

17.1% of industrial

engineers are women

10.7% of electrical or

computer hardware engineers

are women; and

7.9% of mechanical engineers are women.

There is plenty of solid evidence that the physical,

chemical, computer and engineering sciences do *not*

have these disparities because of any *ability* differ-

ence between women and men. There is also plenty

of evidence that traditional cultural differences

(expectations, and varying degrees of outright sexism)

have *much* to do with these statistics. But – and here's

where I may get myself in trouble -- I also think that

culture may only be part of the story.

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Education Committee News

The Education Committee has had a productive year. I wish to recognize and thank our members for their expertise and commitment in meeting our education goals. They are Renee Cortes, Linda de Kort, Amy Jacobs, Kathy Ross, Rod Walette and Pam Willison. A special thanks to Conservation Educator Denny Olson for his resourcefulness, program development and boundless energy on our behalf.

Our educational trunk programs are facilitated by a cadre of Ambassadors who provide help by shuttling trunks to schools and other organizations and / or presenting trunk programs. They are Rod Walette, Linda de Kort, Carole Jorgensen, Pat Jaquith, Barbara Boorman, Shannon Harper Donaldson, Jennifer Dodan, Sue Crawford, Pam Willison, Sue Swab, and Jeanne Olsen.

President Kay Mitchell called for volunteers at our April general meeting. Thanks to the following members who will help with spring activities. They are:

ARBOR DAY: Carole Jorgensen

EARTH DAY: Connie Cohen, Carole Jorgensen,

Tina Zenzola

FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO: Bridger

(Shannon) Donaldson, Nancy Gresham

2019-2020 Strategic Plan

The committee evaluated the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan at our March meeting. The 2019-2020 Plan was developed during our April meeting. Results of this planning will be presented to the FAS Board during their May board meeting. The final plan will be available on the FAS website upon board approval.

We welcome Flathead Audubon members to join us reach our education goals. Please contact Denny Olson or me if you are interested in helping.

by Gail Shay Linne, Education Chair

SPRING/SUMMER 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. Please read our field trip guidelines at www.FlatheadAudubon.org. 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 471-3314, 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. Check the FAS webpage (<https://www.flatheadaudubon.org/activities-and-field-trips/>) for updated information on field trips.



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

SPRING ARRIVALS IN THE SMITH LAKE AREA, Saturday May 18, 8 AM-noon. Join us 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! This is primarily a driving trip with several stops to get out and bird. Bring binocs and scopes and appropriate weather gear. For details and to sign up contact Cory Davis at 406-471-3314, or piranga99@gmail.com. **Limited to 20 participants.**

BIRDS OF GLACIER PARK--APGAR TO FISH CREEK WITH STEVE GNIADEK, Saturday, May 25, 2019, 7AM-noon. Share the joy of birding in Glacier with expert birder Steve Gniadek. Expect to see our resident chickadee species as well as recent migrant arrivals like warblers, flycatchers and so many more avian friends. Loons and Harlequin Ducks are sometimes special visitors in this area. For directions and to sign up, contact Steve at grayjaybro@yahoo.com or leave a phone message at 406-892-7406. Be sure to bring appropriate gear for weather, and binoculars. **Field trip is limited to 14 participants.**

WARBLER WEEKEND AT TALLY LAKE, Friday through Sunday, May 31-June 2. Join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary 3 days of birding and relaxing. All the warbler species of NW Montana can usually be found here. Camping fees paid by FAS. More details will be announced at the May 13 potluck meeting and posted on the FAS website.

WHITEFISH LAKE AND NEARBY HOTSPOTS, Saturday, June 8, 8 AM-noon. Join local birders Bruce Tannehill and Gail Cleveland as they visit some of the best songbird areas around Whitefish Lake. Meet at the MacDonald's parking lot at the Whitefish Mall at 8am. We will car pool from that point to Lazy Creek at the head of the lake. **The trip is limited to 15 people.** For details contact Bruce at tanneland239@gmail.com.

FAS BIRD-A-THON, Saturday, June 15. More details will be announced at the May 13 potluck meeting and posted on the FAS website, or contact Bob Lopp at boblopp@bresnan.net, or 250-7753.

LUBEC-COONSA CREEK AND THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF GLACIER NP, Saturday, June 22, 7 AM to 1 PM. Join local expert birder Paul Rossi as we explore a variety of habitats along Hwy 2 toward East Glacier, including the great bird diversity of the Lubec Lake and Coonsa Creek area. We'll be doing a short walk (<1/2 mile) on a well-developed trail. There will be an option to make it a whole day trip and continue traveling east for some eastside specialties with Paul. **Trip is limited to 15 people.** Contact Paul to sign-up (406-253-8679, polovetsian@hotmail.com).

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PHENOLOGY NOTE: Heartleaf Arnica and Oregon Grape are blooming.

150th bird species on OSNA

Recently, Jake Bramante spotted a Lincoln's Sparrow on Owen Sowerwine Natural Area for the 150th documented bird species. Way to go Jake!

FIELD TRIPS continued from page 7

LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Sunday, June 23, 8:30 AM-2:00 PM. Join refuge wildlife biologist Beverly Skinner and tour the incredible wetlands and grasslands of this hidden jewel west of Kalispell. See nesting Trumpeter Swans and abundance of shorebirds and waterfowl species associated with Palouse prairie, riparian/wetland, and larch/pine forest habitats of the 9000 acre Refuge, northwest of Marion, MT. We will drive and walk along some of the refuge's closed roads with short hikes on uneven ground for better viewing. Meet at the Lost Trail Refuge Headquarters (about 45 miles NW of Kalispell) between 8:15-8:30 AM. For location and more information about the refuge go to http://www.fws.gov/refuge/lost_trail/. To sign up for the field trip or get more information about the trip contact Beverly at 406-858-2286 or beverly_skinner@fws.gov.

SWAN RIVER WILDLIFE REFUGE AND NEARBY BOTTOMLANDS, Saturday, June 29, 8 AM-noon. Join us as we explore the refuge and the wetlands and forests nearby. We'll see some great birds (maybe bitterns, snipe, and redstarts). We'll be walking out on to the refuge and it will be wet, so knee-high boots are highly recommended! For more information call Cory Davis (406) 257-3166 or piranga99@gmail.com. **Trip is limited to 15 participants.**

FLATHEAD RIVER KAYAK TOUR, Saturday July 20, 9 AM-noon. Join Flathead Land Trust to kayak the lower Flathead River to view existing conservation and conservation projects in progress. Kayak either 4 or 8 miles. View existing conservation and the Flathead River Conservation Project in the first 4 miles and as an option extend the trip by 4 miles to view another new potential conservation project. The route is not technical and flows are gentle. Bring your own kayak or canoe and appropriate weather gear. We will provide shuttles to cars but can't transport boats. Space is limited so RSVP to Laura Katzman at Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 or lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org.

EXPLORE OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA ISLANDS WITH JEANETTE OLIVER, Saturday, August 3, 9 AM-noon. A wonderful opportunity to join retired Biology Professor Jeanette Oliver for an information packed stroll in the portion of OSNA near her property on Leisure Island, followed by an easy walk across the summer season dry portion of the Stillwater River to explore OSNA's Big Island. Focus will be on identifying typical flood plain vegetation, as well as spotting birds along the way. **Trip is limited to 20 participants.** For meeting directions and to sign up, contact Jeanette at 406-755-8622 or jopjoliver74@gmail.com.

GOING BATTY! Saturday, August 10, 8:30 PM-11 PM. This cooperative trip between Flathead Audubon and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks will go to a site with known bat activity where electronic equipment will be used to detect the ultrasonic calls of bats flying overhead, and mist nets will be used to capture bats for closer inspection. Wildlife biologists Lewis Young, Lisa Bate, and Chris Hammond will demonstrate the equipment, handle bats captured in mist nets and talk about the amazing adaptations bats have for survival. It is an incredible experience to see bats up close and learn about these amazing mammals! Participants will not be allowed to touch or handle bats. Headlamps or flashlights are necessary and come with suitable clothing for the weather. **Trip is limited to 25 participants.** To sign up contact Kathy Ross, 837-3837 or mtkat67@gmail.com.

American Avocet continued from page 2

Audubon scientists are predicting that with climate change, the breeding range in Montana would move north into Alberta and Saskatchewan. In addition to these threats, human presence at nesting sites can cause abandonment so use your binoculars and

observe them from a distance.

We look forward to spotting many Avocets during the Montana Audubon Festival in June. While there, sign up for a Montana Audubon License Plate so that you can help your neighbor keep a look out for these extravagant birds.

Nominations continued from page 5

worked in some far-away places such as the South Pole, the glacial summit of Greenland and points in between. Some of my life achievements are hand crafting a log cabin and building a bridge across the Swan River near Condon, Montana. I love the outdoors, hiking, cc skiing, fishing, hunting, bird watching, floating rivers and forest management. I have been casually involved in Audubon since the 1990s.

Dave Manuwal: I have studied birds in the western US for over 60 years. I received an under-

graduate degree from Purdue University and a Master's degree working with Dick Taber at the University of Montana in 1968. Then I received a PhD studying marine birds at UCLA in 1972. I taught and conducted bird research for 41 years at the University of Washington's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, retiring in 2013 as Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Science. Currently, I am an affiliate professor at UM where I recently resurveyed his bird plots at Lubrecht Experimental Forest from 40 years earlier! I now reside in Kalispell with my wife Naomi.

MIGRATION MIRACLES

Feathers, hollow bones, no more than air cloaked in brilliant hues. Our neotropical birds migrate at speeds up 100 mph, at elevations as high as 15,000 feet, for up to 8 hours at a stretch or some never stopping for thousands of miles. To top off this feat, they know their way to Mexico or South America in the fall and back to North America and Canada in the spring to breed. Migratory birds hatch with a road map in their brain. They orient via the sun, or the stars, or on a cloudy day some actually read the magnetic field of the earth to find their way. Each year we are witness to one of the most incredible miracles of the natural world and it is happening right now all around us. International Migratory Bird Day is celebrated this year on May 11, but appreciating and celebrating birds can happen 365 days of the year. FAS has some great field trips scheduled during the month of May. Join us as we celebrate the migration miracle. The focus this year for Migratory Bird Day is on the devastating affects of plastic pollution on birds as well as our environment. Please minimize the use of all plastic but especially plastic bottles and if you need to, please recycle.

by Kathy Ross



CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from the April 1, 2019 Board meeting

- ◇ A sample and explanation of the Birds In Motion video project was provided by bj Worth, in hopes of coordinating with FAS for our mutual benefit.
- ◇ Bruce Tannehill provided an annual financial review, which recommended splitting the Treasurer position into a bookkeeper and a Treasurer due to the work volume.
- ◇ Diane Boyd resigned from the Board due to a change in her employment.
- ◇ Birdathon information sheets and pledge forms were distributed. Also, some clarification was provided to reduce the opportunity for stretching the rules!!
- ◇ An exciting new logo was approved and will be visible soon!
- ◇ FAS will be providing a bench or two, bluebird houses, and some native plantings to help finish the new West Valley Viewing Area.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ⇒ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ⇒ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ⇒ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ⇒ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.

LOONS AND LEAD

you can help!

Here in northwest Montana we are fortunate to have both a population of common loons and good fishing in many lakes that support loons. Unfortunately, the lead sinkers and jigs often used for fishing pose a significant threat to loons. Loons often swallow fishing tackle and lead is toxic to loons. One lead sinker can kill a loon. Lead sinkers and jigs 1 ½ inches or smaller along the longest axis are known to cause loon mortality. In our neighboring state of Washington, 1/3 of loon mortalities from 1999-2010 were attributed to lead poisoning.



Numerous other studies around the country have documented the same adverse effects. Many other species such as waterfowl and fish also suffer from lead toxicity.

The good news is that non-toxic alternatives

for fishing tackle are available at local fishing supply stores and online from many sources. A list of 35 companies that sell lead free tackle is available on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website: go to www.pca.state.mn.us then search for nontoxic tackle. Tell all your fishing friends about the problem with loons and lead tackle and be sure to add that non-toxic alternatives are easily available. The quicker more people become aware of the problem and switch to non-toxic fishing tackle the quicker the lead poisoning rate in loons will decline.

More information about loons and lead poisoning is available from the Montana Loon Society (www.montanaloons.org) and the Montana Common Loon Working Group (chammond@mt.gov).

PHENOLOGY NOTE: Red-eyed Vireos arrive.

Niche, continued from page 6

The exception I mentioned above is that well over half the bachelor's degrees in biological sciences (59%) are earned by women, but this dwindles to 53% for Ph. D.'s in the life sciences. Does this decline indicate cultural expectations about the higher levels of learning? (More than half of six-year-old girls think that the very brightest among them will be boys.) Further, over 70% of life science teachers in Jr. high and high schools are women, yet science teachers (big surprise) are among the lowest on the science-career pay scale. Even in engineering fields, traditionally having the fewest women, *environmental* engineering (33%) is far and away the highest in women's participation (compared to chemical, mechanical, electrical and other fields). These could also reflect cultural expectations. But, looking at those percentages, what if "life science" fields of study and work are simply more interesting to more (but not all!) women? For every Marie Curie, are there two or more Rachel Carsons? Looking back, is it coincidence that the old nature study movement was largely driven by women?

These are unanswered, perhaps unanswerable, questions. But they do present the possibility that nature study, in its modern ecological, bio-diverse, systems-oriented forms, presents a slightly more attractive and exciting learning and working opportunity for some women. Long-term, as we become a less prejudiced culture (ignoring the current temporary blip on the curve), perhaps we will increasingly be able to celebrate gender, racial, religious and lifestyle differ-

ences, while creating a world where *equal opportunity* to be *anything* we want is a given.

If we want answers to these questions, gender aside, we can start by getting children outdoors more. Much more. Male or female, kids who spend significant time outdoors in nature are healthier, happier and smarter. The new emphasis on *integrated* learning is not discipline-oriented STEM, but a



cross-discipline methodology with *reading* and *art* included in intertwined content areas called STREAM. I like the concept, and I love the metaphorical acronym. We are moving along with the current. Life is interdisciplinary. No subject stands alone. There are some early indications that public education is finally putting the disparate disciplines back together, along with graduating from the abstract book and screen-learning model to direct learning in and about our place -- our natural, social, political, and economic immediate surroundings. As it happens, Nature cares not a whit about male-female, skin pigments, differing physical and mental abilities, what we wear on our heads, or anything about our private lives that doesn't affect other beings directly. Once again, Nature is the role-model and the teacher. At Audubon, we are doing our best to encourage, promote, preach and practice that.

2019 Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival

June 7-9, 2019

Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, Montana

If you haven't registered for Montana Audubon's annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival yet, it's time to get busy! Slots remain on great field trips to the stunning prairie landscapes in Montana's north-eastern region. The area supports numerous uncommon grassland bird species such as Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspur and Mountain Plover among others.

Featured speakers include American Prairie Reserve founder and Great Falls native Sean Gerrity, who will discuss the importance of Montana's undisturbed, native prairies for birds and other wildlife in the Reserve region. Andy Boyce with the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute will present on the effects of livestock grazing on grassland birds. Other presenters include Kelsey Molloy with the Nature Conservancy, who will give an overview of that organization's work in the area, and Conservation Program Manager, Amy Seaman will describe the unique avifauna of local grasslands and some of the citizen science work of Montana Audubon. Executive Director Larry Berrin will round out the festival speak-

er lineup with a Saturday evening presentation entitled, "State of the Birds".

To learn more about the 20th annual Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival and to register, please visit: mtaudubon.org or call **406.443.3949**. We hope to see you there!

by David Cronenwett, MT Audubon



John Fambing photo

Nominate a Conservation Leader for a 2019 Montana Audubon Award!

Nominations are now being accepted for Montana Audubon's 2019 awards. Consider nominating someone you know for *Conservationist of the Year*, *Environmental Educator of the Year*, *Citizen Scientist of the Year*, or a *Lifetime Achievement award*! Nomination forms can be found on the website: mtaudubon.org/about/awards/.

The deadline for nominations is **May 20, 2018**. Please submit via email (preferred) to info@mtaudubon.org or by mail to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Award winners will be announced at our Bird Festival banquet in Glasgow on June 8.

PHENOLOGY NOTE

Golden eagle eggs begin to hatch.

BirdCast: real time migration information

E-bird, a service of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, has a product that gives migration forecasts for the next 3 days and shows real time bird migration pathways and numbers each night. Click on <http://birdcast.info/>

The migration forecasts give you a quick glance at what to expect for the next three days, with predictions based on weather forecasts combined with radar data from 23 years of spring migration. These

forecasts are updated daily. The live migration maps take data from weather radars, which can detect migrating birds, and package them up into quantified maps: one for each night of migration. Each animation packs a wealth of information, with shading showing migration traffic rates: the estimated number of birds migrating per hour across any given kilometer in the continental US. Check it out. It's amazing!

by Lewis Young

Of Birds and Bears--Finding a Balance

We have had the enormous pleasure all winter of enjoying birds at our feeders and the birds have benefited, especially in hard winters like the past winter. Now is the time to consider taking the feeders down. If you live in bear country, out of respect for our furry, hungry neighbors, it is essential. Besides helping to keep bears out of trouble, taking your feeders down also encourages birds to go for their natural food sources of insects, especially caterpillars. Over 90% of our birds (even hummingbirds!) eat insects, a

source of protein and nutrients vital to their health and more importantly essential for raising baby birds. It has been observed that it can take 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to raise a brood of chickadees (average brood 5-10). Perhaps we would start seeing fewer insects in the landscape, creating less need for toxic insecticides and helping nature to find its own balance. Taking feeders down during the summer can be a win-win for bears, birds and the environment!

by Kathy Ross

SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, September 14th
At Lone Pine State Park
The 13th Annual

BIRDS OF PREY FESTIVAL!

Last year's Festival, with many live birds of prey, great speakers, family crafts and activities, booths from

many organizations, raptor face-painting, and field trips – drew **850 participants!** The trend says that record number will fall again this year, as it has every year so far. Join us and celebrate the incredible beauty and value of our feathered friends!

Saturday, September 28
Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Workday

Your opportunity to help maintain the wonderful Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. More details will be included in the September Pileated Post.

Curlew Survey Opportunities

It's curlew season again in the Mission Valley! Are you ready to hear the 'currleeeee' of the Long-billed Curlew? Well, grab your binoculars and get ready, because this charismatic shorebird needs you. Montana's curlews are back and we want to keep tracking them in and around the Mission Valley!



joelsartore.com

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 bellow-

ing bird. So all you have to do is choose a route and 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: montanabirdsurveys.com.

Here you will find survey details such as the protocol, data sheets, and route maps. You can also contact Amy Seaman if you would like a printed 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 Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org, 406.210.9449.

Have fun and help conserve a gem along the Flathead River! from your friends at the Flathead Lakers and Flathead Land Trust

RSVP to Flathead Land Trust at 406-752-8293

Summer Solstice Party
 Friday, June 21 • 6:30 pm

Live music and food at the Hormuth Barn on the north shore of Flathead Lake.

Join us to celebrate the longest day of the year and support conservation along the Flathead River!

Help us conserve this gem along the Flathead River

\$35 per person. Purchase tickets at www.flatheadlandtrust.org or 406-752-8293.

Music by Mike Manning & Steve Rogers

Logos for Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Lakers, Flathead Family, and others.

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
 P.O. Box 9173
 Kalispell, MT 59904

Family Forestry Expo

The 30th annual Family Forestry Expo will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Ron Buntmeyer Educational Forest located north of Kalispell along Trumbull Creek on Saturday, May 11, 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.

The Expo includes a free "loggers lunch," and features demonstrations, exhibits, and a forest walk with many educational stops, including one run by Flathead Audubon Society. FAS has maintained a booth at the Expo for many years and is 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. Whether you are a volunteer or a participant or just want to enjoy a day in the woods, everyone is welcome to come on out.

by Bob Lee

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Find us on: **facebook**

Be sure to check flatheadaudubon.org for

Late breaking FAS news and announcements
 Online FAS membership sign up or renewal
 Latest eBird reports on species being observed in the Flathead area





Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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Kalispell, MT 59904-9173

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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 Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, 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: lindawin626@gmail.com. Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin626@gmail.com

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Denny Olson: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

Table with 4 columns: Position, Name, Email, Phone. Includes President Kay Mitchell, Vice-President Gael Bissell, Secretary Pam Willison, Treasurer Joe Batts.

DIRECTORS

Table with 4 columns: Term, Name, Email, Phone. Lists directors from 2016-2019 including Cory Davis, Rod Walette, Jan Metzmaker, Jake Bramante, Bob Lopp, Carole Jorgensen, Gail Linne, Bob Lee, Kathy Ross, Mike Fanning, and Derrick Rathe.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Table with 4 columns: Committee, Name, Phone. Lists chairs for Conservation, Education, Field Trips, Finance, Hospitality, Membership, and Nominations.

Table with 4 columns: Committee, Name, Phone. Lists chairs for Natural Area Newsletter, Program, Publicity, Sales, Refuges, and Website.

MONTANA AUDUBON

P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949 www.MTAudubon.org
Executive Director: Larry Berrin lberrin@mtaudubon.org
Board Member representing FAS, Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371
Bob Lopp, alternate boblopp@bresnan.net 250-7753

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 \$

You may renew or join online on our website:

http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/

The Pileated Post is sent to FAS members by email. If you wish to receive a paper copy by USPS, check this box.

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Phone

Email

Your email address is safe with us.

Mail this form with your check to:

Flathead Audubon Society Membership

P.O. Box 9173

Kalispell, MT 59904