



# the Pelated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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OCTOBER, 2002

## CELEBRATE NEARLY A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION DURING NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK, OCTOBER 13-19

Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 13-19, by taking advantage of the hundreds of events happening at national wildlife refuges across the country. With at least one refuge in every state and one near most major cities, the National Wildlife Refuge System offers something for everyone as it approaches its Centennial anniversary on March 14, 2003.

"National Wildlife Refuge Week is a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy outdoor recreation on one of our national wildlife refuges," said Steve Williams, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees the National Wildlife Refuge System. "If you're not familiar with the refuge system, we hope you'll take this opportunity to explore these wonderful places."

Go on a nature walk or a birding tour, participate in a fishing derby or a special hunt, enter a photography or wildlife art contest, or simply enjoy the splendors of nature at one of the nearly 540 national wildlife refuges.

In the nearly 100 years since President Teddy Roosevelt established the first refuge, Florida's Pelican Island, the National Wildlife Refuge System has evolved into a 95-million acre network of lands and waters protecting many of America's--and the world's--most unique natural areas as habitat for an amazing variety of wildlife. As the refuge system prepares to celebrate its centennial anniversary, refuges from Maine to Hawaii and Alaska to the Caribbean are gearing up--hosting special events, partnering with conservation organizations and private corporations, bolstering volunteerism and reinforcing public support for their wildlife conservation mission.

National wildlife refuges form a series of stepping stones for ducks, geese, caribou, and thousands of other birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and plant species. Many national wildlife refuges were established along the four migratory bird flyways to provide crucial stopovers for birds to feed, breed and recharge during migration.

More than 400 national wildlife refuges are open to the public, offering a variety of outdoor activities--including fishing, hunting, environmental education, wildlife observation and photography--and making them special places for Americans to discover the wonders of nature. Many refuges offer additional opportunities for nature hikes, bird tours, wildlife drives and other activities.

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### FAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR OCTOBER 2002

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2002. THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING** will feature a presentation by local teacher and loon expert Lynn Kelly. She will talk about the Montana Loon Society and will give FAS an update on the loons that nest here in northwestern Montana. The program begins at 7:30 at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks building located at 490 N. Meridian Road in Kalispell. A FAS Board of Directors meeting will be held at 5:30 prior to the general meeting.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2002. DEADLINE FOR ORDERING SUNFLOWER SEED FROM FAS. SEE ORDER FORM ON PAGE 5.**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2002. FAS FIELD TRIP TO THE SMITH LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA.** Join FAS for a morning of birdwatching at Smith Lake. We should see migrating raptors and waterfowl and even a late sparrow. Please call Leslie Kehoe at 837-4467 to sign up for the trip.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2002. PICK UP THE SUNFLOWER SEED ORDERED AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS. PLEASE SEE PAGE 5 FOR INFO.**





## CHICKADEE CHATTER

The golden days of Autumn are here. The sun rises just a bit later each morn and when it comes over the horizon it greets a valley filled with sparkling dew. There is a chill in the morning now that invigorates the senses. The frenzy of summer mornings is now a sweet memory but there is still some urgency in the air as birds gather into flocks for the long journeys south. There are still swarms of tiny insects that we see only this time of the year and moths that flutter about even during the daylight hours in that last effort to breed and carry on the species before the first chill winds of winter come.

The aspen are turning that special color of liquid gold that only they can aspire to attain. The thorn apples this year are especially resplendent in their showy cloaks of red and burgundy. Errant gusts of wind that have tried all summer to bring leaves down from their lofty perches now have the ability to carry the golden and peach and red leaves from on high to resting places on the forest floor. It is an especially nice time to take a walk in woods. I, however, have a difficult time walking in the woods this time of the year. There are simply too many distractions and every few feet there are small colorful treasures to discover and admire.



Autumn is a very peaceful time of the year, the pace of life slows just a bit and it is easier to enjoy the simple things in life. Birds still call from the trees and flit about gathering insects and berries but without the need to breed and feed young they do not seem to be in such a great hurry. The rains still fall but in small droplets that fall gently to the earth and not in great torrents that are summer thunderstorms. It is quite lovely to wander the woods in autumn in a gentle rain and listen to tiny droplets fall on dangling leaves. The days still contain twenty-four all too short hours but in the autumn the daylight hours are more fleeting and so all the more precious. Golden autumn days are to be treasured and savored.

On an overcast day at the end of September a friend and I did just that. After a leisurely breakfast we decided to go for a drive. We wanted to see if there were any interesting things happening in the world around us. It was a cool morning and it started to rain, a gentle autumn rain. We drove further I wanted to hear the meadowlarks call once more. We ended up in the rolling grassy hills near Niarada off of Highway 28. It is a perfect place to find something interesting. The kestrels were migrating in large numbers and those beautiful

little members of the falcon family could be found on every fencepost and high wire. We watched as one sat on a fencepost and began to eat a rather large field mouse. Unfortunately, we disturbed it and it took off trying to carry the mouse. It could barely carry the mouse but after some very interesting flying it found a suitable place to land and we drove on so as not to further disturb the kestrels catch of the day.

Further down the road a flash of brilliant blue flew across the road and another and another and another. An enormous flock of Mountain Bluebirds treated us to their presence. There were bluebirds on every sagebrush plant, on every fencepost, they lined up by the half-dozen on the high wires. We never could count them all and lost track somewhere around sixty. It was an amazing sight to behold. It was so captivating that we must have watched little flashes of blue feathers flitting here and there for half an hour or more. The day was getting more interesting by the moment. We regretted leaving the birds with the feathers the color of the sky but it was still early and the road before us beckoned.

Soon, however, we were stopped in our tracks by another interesting occurrence. Large birds with white in their tails were flying hither and thither on either side of the road. I have never seen such a large flock of Western Meadowlarks before. Like the bluebirds there were dozens, fifty or sixty at least. There were meadowlarks on every sagebrush stalk, walking on the ground and flying and best of all singing autumn meadowlark songs. It was great fun to see so many of those yellow breasted crooners in one place.

Further along another flock of Mountain Bluebirds not so large but no less captivating. More American Kestrels and one so close you could pick out the details on every feather. It stood and let us admire its feathered perfection for many long moments bobbing its head and tail in the time honored kestrel dance.

It was an interesting day. It rained off and on much of the afternoon, the sun peaking out here and there. We saw hundreds of birds but less than thirty species the entire day, a few white-tailed deer, some chipmunks and squirrels and a giant white cow. We didn't hurry. We enjoyed the rain in our faces. We marveled at the colors of the hawthorn and aspen and ferns. And most of all we savored and treasured each moment. The days of autumn are short but they are perfect for good friends to enjoy a peaceful afternoon and admire nature's handiwork.

Leslie Kehoe





## FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY OCTOBER PROGRAM

Lynn Kelly, the president of the Montana Loon Society, will present a Northwest Montana 'loon update' at Flathead Audubon's October 14 meeting in Kalispell. Kelly, a Polson teacher and wildlife biologist, received her master's degree in 1992. Her thesis focused on loon management and how human disturbance affects the birds. She has conducted Montana's program for monitoring and protecting nesting common loons for many years. At the meeting, she will report on the nesting success of the past season. There are approximately 200 loons in northwest Montana, which is the only part of the state where common loons nest.

Common Loons are large, goose sized, black and white diving birds that spend their summer on open fresh-water lakes and winter on the ocean. Montana is only one of only a few states west of the Mississippi River where loons spend their breeding season.

Along with her loon research and monitoring, Kelly has focused on educational efforts aimed at dealing with the increased recreational pressure and shoreline development on loon nesting lakes.

Also, at the October General Meeting FAS will recognize the conservation achievements of The Bigfork Development Company and its volunteers for their significant repair of the Swan River Trail.

Everyone is welcome please join us!

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK IS OCT 13-19 CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The National Bison Range, Ninepipe and Pablo NWR's, the Swan River NWR, Lost Trail NWR are all close by and offer wonderful fall wildlife viewing. The National Bison Range is one of the oldest wildlife refuges in the nation and was established in 1908. The 18,500 acre refuge is home to between 350 and 500 bison, elk, deer, antelope, big horn sheep and over 200 species of birds make the refuge home at one time or another. The last songs of Western Meadowlarks can still be heard, raptors will be soaring in thermals and in the picnic area beside Mission Creek a warbler or two might be found lingering. The Ninepipe and Pablo National Wildlife Refuges are also located in the

Mission Valley on over 4500 acres of wetland and grassland and are not to be missed this time of the year. Large numbers of waterfowl can be seen here during October and November. Both of these refuges are administered by the National Bison Range.

The Swan River Refuge is also in our backyard and although the refuge is teeming with birds and wildlife during the spring and summer, fall can also be a nice time to visit. The Swan River Refuge is ablaze with color and in the bushes and trees beside the road one might find some fall migrants. Lost Trail NWR is the newest local addition to the NWR system. It will be beautiful there in mid-October and the 7800 acres wetland, upland and wooded areas are nice places to explore. There will be late migrants and waterfowl to be seen and if you arrive early the calls of elk bugling might be heard. If you would like further information about these refuges and events scheduled for National Wildlife Refuge Week at our local refuges you can phone the Bison Range at (406)644-2211 and for information about the Lost Trail NWR one can phone (406)858-2216.



To find out more about National Wildlife Refuge Week and the National Wildlife Refuge system, go to <http://refuges.fws.gov> or call 1-800-344-WILD.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses nearly 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

Editor's note: From a news release published by the Fish and Wildlife Service, for more information please go to <http://refuges.fws.gov>.



## FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR



SO WHAT IS THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE UP TO? ....HUMM...

The FAS education committee met last week after a languid summer break. With new members and fresh ideas however it has not taken us long to get fired up. Barbara Walden and Melody and John Haynes have joined Ferne Cohen, Kim Davis, Linda de Kort, Sonja Hartmann, Bruce Tannehill, Linda Winnie on this committee. Though not all these members were back from their not so languid adventures, there were many topics covered in a short amount of time at our first meeting of the year.

Bob Petty and Paul Belanger from Montana Audubon came from Stevensville to give us an update on the Community Naturalist program in the state and to offer their assistance in keeping our program growing. We are exploring ways to encourage more volunteers to become naturalists and to efficiently link volunteers with classroom teachers. We are also trying to refine the check out system for our materials. Presently Glacier Institute has generously agreed to house the binoculars, books, bird costume and Birds of the Flathead slides and CD. But space at Glacier Institute is limited and our materials are growing. We have a large bird skin collection for instance which could be used more extensively if some of the larger, better preserved specimens were displayed in tubes. Paul Belanger is helping us find caps for the tubes as well as helping us renew our permit. We are grateful for his assistance.

Bob Petty informed us that Montana Audubon is beginning a program to encourage Middle School and High School students to become engaged in research projects centered on bird biology and conservation. Not only will this add to our common knowledge of birds but it will also give some fortunate students the opportunity to study a topic in depth and learn valuable research skills.

Kim Davis is once again coordinating the Audubon Adventures. Audubon Adventures is written at a 4th-5th grade reading level and includes class sets of materials that are inquiry based. The four issues for this school year will be: freshwater wetlands, temperate deciduous forests, coastal environments, deserts. Teachers who are certain that they will use these materials in their classroom should notify Kim as soon as possible so that you can sign up for this school year.

We are planning another teacher workshop for the spring and are considering combining this with our Beauty of Birds class. With the use of our materials increasing we are considering producing duplicates of some of the materials (costume, slides... etc). The plans for developing additional units are also going forward. Sonja is gathering materials for the cavity nester unit and I am determined to get the hummingbird unit completed before next spring. (I made the same proclamation last year at this time!)

One of the other 'perks' of being on the education committee, in addition to working with the inspiring people and ideas mentioned above, is delving into new topics, such as hummingbirds of the Flathead. I had difficulty initially finding teaching materials about hummingbirds. Last spring I emailed several people and organizations inquiring about possible existing materials. I stated that we were trying to develop a hummingbird "box" that could be used by classrooms in our area and asked if they knew anyone engaged in similar projects. One very sincere respondent replied immediately. He assured me that hummingbirds were not cavity nesters and therefore we should abandon the notion of building a nesting box. I learned to refer to our hummingbird box as our hummingbird UNIT! Recently, however I have found some great resources on the internet, many of them referred by Linda Winnie, who is always vigilant for reliable sources.

One such report was by Ned and Gigi Batchelder who published their findings about Montana hummers in the Five Valleys Chapter newsletter; this information can also be found on the internet: hummingbirdsplus.org. According to this report, 626 hummingbirds, representing 6 different species were banded in 2001. 380 were Calliope, 217 were Rufus, 28 were Broadtailed, and one lone Anna's, the first banding state record which was banded on November 2. There were a few Black chinned and Rubythroated hummingbirds observed during that season. Most hummers are gone by Labor Day. If you happen to see a late migrant please report it to the website mentioned above. On this same website, Bob Sargent reports some interesting data on wintering Rufous hummingbirds in Louisiana. This fall, I am leaving our hummingbird feeder out just to see if there might be some stragglers.

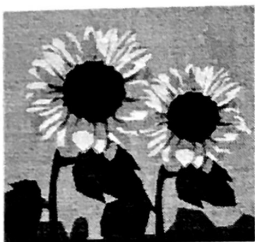
I also encountered Mike Patterson's work via hummingbird.org which keeps track of arrival dates of Rufous Hummingbirds in the northwest. The first sighting in Kalispell recorded this year was May 4th. If you are interested in contributing data for next spring write: [celata@pacifier.com](mailto:celata@pacifier.com).

So your education committee is humming along. Please let us know if you would like to join our discussions and our endeavors.



By Linda de Kort, Education Chair.





# Flathead Audubon's Annual Sunflower Seed Sale

**50 lb. Sack of Black Oil Sunflower Seeds -\$17**  
**Highest Quality – Grown in Montana**



*Feed your feathered friends and support Audubon Projects too!*

This is Flathead Audubon's primary fund raising project.

Proceeds support local conservation and educational programs such as:

- **Distribution of Audubon Adventures to local 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes**
  - **Book Purchase Award to local elementary schools for library books of natural history**
  - **Scholarships for environmental education**
- **Research grants for field studies of birds and bird habitat**
- **Educational materials for lectures by Audubon members to local classes and civic groups**
- **Care and upkeep of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.**

**Pick Up Locations:** Please note on your calendar

Call 862-8070 for more information (754-2289 for Condon)

**Bigfork: IGA Parking Lot**

Saturday, Oct. 19, 10am – 12 noon

**Condon: Call June Ash, 754-2289**

for arrangements

**Kalispell: County Fairgrounds – North Lot**

Saturday, Oct. 19, 12:30pm – 2:30pm

**Columbia Falls: Glacier Bank**

Saturday, Oct. 19, 10am – 12 noon

**Whitefish: Train Depot Parking Lot**

Saturday, Oct. 19, 12:30pm – 2:30 pm

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## ORDER FORM – SUBMIT BY OCT. 12

Number of Sacks: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$17 = Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I will pick up my order **Saturday, Oct. 19** in (check one)

Bigfork\_\_ Columbia Falls\_\_ Condon\_\_ Kalispell\_\_ Whitefish\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send order and check to:

Flathead Audubon, c/o Mike Fanning, 380 Tally Lake Rd., Whitefish, MT 59937

Are you a member \_\_ non-member \_\_ Why not join? It's just \$20 (or \$15 for seniors)



**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
Secretary	Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Ave., Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5775
Treasurer	Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-4548
Past-President	Neal Brown, 670 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

**DIRECTORS**

1999-2002	Linda deKort, 1290 Lost Creek Dr., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-3704
1999-2002	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4467
2000-2003	John Ashley, 3151 Columbia Falls Stage Rd., Col. Falls MT 59912	892-3825
2001-2002	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish MT 59937	862-5807
2001-2002	Jill Fanning, 380 Tally Lake Rd., Whitefish, 59937	862-8070
2001-2002	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
2001-2003	Bob Lopp, 52 West View Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-6886
2001-2004	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 355, Somers MT 59932	857-3143
2001-2004	Jane Adams, 229 Edgewood Dr., Kalispell MT 59901	257-4527
2002-2003	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028

**CHAIRS**

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Birdseed Sales	June and Rod Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon MT 59826	754-2289
Christmas Bird Count	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 355, Somers MT 59932	857-3143
Conservation	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
Education	Sonja Hartmann, P.O. Box 316, West Glacier, MT 59936	387-4150
Field Trips	Jim Swab, 988 Lake Drive, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	387-4299
Hospitality	Lois Drobish, 324 Helena Flats Rd. Kalispell, MT 59901	756-7405
	Judy Spence, Box 239, Lakeside MT 59922	857-2599
	Pattie Brown, 760 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Librarian	Jill and Mike Fanning, 380 Tally Lake Rd., Whitefish, 59937	862-8070
Membership	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4467
Newsletter	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Program	Jeannie Marcure, 300 Shelter Valley Dr., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1808
Publicity	Karen Nichols, 920 6 <sup>th</sup> 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

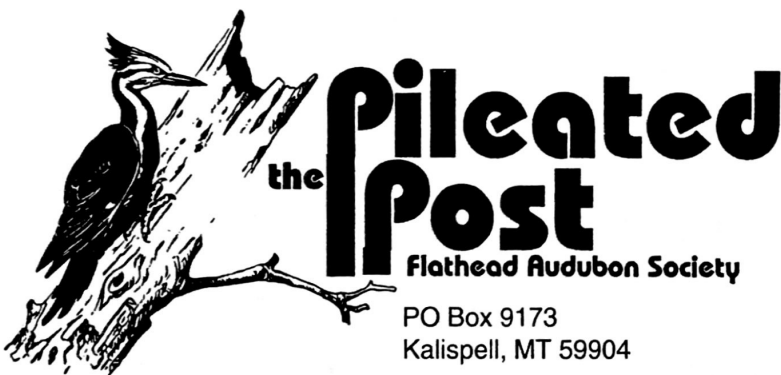
**MONTANA AUDUBON**

State Office	Ray Johnson, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624	443-3949
Western Montana Office	Bob Petty, PO Box 831, Stevensville MT 59870	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 [ljkehoe@digisys.net](mailto:ljkehoe@digisys.net)



PO Box 9173  
Kalispell, MT 59904

**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"/>
Individual Renewal	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$38	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

Name

Address

City

State  Zip

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** ☐

to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership  
380 Tally Lake Rd.,  
Whitefish, MT 59937

For address change, call 1-800-274-4201

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OCTOBER, 2002

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