



Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 16

Number 3

March, 1991

Mark Your Calendar

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3/11/91 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS DINNER MEETING, 5 pm, at the **Bigfork Inn** in Bigfork. Everyone welcome to attend.

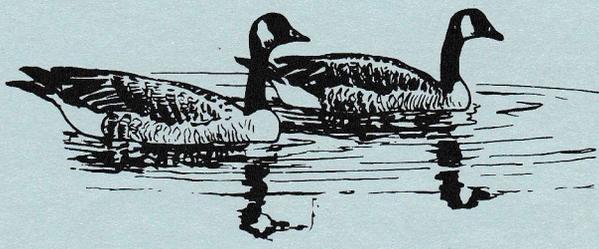
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING: United Methodist Church,

Commerce and Electric Avenues, Bigfork. Business Meeting: 7:30 pm. Program: 8 pm. Open to all.

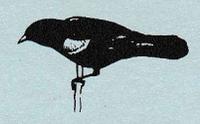
Program: The **Birdathon Ambassador Program** will be presented by Harriet Marble, Member of the National Audubon Society Board of Directors, representing the Rocky Mountain Region. She will share her experiences as a Birdathoner, to assist the Flathead chapter in developing a successful Birdathon.

This presentation will be followed by Nature Photographer Tom Ulick's unique slides: **"A Rainbow of Birds"**.

3/23/91 - The first **field trip** of the year! Led by Dan and Susannah Casey, it will be a half-day trip of **Lower Valley Waterfowl**. Participants are to meet at 8:30 am at Levengood's Parking Lot, near the junction of Hwy's 93 and 82.



President's Corner



"Feedback is the breakfast of champions." Your board of directors wants to know what you'd like us to do and if we are indeed being successful in implementing what you want.

The post card "idea" campaign is an effort to find out how you feel about many issues, and it's meant to give us feedback: a response to the board's questions, proposals and positions. Keep the cards coming in, folks; for 19¢ you can have a "say." At the February membership meeting the current results of the campaign were read. The board has already taken action based on the comments received.

At the finance meeting in mid-February the budget for the next 12 months was set. As an organization, we are doing well enough to increase our emphasis on conservation and wildlife education. Education is a high priority in Flathead Audubon.

As members, we educate ourselves through programs, scholarships, field trips and the like. We help each other learn about our surroundings. Educational efforts are extended to non-members as well.

We work with the kids and the schools. Students who learn to appreciate the lakes, forests and wildlife today will be the responsible stewards, the informed leaders and the caring teachers of tomorrow. Along these lines, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the parents who buy the bird seed to attract wildlife to their yards so that they can teach their children about the wonders of the bird world. These parents are doing their part. Thanks.

Brent Mitchell



Through The Editor's Spotting Scope

I called him Hopalong Grosbeak.

When I first saw him in December, he was in the middle of the backyard perched on a garden frame. When the birds at the feeder were startled into flight, he didn't fly ... he hopped. As he hopped across the garden to the fence, I noticed his left wing was dragging in the snow. When he reached the fence, he managed to get through it and then hopped over to the bushes lining the pond and was enveloped by them.

He was safe for now, but for how long? The neighbor's cat made daily treks across the backyard and that could be a definite hazard for a handicapped evening grosbeak. How could he possibly survive?



I made sure there was feed on the ground and tried to keep water available, but that was almost an exercise in futility as subzero weather descended. I would see him occasionally, under the bird feeder, dragging his wing and hopping from one sunflower seed to another. One after-

noon I noticed that a female seemed to accompany him (or was that my romantic imagination?). He was obviously an aggressive male, defending his eating area and bristling when another got too close. The birds backed off, except for the female who continued to eat quietly nearby.

And then I didn't see him for several weeks. The neighbor's cat or Nature's way? I missed him. Of the gillions of grosbeaks at my feeders, I had gotten to know one of them and he wasn't raucous and obnoxious.

One morning as I filled the feeders a sudden movement in the bushes caught my eye and there was Hopalong with that tattered left wing. "Hi, my friend!" He had survived, but how?

When I returned to the house I watched him with the binoculars. He was an accomplished hopper by now and made good time as he went from one feeder to the other in his own overland fashion. When he felt threatened or just took the notion, he hopped up on a low-hanging branch and then hopped higher into the bush until he was several feet off the ground.

Not long ago, in the afternoon when

the yard was quiet, I noticed a grosbeak up on the feeder by Hopalong's bush. I looked through the binoculars and was astounded. It was Hopalong! Surely, he hadn't hopped that high; he must have flown in. When more birds came to the feeder he pushed off and glided to a nearby tree limb, his ragged left wing functioning as it should. I was elated.

And so the saga of Hopalong Grosbeak came to a close. His determination and ingenuity helped him rise above adversity in his world and was somewhat inspirational in mine.

Sharon Bergman

Bluebirds Are Back

The Lake County Leader reports that the first pair of bluebirds was seen on February 10, along the Clark Fork River near Plains by Rose and Charlie Wright of Pablo. The birds flew directly in front of their vehicle.

Art Aylesworth of Ronan, who has spearheaded bluebird recovery efforts in Montana, commented that the season's first ambassadors are usually seen in Perma, although Plains is not "that far away."

"This is the earliest we've ever seen them. In the past, it's always been around the 20th of the month," he said. "If it's ideal for them, the little devils show up. From now on you can expect to see more everyday."

Eye
the
Eagle



Eye the Eagle on your state tax form and give to Montana's Nongame Wildlife Program.

The eagle marks the box where you can donate to the Nongame Wildlife Program; your donation is tax deductible.

Herons, eagles, bluebirds, loons, turtles and chipmunks are just a few of the state's more than 500

wildlife species that benefit from your contribution. For more information, write to Montana's Watchable Wildlife, Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East 6th Ave, Helena, MT 59620.



Member Of The Month

** Jack White **

He could be a synonym for service.

After retirement in 1971, Jack and his wife Ruth took up residency in Bigfork, and shortly after that they became members of the Bigfork Bird Club. In 1980, Jack was asked to take the Conservation Chair of the Flathead Audubon Society, a position he also held from 1983 through 1986. In 1981 and '82, he served as the vice president of the organization and also in 1987 through 1989. In 1990, he was a chapter director. This very community-spirited person has been active in the Council on Aging and has been honored by the Flathead County area as the Senior Citizen of the Year.

What is his background? Why does he care?

Jack was born in Missoula and had almost immediate contact with the natural environs as his father worked for the U.S. Forest Service. As a youngster, Jack worked during the summer at the Powell Ranger Station in the Lolo National Forest. He attended Yale University and when schooling was completed, he was in the top 100 tested for forest service employment. His first appointment was in Upper Michigan, and for the ten years that he served the USFS he lived in South Dakota, Nebraska and Colorado.

Jack and Ruth were married in 1935 and first moved to Bigfork in 1941. During World II, they lived in California where he worked on an emergency project, developing a practical use of rubber derived from rubber trees. At the conclusion of the war, he went to work for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service where he dealt with conservation issues from a governmental agency standpoint in Arkansas and Texas until his retirement in 1971.

"I've always cared about the environment," Jack commented. "Fifty years ago I did a study on a cedar grove in a swamp and recommended then that the cedar trees should not be cut except under restrictive circumstances. They accepted my recommendation and today are still following my plan with some expanded modifications that make it even more stringent."

Jack White, Flathead Audubon Member of the Month: a man who cares about the environment and about people, as well as the impact they have on each other.

Challenges For Our Chapters by Peter A.A. Berle, NAS President

It's Been A Good Year, On Balance

To many of us, impatient to change the world for the better, the progress of environmental legislation through Congress can seem excruciatingly slow. The payoff comes, after years of painstaking negotiations and sleepless nights, when a bill is finally passed and signed by the President.

Such is the case with the Clean Air Act: It took 13 years, but in late October, Congress at last approved a bill to reauthorize and strengthen this vital law. President Bush deserves credit for putting forth a proposal last year that helped put the legislation on course.

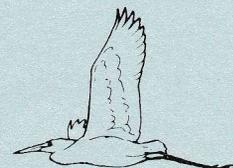
Besides the Clean Air Act, we got a solid new farm bill, with major improvements in wetlands-protection programs and pesticide record-keeping. Regrettably, the law does not stop the "circle of poison," the export of U.S.-banned chemicals and the import of foods treated with them, but the Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy plans to take up the issue next year.

We applaud Congress' good sense in passing tough new oil-spill liability legislation making companies like Exxon fully accountable for their actions. President Bush also signed a bill to limit the export of raw logs from national and state forests in Oregon and Washington, reducing for the time being one cause of the accelerated logging of the giant trees.

We even--thanks in large part to our hard-working activists--put out some serious fires. Pressure from several senior senators, responding to outraged Auduboners and others, forced Alaska Senator Frank Murkowski to back down on his efforts to open the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. And Congress withstood an attempt by Oregon Senator Bob Packwood to cripple the Endangered Species Act.

So it's time to slap ourselves on the back, take a deep breath of fresher air--and then gird ourselves for the challenges ahead. It won't be easy. But that's why we're in this in the first place.

---Excerpted from the *Audubon Activist*, Dec. 1990.





Flathead Audubon Was There!!

More than 250 people appeared at a lengthy public meeting held in Kalispell in mid-February to discuss Montana Power's Kerr Dam mitigation plan. Officials of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) listened to some 40 individuals give testimony and comments on MPC's proposed plan which will have an ultimate affect on Flathead Lake. Following are the formal comments given by Flathead Audubon president Brent Mitchell, some of which were echoed by others in attendance.

"When you know all the answers, you haven't asked all the questions.

With specific reference to the Kerr project, we have not asked all the questions. The decisions made on this project will affect our lake and hydropower production for up to 45 years.

I suspect that much information is available, but somewhere it was lost in the shuffle. We need to dig it out. MPC did not list enough alternatives and has not adequately addressed the environmental consequences of the Kerr mitigation project.

The Hungry Horse mitigation project and the Kerr project are tied inseparably to the same lake, yet the Hungry Horse project involved the public and Kerr nearly eliminated the public from the process.

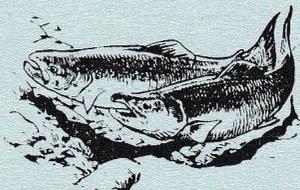
FERC has a duty to independently assess the consequences of a project. MPC cannot be expected to protect the public's interest in the Kerr project; this is a function of FERC.

The EIS process is one way to independently examine alternatives and involve the public. It may not be the only way, but it does work.

If the Commission can find a way to satisfy the need to examine more alternatives, consequences, provide public information and public involvement, then I'll be satisfied.

If not, I suggest we consider the "E" word: the costly and time-consuming (but thorough) Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you."



The North American Nest Record Card Program

The North American Nest Record Card Program collects, processes and stores information on the nesting biology of birds. Hundreds of enthusiastic amateur and professional field ornithologists annually contribute thousands of cards to the Program's headquarters at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

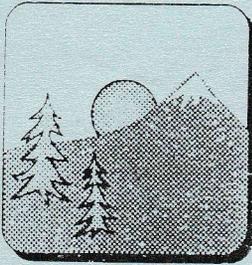
When a nest is found, an observer records information on the species, habitat, location and reproductive history on a nest record card provided at no charge. Cards are returned either directly to Cornell or to a regional center. All contributors receive semi-annual newsletters.

Does this sound like a project you would enjoy? A limited number of nest record cards and complete instructions will be available at the March membership meeting. Or you can write to the following address for a supply of record cards and instructions: North American Nest Record Card Program, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14853. Indicate the approximate number of nests you expect to report on.

Spring Council Scheduled

The Montana Audubon Council has set May 3, 4 and 5 in Billings for the annual Spring Council meeting, which is open for any and all interested Auduboners. Two field trips are planned for the three-day event, one of which will be a prairie nesting area northwest of Billings. The featured speaker will be Cy Jamison, who is the Director of the Bureau of Land Management. More details will be included in the April newsletter. For further information, contact Jim Phelps, P. O. Box 10975, Billings, MT 59103.

Earth Day Planning



(The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the Flathead Valley Earth Day Coalition, representing over 100 organizations and individuals.)

Greetings Earthlings:

Earth Day 1991 is fast approaching. Let's celebrate the Earth and demonstrate how we are making a difference. Kalispell Center Mall has been reserved on **April 21, 22 and 23**. Your participation with an exhibit there, or any other activity you may select, is encouraged. Earth friendly handouts are planned for distribution.

We have been invited to join in the United Way Share Fair, date as yet unselected. National Volunteers Day will be celebrated April 22nd. We will have information as to how you may nominate your outstanding volunteers.

Please mark your calendar for the Flathead Valley Earth Day Coalition meetings, held at the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell, at 7:30 pm. (**March 19 and April 10**) We will be making decisions relative to our Earth Day celebration. We will select educational materials and hear progress reports of ongoing Earth Day activities, such as trails and recycling.

I'm looking forward to joining with you again.

Ferne Cohen
Earth Day Coordinator

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Enjoy full National Audubon Society benefits—and AUDUBON magazine— at a special new-member rate of \$20.

Join today and receive: A YEAR—6 BI-MONTHLY ISSUES of the stunning photography and absorbing articles in AUDUBON magazine.

Mail to:
Flathead Audubon Society
P.O. Box 715
Bigfork, Montana 59911

MEMBERSHIP in one of the 500 local Audubon chapters nationwide (if there is one in your area) with access to field-trips and other activities.

Name _____

FREE OR REDUCED ADMISSION to Audubon nature centers and sanctuaries.

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

INVITATIONS to Audubon's ecology camps and workshops.
ELIGIBILITY for wide-ranging Audubon tours.

Payment enclosed Bill Me

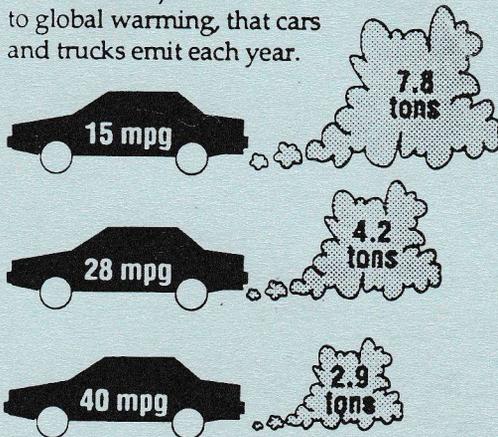
Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue of AUDUBON
Membership dues include \$20 for AUDUBON magazine.

DISCOUNTS on nature books, collectibles and gifts. And with your membership you're supporting the National Audubon Society's vital efforts at protecting wildlife and environment.

NEW MEMBERS ONLY!

Gas Mileage and Air Pollution

Improving motor vehicle gas mileage standards can lower the amount of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming, that cars and trucks emit each year.



Source: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
All figures are for yearly emissions
© Safe Energy Communication Council



