



Flathead the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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JANUARY, 2003

MEMBER PROFILE: A CHAT WITH ELLY JONES

"I was born with the birding bug," laughed Elly Jones, recalling how the voluminous *Birds of North America* was her book of choice as a little tyke. If Elly had not convinced husband, Jefferson, that they should raise their children in Montana, we would know much less about birds in the Flathead and Swan Valleys today.

After living in several other states, the Jones family eventually settled in Missoula. "The Dipper would be singing in Rattlesnake Creek no matter what the weather," Elly remembered of daily walks near her home. Elly's amazing bird filled yard became a favorite fieldtrip of Dr. Phil Wright's university ornithology class. Phil pleaded with Elly to take up bird banding, but with four little chicks of her own, it seemed that banding would have to happen in her next lifetime.

Settling at Swan Lake in the late 70's set the stage to move Elly from a casual observer to the next level of Birding (with a capital B). In the true spirit of a mildly fanatic birder, Elly thought it would be fun to make weekly observations of birds at the nearby Swan River NWR. These records made up most of the official bird checklist for the refuge. Finding an unusual bird at their backyard feeder, she had her daughter draw a picture for Dr. Wright to confirm identification. This Brambling proved to be one of the first recorded in the state. That 1979 sighting re-kindled Elly's thoughts of bird banding. Phil Wright, along with Dick Hutto and Marcy Bishop, sponsored Elly as a novice bird bander the next year. In 1991, Elly actually banded a Brambling and published an article about it in the *Western Bird Bander* magazine. Always looking for a useful project, Elly set up two banding transects near Swan Lake for the national MAPS program. She operated the sites for many years with volunteers from Flathead Audubon, eventually turning them over to the staff of a banding lab.

Hearing Dr. Bill Calder at a Western Bird Banding Association meeting in 1987 hooked Elly

on the art of hummingbird banding. Making those tiny bands, building traps and bags to hold the birds was all part of the challenge. A short time later, Dr. Calder called to ask if she had a particular band number (bands come pre-numbered from the Bird Banding Lab). She had just placed the band in question on a hatch year female rufous hummer several days previous. Calder had recaptured the bird in the mountains near Gothic, Colorado, 1200 miles from Swan Lake. Considering fatness of the bird and weather conditions, Calder estimated that the hummer could have made the trip in two days. This is a bander's dream-come-true. The next summer, Elly re-captured a female calliope hummingbird that Dr. Calder had banded at Condon six years earlier--a longevity record for that species.

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FAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2003

MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2003 THE FAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING. The meeting will be held from 7:00PM at Linda deKort's home in Kalispell. If you care to attend please Linda at 755-3704 for directions.

MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2003 THE FAS GENERAL MEETING will feature Calgary-based archaeologist Dr. Brian Reeves who will discuss the history of human occupancy in the Northern Rocky Mountains. The meeting will begin at 7:30PM at the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks building at 490 N. Meridian Rd in Kalispell. A FAS board of directors meeting will be held prior to the general meeting at 5:30PM. Everyone is welcome.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2003 FIELD TRIP TO THE MISSION VALLEY, see page 3

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2003 FIELD TRIP TO GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, see page 3



CHICKADEE CHATTER

Happy New Year to one and all! I sit here writing this with but two days left in 2002, another year has so swiftly passed by. It was a good year all in all. The only exception being not enough hours spent watching the world around me. Not enough time watching the feathered ones. Not enough time up in the mountains far from the crowds. Not enough time marveling at the delicate petals and perfect green leaves of buttercups and glacier lilies and hairbells and shooting stars. Not enough time spent listening to the special sound of silence that you can only find on a winters day in the snowy woods. Not enough time looking at the brilliant stars that sparkle so brightly in the middle of the night.

I think that I will simply have to make a bit more time in the new year for these things. It is simply not enough to remember these things they have to be experienced and cherished. If I make a resolution for the New Year it will be to spend more time watching the world around me more carefully.

The old year however has ended very well. The Kalispell Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 29th and Linda Winnie and I spent an entire day searching for birds in our assigned area (in the NE section of the seven mile circle). We started the day with a hearty breakfast at Finnegan's and some planning. The day looked a bit ominous, dark clouds and snow and wind greeted us as we left the restaurant. The temperature hovered around the 30F mark.

This year we decided to try a new area we had not had time to look into in past years, up in the foothills to the east of Farm to Market Road. As we drove up into the hills the sun broke through the clouds, the snow stopped falling and the wind died down. Brilliant sunlight fell on snow white trees as we drove up Dern Draw. We drove several miles and stopped several times in the midst of the wintry woods. Most of the time the woods were quiet and peaceful with only the sound of puffs of snow falling off of trees. Several times we stopped and were greeted by the sounds of many little birds peeping and beeping and chickadeeing. There were little birds flitting everywhere, a Red-breasted Nuthatch took up a position on the top of a nearby fir tree and spent many moments serenading us and several of his compatriots joined in. Tiny Golden-crowned Kinglets chased one another through the trees and curious chickadees could be found near eye level popping in and out of the snowy branches. It was hard to leave such an



enchanted scene. But we had to move on and see what else was out there.

Since we have done this same route for several years now we have certain places we check each year. The interesting thing is see the changes that have taken place in a year's time. Some people that have had feeders out in the past don't have them this year. Some of the areas have undergone dramatic changes, there are several places where we have found many birds in the past that once had wonderful bird habitat and are now new homes with carefully manicured lawns that now have very few birds.

We found a deer that had recently died in a field and counted somewhere around 20 Common Ravens and two majestic adult Bald Eagles in the vicinity. It is always a pleasure to watch eagles fly.

We wandered up and down the roads stopping every so often to look around. Along Four-mile Drive we watched several Rough-legged Hawks and a Red-tailed Hawk. One of the hawks was so beautiful we had to take a few extra looks in the spotting scope. It was very pale in color with a lovely face and when it took flight we held our breath. It was very pale underneath with very dark spots. It was magnificent.

We found an American Kestrel perched in the top of a tree at one of our favorite stops. It was an old farm that has been extensively renovated. We have found lots of birds here in the past as there is a wet area nearby. It is here that in past years we have found such odd winter birds as a Common Snipe and Killdeer. No such luck this year but we did find several dozen Mourning Doves, House Finches and House Sparrows and some 40 odd Mallards took flight from the stream.

Later in the day as we wandered around the open fields we came across a field filled with Canadian Geese, to many to count exactly, I think we ended up with over 250 birds. That a lot of geese.

It was great fun to spend a day watching and counting birds. It was a very quiet year for birds, however. Many of the places we have found birds in the past had none or very few. We didn't see many songbirds, not a single Evening Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird or Oregon Junco, in past years we have counted many in our part of the circle. We did see lots of Rock Doves, Mountain and Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches and only four Bald Eagles.

We were treated to pouring snow, brilliant sunshine, sleet and rain. The wind blew much of the day and the clouds were simply spectacular. At the end of the day we saw a juvenile Northern Harrier sweeping low over a snowy field. Who could ask for more?

Leslie Kehoe



JANUARY PROGRAM: ARCHEOLOGY OF THE WATERTON-GLACIER PARK ECOSYSTEM

Calgary-based archaeologist Dr. Brian Reeves will discuss the history of human occupancy in the Northern Rocky Mountains, extending back 10,000 years. His slide lecture, titled *Mistakis: The People and Their Land The Past 10,000 Years*, will focus on the Waterton-Glacier Park ecosystem.

Over 10 millennia, the Native cultures' occupancy and resource harvesting – fishing, bison and sheep hunting, quarrying patterns evolved and changed as climates fluctuated and new peoples came and went. Native peoples were an integral and dynamic component of the "historic" ecosystem, ensuring ecosystem productivity through active application of fire, selective game and plant harvesting.

All this changed in the last 300 years with the arrival of the fur trade, recurrent small pox, and the removal of the historic descendants of these ancient peoples the K'tunaxa and Piikani to the reservations in the late 1800's.

Reeves, professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of Calgary, has more than 40 years of research experience focusing on archaeological resources in the Northern Rocky Mountains and northwestern plains. Reeves has conducted archaeological surveys across western Canada and the United States, including Waterton-Glacier, Banff and Jasper National Parks.

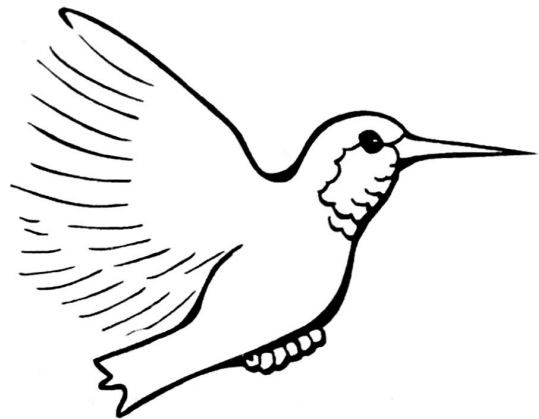
Reeves is the president of Lifeways, Alberta's first and oldest cultural resource consulting company. A third generation resident of Waterton Lakes National Parks, Reeves is also involved with planning and development issues facing Parks Canada and National Parks communities.

MEMBER PROFILE: A CHAT WITH ELLY JONES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Elly fondly recalls Black-Capped Chickadees banded at her home that turned up in Bigfork, Lake Blain and even, British Columbia. An Evening Grosbeak found its way to a bumper pinecone crop in northern California. A Red-Winged Blackbird banded in February spent the rest of the winter at a stock yard in Ronan. Hiking twice a week in summer, Nordic skiing and ice skating take

up more time now. Elly preserves scenes of nature, as well as the birds and flowers she loves, in whimsical quilts and wall hangings. "Shortly before I retired in 1994, I saw another brambbling at Jean Robocker's feeder," Elly remembered as one of many birding highlights. Another was climbing Mt. Aeneas just in time for a hawk and eagle migration spectacular. This is the story of years spent in the methodical pursuit of a fascinating hobby, and of sharing its joys with others.

BY ROBIN MAGADDINO



FAS FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, Jan. 12, 2003: Please join FAS for a field trip to the Mission Valley. We will be roaming the backroads in search of the raptors that frequent the valley in the midst of winter. We will focus on raptors such as Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, eagles and the occasional falcon. In years past we have seen Short-eared Owls, Snow Buntings, waterfowl of all kinds, Townsend's Solitaire and even a frosty American Robin or two. It is always an enjoyable trip, come spend a day watching some of the fascinating birds of winter. We will meet at 8:00AM at the Park and Ride across from the White Oak Lodge (formerly The Ramada Inn) on Highways 93 and 82 (the Somers cut across road) and return in the late afternoon. If you would like to attend the trip or for more information please call Leslie Kehoe at 837-4467.

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2003: Sue and Jim Swab will lead a ski fieldtrip to the Lake McDonald Ranger Station at the head of Lake McDonald, then continue towards Kelly Camp. We will meet at the gated area of the Going-To-The-Sun Road (above Lake McDonald Lodge) at 10:00 a.m. Roundtrip is about 8 miles. Bring a lunch. For more information, contact Jim at 387-4299 or suejim@bigsky.net.



FROM THE PRESIDENT: LINDA WINNIE



A crucial step was taken toward ensuring the long-term existence of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area in spring 2001, when a 10-year license agreement for Owen Sowerwine was signed by Montana Audubon and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC).

The license designates Montana Audubon as the Managing Entity for the Natural Area, and commits Montana Audubon to paying a yearly fee for the license. The first year that fee was \$642; it increases by 2% each year thereafter. The license also lays out a variety of specific management activities to be carried out by the Managing Entity.

At the same time, Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon made a separate agreement to jointly plan and carry out the management of Owen Sowerwine, and to share in the associated costs. Flathead Audubon's share of the first year license was \$550, and increases by 2% each year thereafter. Montana Audubon will provide the rest of the license fee, and also provide insurance for the Natural Area.

In the 1½ years since the license agreement was signed, Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon have been taking further steps to solidify and implement these arrangements, and to begin the work of managing Owen Sowerwine as a Natural Area. Plans are already in place for moving forward in 2003 on both of these fronts.

You, the members of Flathead Audubon, are what have made these steps possible. And your help and support will be needed in the years to come if we are to ensure the continued existence of Owen Sowerwine as a Natural Area, and to manage it in a way that preserves its natural character.

So I am taking this opportunity to provide you with a brief accounting of what has been done so far on the Owen Sowerwine Project and what is planned for the coming year – and also to suggest some specific ways that you can become involved in helping with this project

Highlights of Owen Sowerwine Activities and Plans

* A management plan has been written. In fall 2001, a committee was formed to write a Master Plan for Owen Sowerwine. This document lays out general management guidelines, specifies management activities to be carried out, and sets use restrictions for the different zones of the Natural Area. This Master Plan was developed in cooperation with DNRC and completed in October 2002. It is now in the hands of the State Lands Board awaiting their approval. If you would like to have a copy of the Plan, please contact me.

* In spring 2002, Bruce Tannehill, Flathead Audubon Treasurer, organized an Owen Sowerwine Birdathon. Flathead Audubon members were encouraged to become better acquainted with Owen Sowerwine through field trips or individual birding expeditions. The many people who participated in this event were able to add a variety of new bird species to the Owen Sowerwine bird list. More than 100 species are now on this list. The Birdathon raised more than \$1000 for the Flathead Audubon Owen Sowerwine Fund – enough to cover the Flathead Audubon portion of the license fee for 2002, and provide funds for fencing and signs.

* In spring and summer of 2002, Brent Mitchell carried out an experimental weed control program on a small portion of the Owen Sowerwine mainland. Results of that experiment will be used to develop a workable weed control plan in 2003.

* An Owen Sowerwine clean-up day was held in September 2002. Twenty-eight people spent a Saturday at Owen Sowerwine removing debris from the Natural Area and clearing brush around the main entrance. The effort also satisfied the conditions of a Prudential Financial Grant organized by Bob and Jane Lopp, so earned \$1000 for the chapter general fund. This money helped pay for the printing of the chapter's Flathead Basin Birding Hotspots brochure, and also for such operating costs as the printing and distribution of the chapter's newsletter.

* A standing Owen Sowerwine Committee was formed in November 2002. This Committee will plan and oversee the management of the Natural Area, and organize volunteer efforts needed to carry out this management. Neal Brown and Brent Mitchell were elected the Committee Co-chairs. Committee members are Janet Ellis from Montana Audubon, and from Flathead Audubon, Dan Casey, Jill Fanning, Leo Keane, Bob Lopp, Brent Mitchell, Karen Nichols, Bruce Tannehill, Linda Winnie.

* The Owen Sowerwine Committee has begun writing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon. This document will detail the specific management tasks and planning activities that each organization will be responsible for, and which aspects of management will be carried out jointly. It also specifies the financial responsibilities of each organization.

A draft of this MOU has been completed, and is currently being revised by the Committee. A final version should be ready early in 2003 for review by the Boards of Directors of Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon. The MOU becomes binding when both Boards vote to approve it. If you would like to have a copy of the MOU, contact me.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

*Preliminary estimates have been made of what fencing and signs will be needed for Owen Sowerwine. Currently, Committee members are looking at possible designs for gates and signs. In March, Committee members will visit the Natural Area to determine more precisely how much fencing will be needed, where to locate gates and signs, and get a precise estimate of types and quantities of materials needed. Installation of fencing and signs is planned for late spring.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

* Visit Owen Sowerwine. Spend some time getting acquainted with the Area, looking for birds, or just enjoying the natural features of the Area. If you want a copy of the current Owen Sowerwine Bird List or wish to sign up to get periodic updates on this list, contact me. If you see a bird that is not already on the Owen Sowerwine Bird List, send a report to Dan Casey, 756-2681 or dancasey_abc@centurytel.net.

* Help Flathead Audubon pay its portion of the 2003 license fee. Last year, funds for the fee were generated by the Birdathon. This year, we are trying to do it through donations. If only one-quarter of the Flathead Audubon members donate just \$5 each, the fee will be covered. If donations bring in more than is needed for the 2003 license fee, the excess will be put into the Owen Sowerwine Fund, to be used for fencing and signs and other management costs. Send your donation to Bruce Tannehill, Flathead Audubon Treasurer, 2238 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937. Be sure to mark it "For Owen Sowerwine".

* Help with fencing and signs. You can volunteer to help install them, or donate materials for them. Watch upcoming issues of the Pileated Post for details or contact Brent Mitchell, 756-8130 or bkmitch@bigsky.net.

* Watch the Pileated Post for further planning and hands-on volunteer opportunities at Owen Sowerwine. Projects such as weed control and organized bird surveys are in the works. Announcements will appear in the newsletter when volunteer needs are identified.

Thank You

to all who have helped with this project, and to those who will help in the future.

By Linda Winnie, 755-1406 or lindawin@cyberport.net

BIRD SEED AVAILABLE



Need birdseed for your feeders?

FAS is selling 50-pound sacks of black, oil sunflower seed. Sale of this birdseed is Flathead Audubon's primary fund raising project. Your purchase will help fund local conservation and educational programs.

Sacks will be available at the FAS meeting. Or you may call one of the following: Bigfork – Neal Brown, 837-5018; Columbia Falls – Jim Swab, 387-4299; Kalispell – Karen Nichols, 756-5763; Whitefish – Jill Fanning, 862-8070

JAN. 15 WORKSHOP ON LAKESIDE AND STREAMSHORE RESTORATION

Here is your chance to learn about maintaining or restoring a healthy lakeshore or streambank. In addition, learn more about preventing erosion and protecting water quality.

Paul Hansen of Bitterroot Restoration will present a free workshop on "Practical Aspects of Lakeshore and Streamside Restoration" on Wednesday, January 15 at 7 p.m., at the new Montana Logging Association building, 2224 Highway 35, just east of Kalispell.

Hansen is an expert on lakeshore restoration and riparian ecology. He is a former University of Montana professor.

The workshop is sponsored by the Montana Native Plant Society. The general public is encouraged to attend.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY
OFFICERS

President	Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920	755-1406
Vice-President	Sonja Hartmann, P.O. Box 316, West Glacier, MT 59936	387-4150
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Treasurer	Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-4548
Past-President	Neal Brown, 670 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

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2002-2005	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4467
2002-2005	Karen Nichols, 920 6 th Ave. E, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-5763

CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
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Education	Linda deKort, 1290 Lost Creek Dr., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-3704
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	Judy Spence, Box 239, Lakeside MT 59922	857-2599
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	Neal Brown, 670 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
Newsletter	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4467
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Publicity	Jeannie Marcure, 300 Shelter Valley Dr., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1808
	Karen Nichols, 920 6 th Ave. E, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-5763
Refuge Projects	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork MT 59911	837-4467
Wetland/Waterfowl	Neal Brown, 670 Wolf Creek Rd., Bigfork, MT 59911	867-5018

MONTANA AUDUBON

State Office	Ray Johnson, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624	443-3949
Western Montana Office	Bob Petty, PO Box 831, Stevensville MT 59970	777-0780
Board President	Jim Brown, 1504 Woods Gulch Road, Missoula MT 59802	549-8052

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. The regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. and includes a featured guest who will present a conservation or nature program. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. Subscriptions for non-members are \$10.00 per year.

Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month. Newsletter e-mail likehoe@digisys.net

**National Audubon Society
Membership Application**


Enjoy full National Audubon Society benefits and AUDUBON magazine, as well as PILEATED POST newsletter.

Check your category rate from the following:

First-time Applicant	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Senior	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustaining	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life	\$1500	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dual Life	\$2000	<input type="checkbox"/>

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City

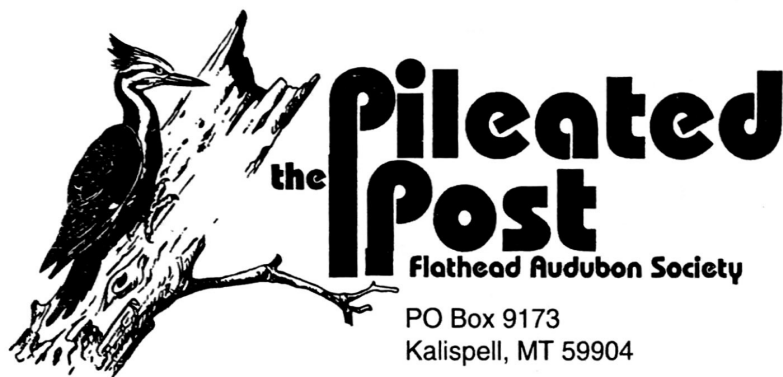
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Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

For Newsletter Only Send \$10 ☐
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HAPPY NEW YEAR
JANUARY, 2003

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