



the

Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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Horned Lark



islapedia.com

BACKYARD AND LOCAL CONSERVATION FOR BIRDS - THEY NEED OUR HELP

by Kathy Ross

Recent research findings on declining bird populations motivates all of us to find ways to help the birds that add so much to our world. Many Bird Conservation organizations are offering ideas on how we as humans can help. Below is a list drawn from suggestions made by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Bird Conservancy and the Teton Raptor Centre, along with a few of my own.

Flathead Audubon will be offering monthly articles in the Pileated Post over the next few months providing you information on why these suggestions are important, and also information on local sources that can help you help our birds.

NEXT MONTH, tips on how to help to prevent window collisions, bird friendly products, and how to minimize the use of plastic.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING BIRDS

- Make windows safer night and day to help prevent bird collisions.
- Garden with native plants, help restore natural habitats in your yard and community.
- Use less plastic.
- Buy bird habitat friendly products like coffee and chocolate which are grown in the winter habitats of our migratory birds. Look for Fair trade, organic and shade grown.
- Do not buy illegal caged birds.
- Keep pets inside as much as possible, especially cats. We love our cats but they love birds.
- Buy migratory bird stamps.
- Slow down when driving to avoid collisions with birds feeding along road ways
- Be a Citizen Scientist, join Christmas bird counts and Backyard bird counts. There are many opportunities in your own back yards. You can make a difference.
- Take a child or friend birding. Help others connect with nature and birds.
- Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Let lawns grow taller and go to seed.
- Clean your bird feeders.
- Keep water available for birds year round if possible.
- Keep your distance from birds, especially when they are nesting.

Excellent discussions of these and other suggestions, detailing why and how to do them – and resources for help, can be found at www.abcbirds.org, www.birds.cornell.edu (7 ways to help birds), and www.tetonraptorcentere.org (Backyard Conservation for birds).

JANUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, January 6, 2020. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. All welcome.

Monday, January 13, 2020. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. All welcome. See page 3.

Saturday, January 18, 1-4 PM. Winter River Bottom: Birds, Tracks, and Plant Adaptations. See page 7.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Hardy Winter Visitors: Redpolls

Reprinted from March 2004 Pileated Post

Winter visitors to our forests and feeding stations, Common and Hoary Redpolls are among the hardiest of the songbirds. In fact, Audubon's *Encyclopedia of North American Birds* says these small finches can survive colder temperatures than any other songbird. Both the Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*) and the Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*) breed in the subarctic forests and tundra scrub and venture into Montana only during the winter months.

One way that Redpolls survive frigid weather is to store seeds in their crop—a relatively large

throat pouch located about midway down their neck. The ability to store extra food during nightfall and severe weather allows them to conserve energy. After filling their crop, Redpolls will often fly off and find shelter from frigid weather in dense coniferous foliage. There, they will settle into the protected spot and swallow the seeds at their leisure. They will often adopt a fluffed-up ball posture that reduces heat loss.

Testimony to their hardy nature, the birds can be spotted bathing in icy creek water or burrowing into wet snow. The birds can be quite tame and easily approached. The very small finches with the red cap or "poll" and black chin are difficult to distinguish from each other. In general, the Hoary Redpoll has a "frostier" or paler appearance than the Common Redpoll. Another distinguishing feature (if you can get a close look) is the Hoary's lack of streaking on its rump and undertail coverts. The male Common Redpoll usually has a rosy breast and sides, much brighter than the Hoary. Both Redpolls have a distinctive facial profile, with a small conical bill and a face that looks

foreshortened or "smushed."

Of the two, Common Redpolls are much more common in northwestern Montana, with Hoary Redpolls occasionally spotted within flocks of Common Redpolls. During both the Kalispell and Bigfork 2004 Christmas Bird Counts, only one Hoary Redpoll was spotted on each count. That's compared to 109 Common Redpolls on the Bigfork count and 21 on the Kalispell count.

Redpolls move about their wintering ground in large flocks, settling down to feed on seeds and buds

of birch and alder or at feeders.

When they are perched, listen for their *sweet-ee-ee-ee* call that is described as similar to, but coarser than, the call of the American Goldfinch. The flocks usually leave for their northern nesting ground by mid-March.

Redpolls are known for their tendency to roam. Fluctuations in food supply cause these finches to travel great distances to find suitable forage. These "irruptions" cause the birds to become abundant in areas where they have been uncommon or rare for several years. A Common Redpoll banded in Fairbanks, Alaska, one winter was recaptured 3,000 miles to the east near Montreal, Quebec the next winter.

For more information on these hardy little birds, check out Cornell's online bird guide at: www.allaboutbirds/guide/

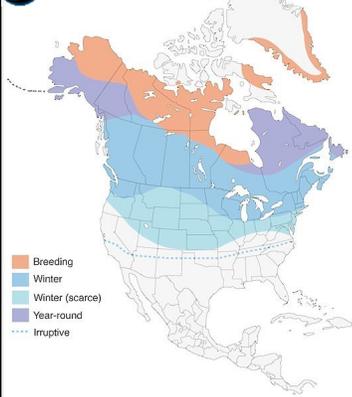
Sources for this article were The Sibley Guide to Birds, The Birder's Handbook, Birds of North America, the Cornell site listed above, and the Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds.

Common Redpoll



© Raymond Lee

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA



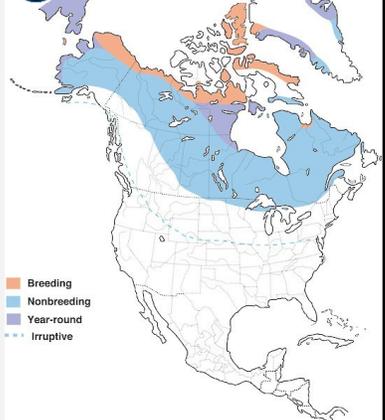
foreshortened or "smushed."

Hoary Redpoll



© Gerrit Vyn/gerritvynphoto.com

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA



January Program

Impact of Habitat Destruction & Fragmentation on Birds presented by Robert Gentry

Robert Gentry will be the guest speaker at the Flathead Audubon meeting Monday, January 13 from 7-9 PM in the Gateway West Community Meeting Room in Kalispell. The program is free and open

to the public.

More information will be posted on the Flathead Audubon website: www.flatheadaudubon.org as it becomes available.

BOARD VS MEMBER CHALLENGE!

When you think of the 442-acre Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, Birds of Prey Festival, dozens of field trips, Jewel Basin Hawk Watch, and our ability to reach 6500 people in the Flathead Valley annually about the importance of birds and ecosystems, you know that your contributions to FAS are put to good use. We are incredibly grateful for all your past donations to Flathead Audubon, both through our website and through the mail! This year's fund-raising Challenge between those who have served on the FAS board (past and present) and our nearly 350 other

members continues through December 31, 2019! The race is pretty close! As of December 18, the Board is ahead with donations of \$2100 and the Membership with donations of \$1765.

We are amazed at your generosity. Thank you so much!
the FAS Board



Board Members

End of Year Challenge: Board vs Members

Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to the End of Year Challenge through December 17, 2019.

Osprey

David Hudak

Snowy Owl

Billy Ann Burch

Merlin

Ray Kenny
Jennifer Graham
Darcy Thomas
Gael Bissell
Jan Metzmaker
Pat McLaughlin
Rod Walette
Linda Winnie
Lynda and Lewis Young
Robert Lee

Rosemary McKinnon

Marylane Pannell

Kestrel

Bob O'Neil
Elizabeth Hammer
Diane Myslicki
Sarah & Richmond Thomason
Katherine O'Neil
Brentley Buchele
Mike & Jill Fanning
Joel or Barbara Vignere
Christine Dye

My Own Vision

Tom Harding
Laurie Brandon

Theresa Swan

Mary & Don Granger
Guenter Heinz
Jean Deshon
Jane Adams
Elizabeth Gardner
J.K. Bourne
Pam Fuqua & Mary Campbell
Barbara Lutz
Patricia Jaquith
Beverly Skinner
Paul Bradt
Mary Jo Gardner
Cindy Roberts
Barbara Boorman

Many Thanks to the Whitefish Community Foundation

The Whitefish Community Foundation has provided a \$3000 award to our education program for this year. This is the 12th year The Foundation has supported the program. The generous contributions from The

Foundation have allowed our education program to grow in both numbers of people served and in the quality of the programs. *by Mike Fanning*



Conservation Educator's Niche

By Denny Olson

I'm Spoiled

I've always been a student of nature, gleaning factoids and evaluating the quality of evidence about the health of our wild environment. I've been able to teach what I have learned – about in equal measure to my continuing efforts as a student – to literally hundreds of thousands of people over 47 years as a teaching naturalist. Because of the “nature” of my work, the lines between work and “play” have been blurred beyond any distinguishing characteristics. I mostly teach in the woods and play in the same woods. The downside, which I don't see as one, is that I'm ever-so-slightly less financially secure as, say, your average venture capitalist. I have been able to spend a good share of my life where I am most comforted, euphoric, frightened, enlightened, peaceful, adrenaline-riddled and satisfied. It is my real home, and I feel that right down to the most primitive gene in my body.

The riches from this kind of life come in the form of stories, and the lessons I can pass on from those stories.

As an example – and forgive me if you have heard this one in another context – there was one spring when I was in the thick, overgrown North Woods with a troop of 5th-graders following on the trail. A Ruffed Grouse male began drumming, on his chosen log, about a hundred-fifty feet away from the trail. I had tried for years to get a photo of that – sneaking, hiding, sitting in camo – with no success whatsoever. On a whim (no idea where it came from) I decided to try a playful and a bit radical approach. I drummed with my fists on my chest with the same increasing tempo as the grouse. The kids were suddenly looking at me warily ... until the grouse drummed back. I walked toward him, nine fifth-graders in tow, and drummed again. He drummed. Forward some more, in plain view. I drummed. He drummed. A few more repetitions of that sequence, and we were ten feet away, repeating the war of body language. The grouse was fanning his tail, hissing, pecking at the log, stalking back and forth, stopping to drum his muffled air-compression thumps whenever I did – as perfect a rendition of testosterone-riddled football game sideline behavior as he could muster.

By that time, the kids' eyes were wide and

mouths were hanging open, and they were wondering why they had ventured into the woods with this guy. I had a volunteer from their group try a “drum”. The grouse now saw two enemies to defeat and doubled his efforts. We did this for a full hour. The kids never got bored, and their eyes never narrowed. In that hour, we called in eight females! I'm not sure if the male had romantic payoffs later.

I saw big, big grins as we walked back to the outdoor school of my employment. The least of their expectations was that they were going to go home with a real story to tell. And it wasn't just a “nature I out there and I watched” story. I think at least some of them realized then and there that they were, and would always be, active *participants* in nature – a part of it all, as it should be.

In my own participation in nature -- as a student, teacher, predator, meditative observer, restorer, and fellow living being – the riches of stories have piled high. There was the time a bull moose sneaked behind me to eight feet as I was doing morning duty at the base of a tree, literally catching me with my pants down. Or when a female moose with two small hours-old calves shared a tiny island for week with three friends in Quetico Provincial Park. Or the two times “docile” black bears had stalked me – heavily-armed with a fly rod. Or the times the more “fearsome” grizzlies had walked by unruffled and calm at ten and fifteen feet in Glacier National Park. Or being temporarily blinded by a very close lightning strike on my sleeping rock, and another time felt the current from a strike through the roots of an unfortunate white pine. Or meeting a curious wolf at forty feet on a trail, alone, in the bright moonlight, and watching the sparkle of sub-zero snow making a halo as it wagged its tail. Or watching a silly American Bittern freezing in the middle of the road to “disappear”. Or White-throated sparrows sitting on my head looking for the whistling “invader”. Or the dominant beaver female waddling up to me and depositing her territorial castoreum claim on my rubber boot.

This is just the proverbial “tip” the iceberg mass of stories I get to share from my primordial best and oldest friend, the natural world. And I get to take them with me when I go back to her (although not terribly soon, I would hope!).

Yup. I'm a spoiled rich kid. I have the stories to prove it.

Natural Events To See This Month:

Great-horned Owls are hooting as part of their mating ritual.

Flathead Valley Bird Report

by Joshua Covill

Rare and Notables - December 2019

11/18 - **Northern Hawk Owl** at Howe Lake in Glacier NP (Steve G.)

11/21 - **Rusty Blackbird** at the Lazy Creek bridge of Whitefish Lake (Anonymous eBirder)

11/28 - **Northern Hawk Owl** photographed at the Swan River NWR access (Carrie V. & Dan S.)

11/30 - **the NORTHERN CARDINAL** in Marion made another appearance at the same private residence that it was initially reported from (Steve S. & Joshua C.)

12/05 - **2 Glaucous Gulls** at the West Valley Ponds (Craig H.)

12/08 - **Prairie Falcon** in the West Valley Ponds area (Cory D. & Jake B.)

12/08 - Flock of **Horned Larks** and **1 Snow Bunting** in the West Valley Ponds area (Cory D. & Jake B.)

12/13 - **3 Pine Grosbeaks** spotted halfway up Blacktail Road in Lakeside (Bob K.)

12/14 - **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in the Flathead Lake WPA roosting in dense cover (Pete F.)

12/17 - **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visiting the feed-

ers of Craig H. regularly at time of this writing.

12/17 - **Common Grackle** visiting the feeders of Craig H. regularly at time of this writing.

What to Expect – January 2020

The new year is an exciting time; year lists are reset and old birds become new again. Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are mostly over, but the inspiration lingers. CBCs turn up odd birds because areas that never get covered are suddenly searched meticulously. It's a great time to add a birding stop to your morning commute or weekly errands; a small patch of shrubs in the park for rare sparrows or a city block with a lot of Mountain Ash berries for Pine Grosbeaks. Open agricultural fields might hold Snow Buntings or a Gyrfalcon and forested foothills have Northern Pygmy-Owls and Evening Grosbeaks. Open water attracts a lot of waterfowl, and cattle feed lots hold flocks of Red-winged & Brewer's Blackbirds with the chance of Rusty Blackbirds. The best way to ensure that you won't see any birds is to not look for them.

Membership and Murdoch's

A major benefit of becoming a member of the Flathead Audubon Society (FAS) is the satisfying feeling that you are contributing to solid, science-based education and conservation efforts. It doesn't stop there, however. If you haven't noticed, we have a new look and with that new look, some additional benefits.

Every member has access to a membership sticker and a membership card. The sticker is an all weather sticker that looks great on car windows, Nalgene bottles, and gear boxes. The membership card allows you to get discounts on bird feed when you shop at Murdoch's.

Initially, Murdoch's generously offered 10%

off on black oil sunflower seeds, but they have recently expanded that to all bird food including suet cakes and the more expensive Nyjer thistle seeds for your finches. When purchasing, you'll need your signed membership card. Be patient with them at the front counter as they are getting all of their cashiers up to speed on the new deal. So head over and pick up some seed and thank them for their support! (Note that this doesn't apply to items currently on sale.)

Membership cards and stickers are available at the meetings towards the back of the room. Also available for \$1 a piece are cute Pileated Woodpecker stickers!

by Jake Bramante

Natural Events To See This Month: Beavers start their breeding season.

Flathead Audubon Fly-by

Did you forget about the Christmas Bird Counts? Were you disappointed to find out about a last minute field trip that was changed? Do you want to know what's happening throughout the summer? Enter the "Flathead Audubon Fly-by"! This is Flathead Audubon's once-ish a month quick newsletter briefly reminding you of upcoming events, changes/

additions/deletions of field trips and meetings, and other important happenings to augment our excellent Pileated Post Newsletter.

If you didn't receive the first edition of the Fly-by, head over to flatheadaudubon.org and find the signup on the main page and stay up to date!

by Jake Bramante

Finches with Eye Disease are in the Flathead – What You Should Do

At the December FAS meeting, several people reported seeing House Finches with infected eyes at their feeders – partially or fully closed, red, swollen, or crusty. Most likely these birds were suffering from avian conjunctivitis, a bacterial infection that can affect any songbird, but occurs frequently in finches.

If you see a bird with an infected eye at your feeders, you need to take action immediately in order to keep the disease from spreading.

1. Throw away all the bird seed that was in your feeders, and rake up the seed on the ground under your feeders and dispose of it.

2. Take down all your feeders and clean and disinfect them. Cornell Lab says you can use your dishwasher to do this if you can take the feeder apart. Disassemble the feeder and wash all the pieces in the dishwasher on the hot setting. Or wash the feeder with boiling water and soap, or with a dilute bleach solution. (Many sources suggest 1 part bleach to 30 parts water; some say that to disinfect, you should also soak the feeder in this bleach solution for 15 minutes.) Rinse thoroughly after washing. Leave the feeders

down for a few days to allow the infected birds to disperse.

3. Report the diseased bird to Project Feeder Watch if you are a participant. They are tracking the disease across the U.S.

4. Let FAS know when you see an infected bird. Send an email to info@flatheadaudubon.org saying when and where you saw the bird, and what species it was. We will keep track of where the disease is occurring in the Flathead, and how many birds are being affected, and report these results in a future issue of the Post.

Even if you have not spotted an infected bird at your feeders, you should be cleaning your feeders at least once a month. Be sure to let them dry thoroughly before rehangng.

For more information about the disease, including its history and current distribution, see www.allaboutbirds.org/news/house-finch-eye-disease-outbreak-then-understanding/ (Cornell Lab) or <https://feederwatch.org/learn/house-finch-eye-disease/>.

by Linda Winnie

Bigfork CBC 2019

The 46th annual Bigfork Christmas Bird Count was held Saturday, December 14th, under cloudy skies, periodic “snow bands,” and relatively calm conditions all day. Snow depths were non-existent and/or limited to the higher eastern edges of the count circle; temperatures ranged from 31-39 degrees F. Rivers and lakes were mostly open and there was no ice on Flathead Lake. Thirty-seven volunteer participants counted **13,711** individual birds of **93 species**. Up from 87 species last year, and 2nd highest total ever. The overall number of birds decreased from last year’s total of 22,697 to 13,711 birds. There was one new

bird species found this year on the count an **Iceland Gull** (Thayer’s). Highlights were a **Cackling Goose**, **Glaucous Gull (4)**, **Common Grackle** and a **Brown-headed Cowbird**, plus many other great birds. There was a Coopers Hawk and a Great Gray Owl observed during count week. We had no record high counts of any species; probably the mild weather and the open habitat contributed to lower bird numbers. Thank you to all the wonderful participants who helped make the Bigfork CBC count a very enjoyable and fantastic experience! by Craig Hohenberger, aso-leado2003@yahoo.com

Eureka CBC 2019

The 27th annual Eureka Christmas bird count was held on Saturday December 14 in moderate weather that ranged from 28°F to 32°F. Koochanusa Reservoir was unfrozen as were the streams but smaller lakes and ponds were frozen. Foggy weather in the morning confronted the 25 people that went to the field as well as those counting at 13 feeders. Fifty-one species and 3033 individuals were recorded. The species total was lower than the last few years but well within our long-term count totals. The total number of individual birds (3033) was in the middle of the range for our long-term counts.

Bohemian Waxwing (622), Canada Goose (471), and Mallard (206) were the most numerous

species observed.

Only 1-3 individuals were seen for 14 species such as Ruffed Grouse, Golden Eagle, Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Northern Shrike, Brown Creeper, and Snow Bunting. The species may change from year to year but the low numbers of numerous species happens every year.

A record high count was recorded for American Dipper (13) and Blue Jay (14). No new species were reported this year, leaving a total of 123 that have been seen at least once in 27 years.

Thanks to everyone that helped make this another successful count! by Lewis Young

WINTER 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, Margaret Parodi at 837-1371, 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.



WINTER RIVER BOTTOM: BIRDS, TRACKS, AND PLANT ADAPTATIONS, Saturday, January 18, 1-4 PM (weather permitting). Join FAS Conservation Educator and long-time teaching naturalist Denny Olson on a winter hike in Kalispell. Winter birds, bird songs, tracking, botanizing, and seat-of-the-pants interpretation will be the unstructured itinerary. This is one of the best spots in the area to see Pileated and other woodpeckers, many kinds of chickadees, Bohemian and Cedar waxwings in flocks of thousands, Pine Grosbeaks, Townsend's Solitaires -- and there's always an unexpected bird. Not just ID, but lots of natural history lore, which is Denny's trademark. Dress warm, bring binoculars and snow boots, and check with us on the need for snowshoes if the snow is deep. We have binoculars and field guides if you need them. Call Denny at 249-3987, or contact at auduboneducator@gmail.com to register and get directions.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT: A field trip for kids and kids at heart of all ages. Sunday, February 16, 2020, 10AM-1PM. Join us for a morning of birding and learning about our local birds, especially those that visit our feeders during the winter months. If water is open we will also be watching for ducks and Swans where possible, and raptors overhead. Excellent outing for families with kids, as well as those who want to get acquainted with our winter, resilient, resident birds. Learn identifying characteristics of our three different chickadees, numerous woodpeckers, nuthatches, along with many other feeder surprises. Dress warmly, bring binoculars. Minimal walking to some viewing areas and short periods of standing. Contact Kathy Ross for information and to sign up: 837-3837 or mtkat67@gmail.com.

FREEZOUT LAKE AND THE SNOW GEESE MIGRATION, Thursday and Friday, March 26-27, 2020. The Snow Geese are moving from their California wintering grounds to their arctic nesting areas along with thousands of other waterfowl. There is nothing like Snow Geese and the Rocky Mountains at the same time and place. The place is Freezout Lake near Choteau; the time is the annual Flathead Audubon field trip. We will meet on Thursday morning at 10 AM, caravan/carpool to Choteau and arrive in time for the afternoon "fly-out." After spending a night in Choteau, we will head back out just before daybreak to watch the "mass ascension" of geese from the ponds of Freezout. After the morning's birding, we, too, will head home in the early afternoon arriving in Kalispell around 5 PM on Friday. Bob Lee will provide a suggested schedule and route, and will be in the front of the group. Participants may choose to pursue the geese on their own as much or as little as they, the weather and the birds allow. Please make your own arrangements for lodging; primitive camping is available at Freezout WMA. Motel options include the Stage Stop (406-466-5900), Gunther (406-466-5444), and Big Sky (406-466-5318). Make your reservations early as these hotels will likely fill up. For more information, including the meeting location, contact Bob Lee at 270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net.

Congratulations to Code Cranes

Kay Mitchell from Flathead Audubon Society worked with a trio of Kalispell Middle School girls who were participating in an after school program called Girls Who Code. Girls Who Code was created to provide a chance for young women to employ science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills. The team, "Code Cranes", was comprised of Zoe Wendt, Beatrix Poitra, and Anna Bergstedt. Using the bird call

recordings made by Bruce Tannehill, they created an app to help birders identify birds by their calls. Recently, Code Cranes won the 2019 Congressional App Challenge for Montana, and their winning app will be displayed at the US Capital with the winners from each other congressional district. Congratulations to Code Cranes Zoe, Beatrix, and Anna.

by Pam Willison

Grant Awarded for Owen Sowerwine Weed Control

Flathead Conservation District has awarded FAS a \$2000 grant through their Cost-Share program, which will be used to address the weed problem in Owen Sowerwine. This is a 75%/25% matching grant, which means FAS will need to provide match funds and volunteer hours to fulfill our match and use the grant. FCD provides this program for "on-the-ground" conservation projects, including control of noxious weeds. We look forward to coordinating with bordering land owners for the most efficient use of funds and effective control of noxious weeds at the fence lines, as well as working in some of the core areas. Through a variety of techniques, we hope to give the native plants a competitive edge and improve the habitat for birds and other critters, as well as for the human visitor to Owen Sowerwine. Many thanks to Flathead Conservation District for the funding awarded to FAS

through this program. Thanks also to the members of the Grants and OSNA Committees for the hours of work invested in the grant application. We should all start seeing the positive results when new efforts get underway early next spring.

On a related note, we recorded over 160 hours of volunteer work done in OSNA and directed toward the control of various noxious and invasive plants and shrubs. These volunteers worked to control houndstongue, thistle, knapweed, oxeye daisy, poison ivy, viburnum, buckthorn, daphne, and barberry. Volunteers are such an important part of programs at Flathead Audubon, and I offer my heart-felt thanks to the volunteers in OSNA for their time, sweat equity, and concern.

by Pam Willison, Co-Chair, OSNA Committee

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from the December 2, 2019 Board meeting

- ◆ The list of nominees for the Conservation Achievement Recognition award was reviewed and updated, and ballots were cast for individual and business awards.
- ◆ Conservation Educator Denny Olson is seeking input from the Board to help guide his decisions about priorities, goals, and buckthorn control/restoration in OSNA.
- ◆ A discussion was held about trying to provide better information to members and to the public related to what individuals can do in their own yards to support birds.
- ◆ The 2 bridges spanning the swampy area of OSNA accessed through the Greenridge entrance have been identified as needing improvements. The OSNA Committee will investigate DNRC approval, materials needed, and funding sources.
- ◆ Bob Lee reported that a Pentax spotting scope has been donated and will be available for field trips and for Christmas Bird Counts.

Kalispell Christmas Bird Count

The 21st annual Kalispell count will be on **Sunday, December 29th**. Centered at Reserve and Highway 93, the 15-mi diameter count circle includes Evergreen, much of the Flathead River corridor including the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, Happy Valley, Herron Park, Kuhn's Wildlife Area, Foy's Lake, MacWenegar Slough, Fairview Marsh, Lone Pine State Park and the "Flathead Gull Sanctuary". This count has proven to be a popular New Year's tradition. It includes the homes, bird feeders, and favorite birding spots of many of our members! Our traditional

start to this count is a group breakfast at 7:00 AM; this year we will meet at 4B's Restaurant (formerly Finnegan's) at 660 East Idaho in Kalispell. It is here that we will finish assigning circle segments and field teams for the day's efforts. At days' end, there is an informal meeting at Brannigan's Pub in Kalispell to tabulate results. If you are interested in participating, please sign up and leave your contact information at the December general meeting, or contact Pete Fisher at fisherpete88@yahoo.com or 406-250-9624.

Shopping for the holidays?

When you shop at smile.amazon.com,
Amazon donates.

amazon
smile

Christmas may be past but Amazon Smile works all year long. Select Flathead Audubon as your charity and Amazon Smile donates a portion of each purchase. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> to get started.



Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through November, 2019

Kestrel

Margaret Lekander
Gail Sullivan (in memory of Lois Drobish)



Supporting Member + Donation

Robert Lee
Kathy Ross



My Own Vision

Ellen Sullivan

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

Your gift is tax deductible.

HAVE A GOOD BIRDING STORY?

We invite readers to submit their own birding story to be printed in the Pileated Post in what we hope becomes an occasional feature called STORIES FROM OUR READERS. If you have an interesting birding story you would like to share, send it to Linda Winnie or Lewis Young (email or phone contacts listed on page 10) with a picture if possible; maximum of about 600 words; picture in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited and corrected for scientific accuracy. They will be published as space permits.



Learn Cool Stuff About Birds

Birds in Our Lives

Continuing Education Center
Flathead Valley Community College

Class Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Day: Tuesdays

Dates: February 4, 11, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31;
April 7, 14, 21

Instructor: Dr David A. Manuwal, Board member, Flathead Audubon Society. For more information contact him at manuwal2@centurylink.net

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Late breaking FAS news and announcements
Online FAS membership sign up or renewal
Newly scheduled field trips and events



Clipartfest.com



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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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 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

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Membership Individual or Family

Basic Membership ————— \$25

Pays for newsletter and operating costs

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

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