



# Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 16

Number 6

September, 1991

## President's Corner

Welcome to a great year!

Have you heard the news? Sharon Bergman, editor of this newsletter, captured for us a national recognition award for THE PILEATED POST. Congratulations and thanks, Sharon!

Ferne Cohen and Ed Prach have worked up some wonderful, thought-provoking and entertaining programs. They're hoping to entice each of you to eagerly attend every meeting this year.

The Birdthon was a BIG SUCCESS in June. (See Dan Casey's report on page 4.) Not bragging, of course, but yours truly, on his very first Birdathon, managed to stumble upon and recognize 62 species of feathered friends. A most awesome feat, if I do say so, and it just goes to show that anybody (with the aid of a chocolate Lab) can pull this off. If I can, so can you, so plan on your Big Day next year.

This summer we offered testimony on the following: the Kootenai/Lolo Accords (thanks to Ed Prach); Kerr Dam mitigation hearings and the Hungry Horse fisheries mitigation hearings.

In response to the emergence of wetlands and waterfowl as major issues in our part of the state, Linda Vassallo will monitor events related to those pressing topics. She will also assist Bob Ballou with refuge projects.

Our first (September) meeting this year will be held at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks building in Kalispell, as an effort to reach more people in the North Valley. Beginning with the October meeting, the rest of our regular meetings will

be held at the Bigfork Methodist Church. Already the days are growing shorter and cooler. Start putting together your sunflower seed orders, folks -- it's that time of year again. **Brent Mitchell**



## Mark Your Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

### 9/9/91 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS DINNER

MEETING, 5 pm, at the **Lighter Side Restaurant**, 221 Main Street, Upstairs, Kalispell.

### REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING: Fish, Wild-

life & Parks Meeting Room, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell. Business Meeting: 7:30 pm. Program: 8 pm. Everyone welcome.

**Program:** The speaker will be Deborah Richie of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Her subject will be "**Montana's Watchable Wildlife: A Future for Wildlife; A Future for Montanans**". She will show how the new statewide program can help with the conservation of all species, as well as the economic diversification of the communities.

9/7/91 - **Montana Native Plant Society Logan Pass Seed-Collection Day**. See page 2 for details.

9/14/91 - **Swan Valley Logging Field Trip**. See page 2 for details.



## Elly's Banding Report

Time flies when you're having fun and so do the birds. It is amazing how quickly the nesting areas empty out. August 3 was the last banding on the Swan Oxbow Preserve for MAPS. There were only a few birds left. Overall, we had a good season.

This greedy bander slipped in the 11th net and we ended up with 15 species and a total of 51 birds. The species included: Swainson's thrushes (up from last year); yellowthroats (they like wet places); ruby crowned kinglet, chipping sparrow; black-capped chickadee; orange-crowned warbler; red-breasted nuthatch; dark-eyed junco; a redstart; Lincoln's sparrow; northern waterthrush; red-eyed vireo; mountain white-crowned sparrow; western tanager and downy woodpecker. A robin was the only recapture from last year.

The footbridge was raised and a railing installed. Information obtained will be sent to Montana Natural Heritage Program for the new latilong distribution book.

A special thanks to Neal Brown, Barb Richardson, Robin Magaddino, Norm and Paul Rossi, Dan Sullivan, LaVon and Paul Mooring, Leo Keane and Karen Bray for their help in making all this possible.

A total of 457 hummers (so far) were captured this summer: 13 caliopes, 1 black-chinned, 258 rufous and 185 recaptures. Nestlings were down, probably due to heavy rains in June. Actually the total number of hummers were down because of an abundance of flowers and insects.

A female rufous showed up with an impaled black wasp on her beak. The insect had dried hard like cement around her beak and her weight was low at 3:15 grams. (Most hummers at this time are near 4.0 grams.) I did my good deed and the carcass was chipped away with scissors, with the bird zooming away to feed again.

Recently, a little "turkey" of a female rufous was caught, weighing 5.0 grams. Her feathers stuck straight out around her body and she felt fuzzy. Her bag was packed and she was ready to migrate.

Banding will continue through September at the Preserve and at a new site on 6-mile to study requirements of fall migrants.

**Elly Jones**

## From Montana Audubon Council

MONTANA AND IDAHO AUDUBON MEETING -- JOIN US! Mark your calendars now! Audubon members from Montana and Idaho are invited to a weekend full of learning, socializing and birdwatching October 12 and 13 in Hamilton, Montana. This special meeting is designed to bring Audubon members from these two states together to form new friendships, exchange ideas and learn about areas of common interest.

Lots of good fun is already planned. We will learn about wolves, visit the local wildlife refuge and watch artist Joe Thornbrugh create a drawing in front of us. Events start Friday evening. On Saturday, we will have field trips, workshops, speakers and a banquet. The program ends with a field trip on Sunday morning.

The meeting is hosted by the Montana and Idaho Audubon Councils and the Bitterroot Audubon Chapter. For registration information contact the president of your local chapter or Bitterroot Audubon, P.O. Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840-0326.

**Janet H. Ellis**



## September Field Trips

Saturday, Sept. 7: MNPS - Logan Pass Seed-Collection Day. Help Rachel Potter collect seeds to use in restoring the sub-alpine meadows around construction zones. Meet at 9 a.m. at Glacier Park Headquarters or 10:15 at Logan Pass. Call Rachel for more details: 888-5441, days, or 892-2445, evenings.

Saturday, Sept. 14: Swan Valley Logging. Retired USFS employee and logging contractor Bud Moore and Rod Ash will show clearcuts, selective cuts and other managed stands and discuss wildlife impacts. The trip will involve short hikes and roadside stops. Meet at Swan Valley Community Club in Condon, near milepost 42 on Highway 83, at 10 a.m. Call Bud (754-2473) or Rod (754-2289) for more information.



## The Editor's Spotting Scope

**Thank you. Thank you.** First off, thanks to Leo Keane for taking over the typewriter and paste pot, to get out the May issue of THE PILEATED POST. Good job, Leo, you haven't lost your touch. My spring was spent in Iowa, working at a national bowling tournament and watching blackbirds, mallards and nighthawks, all of which seemed to be in abundance in the Cedar Rapids area.

It came and went so fast. Summer, that is. When I was a kid, summer was always special because it meant hiking, swimming, camping and eating yummy things from the garden. Now that I'm an advanced adult, summer still has a special meaning, although the viewpoint has changed somewhat. And Flathead Audubon is now a part of making plans for summer through the field trip schedule.

**Jewell Basin Hike.** Fifteen of us met at the Jewell Basin parking lot in mid-July and with Patti Brown leading the way, we hit the trail. It was momentarily sobering to be met by U of M students who offered bells to be worn or carried on the trail, as a deterrent to grizzlies.

The group was of all ages, ranging from a 9-year old girl to a man in his 70's, and we strung out along the zigzagging trail, going ever upward. (Today the trail is mine and if a grizzly is out there, it will be at a distance where binoculars will be needed to see it.)

There were many stops along the way: to look at the view, always spectacular; to look at alpine flowers, many of which Patti knew and some that she didn't; to listen and look for birds; to eat lunch on the mountain top, looking into Glacier Park, many miles away; and to decide whether to backtrack or stay on the trail, when it was covered with several inches of snow. (We backtracked and took another trail.) Going up the mountain was a never-ending delight and coming down was equally as interesting. It was a day of experiencing Montana (and nature) at its very best.

**Flathead River Float.** Four canoes, one kayak and 16 people set out from the Presentine Bar Fishing Access above Kalispell and headed south on the Flathead River, led by Dan and Susannah Casey.

The day was sparkling: slight breeze, blue skies and glistening water. The twofold purpose of this trip was to enjoy the river and see as many birds as possible. The mission was accomplished on both counts. For about six hours we paddled and drifted, watched, noted and wondered. Lunchtime was spent on a riverbank, watching pileated woodpeckers fly overhead. For this bird watcher, the big thrill of the day was floating within 50 feet of a bald eagle, who watched us approach from his perch on a water-soaked log. When he determined we were close enough, he spread those wings and lifted himself gracefully into the air, leaving us with a grateful feeling for having shared the moment.



Later we left the swifter currents of the Flathead River and drifted into the more quiet waters surrounding Leisure Island. The pace was slowed, but the scenery was still ever-changing. As another Flathead Audubon field trip came to a close, we reflected on the birds we had seen from our vantage point on the river: great blue heron, Canada goose, mallard, common merganser, osprey, bald eagle, spotted sandpiper, ring-billed gull, California gull, Vaux's swift, belted kingfisher, northern flicker, pileated woodpecker, western wood pewee, least flycatcher, eastern kingbird, violet-green swallow, northern rough-winged swallow, bank swallow, veery, cedar waxwing, warbling vireo, red-eyed vireo, yellow warbler, song sparrow, pine siskin and evening grosbeak.

We in northwest Montana have busy summers, often filled with visitors, gardening and summer activities in addition to our regular routines. When the opportunity presents itself, we need to make the effort to get out into that which attracted us originally to birding: the great outdoors. Taking part in some of the field trips provides unlimited rewards.

**Sharon Bergman**





## Conservation Comments

Biodiversity - A Central Theme. The maintaining of biodiversity is rapidly becoming the central theme for international conservation. Even such an economically driven organization as the World Bank is starting to take into account the potential results of bank supported development on habitats. A poor country like Costa Rica is setting aside up to 30% of its land in national parks and biological reserves.

Much closer to home, the ancient and continuing controversy over management of our national forests may be positively influenced by the growing concern over biodiversity. As a Forest Service historian recently noted, perhaps the old battles over logging methods (clearcutting vs. selective logging) will be preempted by the agreement on the necessity to protect biodiversity.

Recent Forest Service pronouncements about biodiversity and ecosystem management is encouraging. Wendel Hann, USFS ecologist, described to Flathead Audubon members an ecosystem management approach which took into account whole drainages and the maintenance of historic species diversity. Forest Service researchers, such as Jerry Franklin, are proposing timber cutting systems which more closely duplicate natural forest changes.

A new emphasis on protecting biodiversity and on ecosystem management obviously clashes with the present system of requiring national forests to meet timber production quotas (ASQ's) set by Congress or by Forest Service officials in Washington, D.C. Ecosystem management, which has as a primary goal protecting biodiversity and also producing timber for domestic use, will require bottom up decision making with a foundation on the ground in specific places based on fundamental ecological principles. Resource management which attempts to force decision making into an arbitrary framework of forestwide production figures based on politics rather than biology is unlikely to meet the goal of preserving biodiversity.

Rod Ash

## Birdathon Team Sets New Record - briefly



The "official" Chapter Birdathon team of Dan and Susannah Casey, Jim Rogers and Sherry Jones set out again on June 1 to try and break their own Montana "Big Day" record of 157 species, set in 1989. With some small deviations from their previous route, and some good luck, they were successful. At 10:30 pm, when Dan and Susannah went home to relieve the baby-sitter, the new record stood at 159 species.

Jim and Sherry persevered and recorded two additional species before midnight (Northern Saw-whet and Long-eared owl), so 161 could have been the total. However, their record was broken a month or so later by Ed Harper of California (via Bozeman), who recorded 162 species along a route from West Yellowstone to Two Medicine Lake on July 9. That's an added incentive for the 1992 effort!

As in 1989, the American robin was the first species recorded, heard at Pine Butte Ranch at about 4:15 am. The team left Freezeout Lake at 11:10 with 112 species; arrived in Columbia Falls at 6:30 pm with 143 species and finished at Bigfork with a singing rufous-sided towhee at 10:20 pm. Highlights on this year's list included all the possible grebe species, 10 flycatcher species and 19 species of ducks. The Cordilleran (Western) flycatcher, three-toed woodpecker and McCown's longspur had not been seen during the five previous birdathon efforts along the same route.

Chapter president Brent Mitchell and vice president Leo Keané also spent the day afield, each seeing almost 100 species. Thanks to the efforts of these members and others, and especially to the diligence of Susannah Casey in following up on pledges, we raised a chapter record \$1,032 through the 1991 Birdathon, which will be split with the regional office.

Thank you to all who participated--birders, pledgers and pledge-gatherers, for our most successful Birdathon ever!

Dan Casey

## The Birds Of Summer, Part I

by Leo Keane

**First day of June. 5:00 AM. Full battle regalia:** Converse "All Stars", high tops; safari hat, full-brimmed; spotting scope, Leupold, 30X; additional optics, 7 x 35; field guides, Peterson and National Geo; checklist, A.B.A., "The Birds of West-Central Montana". Coffee: two quarts, high test. It's morning.

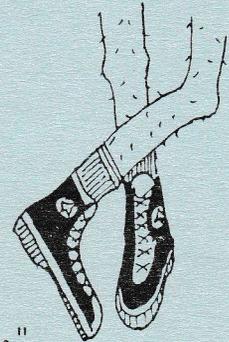
I hop in the 4 x 4 and gun it. The sky is brightening over Columbia Ridge as I speed south on MT. 35 toward the Swan River. Mt partner, Bruce Rickenbacker, visiting from New York City, will be waiting for me there. From our phone conversation earlier in the week, I can tell the guy knows his birds. That's good. We'll need all the smarts we can get to bag 100 species by sundown. If we pull it off, a cool three, maybe four hundred bucks will go toward the Audubon Society. That's right, it's what they call the BIRDATHON. And we're bird watchers. That's our job.

Rickenbacker is hot to trot when I pull up. He's packin' Zeiss 8 x 40B's and Peterson's Advanced Guide--not to mention a grocery bag full of sandwiches. I like it. The guy's definitely no slouch. Let's go!

We cruise to our first hit, a little backwash of the Swan River, just as the sun busts loose. The place is hoppin'. It sounds like a party out there. Rickenbacker whips out the checklist and I tick off the I.D.s: northern waterthrush, yellow-rumped warbler, belted kingfisher. What a zoo! These birds have had too much of a good thing. Mallard, McGillivray's warbler, common merganser. "Rickenbacker! Over the bridge!" A squad of swallows is trying to give us the slip, but I've got 'em nailed: barn, tree, violet-green. "Piece of cake, eh Rickenbacker? Let's go. We're burnin' daylight!"

Our next stop is a pretty little joint they call Point Pleasant, further up the Swan. I've scored here before--on trout though, not birds. It could be a long shot.

When we pull in, it looks like a yard sale. A bunch of locals are having a picnic, and we've stumbled right into the middle of it. Rickenbacker jumps out and makes a bee-line for the river. I figure, what the hay, and saunter in that general direction. Over at the yard sale, some blond doll in white Bermuda shorts makes a comment I don't quite catch, but her smile tells me she's attracted to my Converse "All Stars", black and white high-tops. Or is it Rickenbacker's tan fedora? I make a quick mental note as to the size of her body guard and decide against a clever come-back. Anyway, we've got a common merganser down on the river requiring a great deal of scrutiny at this moment. "Let's blow this pop stand Rickenbacker." (under my breath) "These yahoos don't know 'power-birding' from middle-aged men in tennis shoes."



Back on the dusty trail, it's about time for the Empidonax Show. The Squeezer Creek "Watchable Wildlife" Area south of Swan Lake is lousy with these flycatchers: your dusky, your Hammond's, your least and western. Riding shotgun, Rickenbacker is treating me to a vocal rendition of each song, as per Peterson's Advanced Guide: "Brrr yup! Chee twirr. Chewy, chewy, chewy". He explains that this will better prepare me for a quick field I.D. of the tricky Empids. "Say Rickenbacker," I casually reply, "Just what kind of sandwiches do you have in that grocery bag?"

(Continued next month!)



## Report From The National Audubon Convention



(Editor's Note: Ferne Cohen has written a very comprehensive report on the national convention and due to limited newsletter space, it will appear in two installments.)

The theme of the convention, held in Estes Park, Colorado, on July 21 through 27, was "Audubon in the Americas." There were approximately 900 in attendance with a significant number of international guests from Central and South America and Canada. Giving meaning to the theme, there were programs on Mexico, Trinidad, Tobago, Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Belize, Brazil and Canada. Attending from Flathead Audubon were Tommie and Ralph Clark, Ferne and Martin Cohen and Malcolm Thompson, who bicycled over 2,000 miles roundtrip to the convention.

**Notable Speakers:** Jose Lutzenberger, Brazilian Director of the Environment, challenged us with a new economic outlook, saying the Gross National Product should include the cost of depleted natural resources in computations. Ted Turner impressed us with his sensitivity to environmental degradation and his positive action to do something about it: being a co-producer of NAS television specials on PBS and promising buffalo burgers in the future! Chief Cancon of the Cree eloquently implored us to prevent Hydro-Quebec from constructing the James Bay II hydroelectric project which will destroy his homeland and surrounding habitat and wildlife.



**Wetlands Under Siege.** A conglomeration of development interests, cabinet members and White House administrators are urging Congress to weaken Federal wetlands protection. President Bush is being pressured to abandon his pledge of "no net loss" for wetlands.

The most serious legislative threat to wetlands is HR 1330, the so-called "Comprehensive Wetlands Conservation & Management Act", a bill introduced by Rep. Jimmy Hayes. This bill would demolish section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the only federal law regulating wetlands destruction. Protection is weakened by excluding seasonal and isolated wetlands from the law's protection; it eliminates EPA's role in the program and would require that wetlands be classified by "value". Wetlands may be destroyed if there is an "overriding public interest." A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator John Breaux, also from Louisiana.

Meanwhile, the US Fish & Wildlife Service Private Land Program is encouraging wetlands restoration by forming partnerships with farmers. Wildlife habitat is being preserved, restored, enhanced and created to the benefit of wildlife, ranchers and farmers. Success stories were reported in South Dakota, Nebraska and Colorado, as well as in other states. When there is a foreclosure, the FHA may ease the debt if a Conservation Easement can be dedicated. There are also voluntary Conservation Easements.

**Population and the Environment.** NAS's population program recognizes the impact of population growth on the natural environment and the Earth's resources. The present emphasis is to raise the U.S contribution to family planning abroad. Congress has sent a bill for the president's signature which will repeal the "Mexico City policy", which restricts U. S. support to countries which provide information, counseling or health care related to abortion. Repeal of this policy will allow the U. S. to reestablish leadership in the population field and provide funding for some of the most effective international providers of family planning.

The bill before the president will also refund the U. S. contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Our funds were withheld over allegations that UNFPA was participating in the management of China's controversial "one child policy." Those charges were never substantiated.

(Report continued in next month's issue.)

Ferne Cohen



# IT'S AUDUBON'S ANNUAL Sunflower Seed Sale

## SUNFLOWER SEED ORDER FORM

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Number of sacks	BLACK, OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS	Amt. enclosed
_____	50 lb. sack at \$16	_____

I will pick up my order on Saturday, October 19 in

Bigfork\_\_ Kalispell\_\_ Columbia Falls\_\_ Wfish\_\_ Polson\_\_ Condon\_\_

Send check and order to: FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY  
(due October 12) P.O. BOX 715  
BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911



Are you a member\_\_ or a non-member\_\_ ?

### DON'T KEEP THE BIRDS WAITING

Get your winter supply of sunflower seeds and help Flathead Audubon fund its conservation and education programs.

The following convenient locations will be used for delivery on October 19.

- Bigfork:** Lakehills Shopping Center  
9-11 am; 837-5018
- Columbia Falls:** First Federal Savings  
10-12 am; 892-0272
- Condon:** Call June Ash, 754-2289  
for arrangements
- Kalispell:** Kalispell Center Mall west  
parking lot, 10 - 12 am
- Polson:** Super 1 parking lot  
11 am - 1 pm; 849-5286
- Whitefish:** Train Depot parking lot  
10-12 am; 862-2028

After filling out the order form, be sure to make note of where you want to take delivery and mark your calendar accordingly, so you won't forget the time and place.

## NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Mail to:  
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Bigfork, Montana 59911

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Membership dues include \$20 for AUDUBON magazine.

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# Flathead Audubon Society Directory

## Bird Sightings

Jean Robocker reports spotting a Lark Bunting on Egan Slough Rd on 8/7. "White patches on wings, prominent whether sitting or in flight; smaller than a robin, bigger than a sparrow. I drove past a pickup (parked) and it was sitting on the hood. It flew as I backed up alongside the pickup. There was one (the same one or a second one) on the truck box -- 10 or 15 feet away. I had a good long look. It sits tall, black plumage season worn, which probably meant it was an adult. The next day there was a black-headed grosbeak and an immature evening grosbeak which came to the feeder."

### OFFICERS

President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
Vice president	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Secretary	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Treasurer	Tommie Clark, 231 Pine Needle Ln, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-6615

### DIRECTORS

Ferne Cohen, P. O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028
Sam Culotta, 979 Eastman Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4298
Robin Magaddino, 2100 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4294
Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Lynn Kelly, 905B 5th Ave E, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Malcolm Thompson, 775 Berne Rd, Col's Falls, MT 59912	892-4208

### MONTANA BIRD HOTLINE 721-2935

### CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 4870 Hwy 93S, #62, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-7350
Conservation	Rod Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Field Trips	Dan Casey, P. O. Box 2922, Kalispell, MT 59901	857-3143
Hospitality/Sales	Patti Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
Hostess	Evelyn Kile, 20 Hoffman Draw, Kila, MT 59920	755-4422
Librarian	Marie Shirley, 1016A Park Ave, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-0790
Membership	June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Newsletter	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Ln, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
Program	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028
Refuge Projects	Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
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Wetlands/Waterfowl	Linda Vassallo, 683 Somers Rd, Somers, MT 59932	857-3166
	Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-6344
	Linda Vassallo, 683 Somers Rd, Somers, MT 59932	857-3166

### MONTANA AUDUBON COUNCIL

Office - Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624

443-3949

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 business meeting is held at 7:30 pm, followed by a special program at 8 pm. The regular monthly meetings are preceded by an Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all interested people.

THE PILEATED POST is published nine times a year, September through May, and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. Subscriptions for non-members are \$5 per year. Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month.



the **Pileated Post**

Flathead Audubon Society

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- PAGE 7 -