



# Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 18

Number 8 9

December, 1993

## MAKE NOTE Of It!

◆December General Meeting 12/13/93  
United Methodist Church, Bigfork  
Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm


◆Bigfork Xmas Bird Count 12/18/93  
See page 6 for details.

◆January General Meeting 1/10/94  
United Methodist Church, Bigfork  
Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm



## Program for December Meeting

Plans for the annual Christmas Bird Count will be featured at the December General Meeting. Co-ordinator Dan Casey will have full particulars for the Bigfork count, as well as information on the Ninepipe count. Information, including dates and contact points, on the new Swan Valley count will also be provided.

Birders who'd like to participate in the annual count are urged to attend the meeting. You don't have to be good -- just interested and willing. If you are unable to attend, but want to participate, contact Dan. 

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
TO  
ONE AND ALL**

## Rod & June Ash to Receive Danny On Award

The prestigious Danny On Conservation Awards will be presented by Flathead National Forest Supervisor Joel Holtrop at a ceremony Monday, December 6 at 10 am, at the Forest Supervisors office in Kalispell. Rod and June Ash of Flathead Audubon will be recognized from the private sector and Ed Hula of the Hungry Horse district will be honored as a Forest Service employee.

There will be a cake cutting ceremony and refreshments will be served. After the award presentations, the room will be open until noon to give people a chance to visit and congratulate the recipients.

The award was created to honor the memory of Danny On, a Flathead Forest employee, who achieved wide recognition as a conservationist, using the magic of photography to tell nature's story. It was first presented in 1986 and the last presentation was made in 1991.





### The Editor's Spotting Scope

Aloha! Birding in Hawaii is a great experience! It is almost forced upon you, as the birds are everywhere and there for the watching.

When I got to Honolulu, I called the Oahu Audubon office, but there was no answer so I headed for the nearest bookstore. I had to have something to identify what I was seeing and I picked up *Guide to the Birds of Hawaii*, which had pictorial descriptions of about 50 birds. That was enough to get me started.

On the island of Maui, at Lahaina where we stayed, the most common birds seen around the hotel were the Barred Dove and the Myna. They were used to living near people and acted as though it was their hotel.

But not as much as the House Sparrow and House Finch. The Hawaiians have solved the problem of birds flying into windows: leave the windows open! When you sit down to breakfast at the Royal Lahaina Hotel, the birds come and go as they please. They fly in and land on the backs of chairs or on the trays at the busboy's stand; they hop across the carpet, picking up tidbits as they go. No one seems to care -- not the tourists and certainly not the waiters or busboys. And the big surprise: there is no bird "mess". There must be an understanding between the birds and management: open windows in exchange for good table manners.

Being away from the crowds, of course, brought the most success in birding. A White Tern, Wandering Tattler and Sanderling were seen on beach walks, as well as a Red-crested Cardinal in a bush near the sand and a Northern Cardinal. An Hawaiian who was making baskets out of coconut palm fronds on the beach told us that the cardinals are so acclimated to people that they frequently land on an outstretched hand, reminding me of our chickadees which have a similar nature.

There was a Black-headed Munia in a hedge of flowers, which reminded me of our grosbeaks, and the Red-vented Bulbul was a

flash of color as he flew into view, long enough to be identified. Out in the countryside, on a big cattle ranch, were a lot of Cattle Egrets. But time ran out and it wasn't possible to see everything or look for every bird.

When I was chitchatting with a local person, I asked her about a bird that flew in on the patio. She looked at it with an expression of tolerance and acceptance and then said she didn't know what it was. It was obvious the bird was a part of her daily life, but it wasn't necessary for her to know what it was called.

For those of us who are birders, seeing, watching and identifying birds adds a special perspective to our lives. Actually, we can't help ourselves -- we have to know. But who is to say whether our way is best for enjoying birds, or her's is.

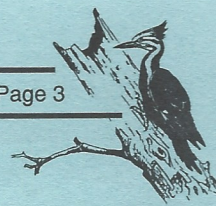
"Mele Kalikimaka" to you and yours and a Happy New Year too. **Sharon Bergman**



### Welcome to Those New Among Us

**Bigfork:** Susan Hanson, Karin Hemion, Agnes Hopke and Janet Vornbrock; **Charlo:** Jaren Barker; **Columbia Falls:** Cathy Clark and Diana Warner; **Condon:** Carol Stenhouse; **Dixon:** Alex Young; **Eureka:** Hiram Reynolds; **Hungry Horse:** Dee Meek; **Kalispell:** Diana Ducharme-Birky, N. Foy and B. C. Whiting; **Lakeside:** Dave Christensen; **Libby:** R. Magee; **Marion:** Sid Goodrich; **Martin City:** M. Johnson; **Polson:** Marjory Hinman; **Rollins:** Richard Schleicher; **Ronan:** Jean Nuesse; **Troy:** Donald Delesi, Mark Natale and Laurie Tyndall and **Whitefish:** D. Vinnedge.





## Member of the Month

### ❖ Sam Culotta

Sam Culotta got his start with nature in his sandbox as a child of five. His grandfather told him to cut some potatoes in half, put them in the sand and they would grow -- and they did! The path he would follow in his lifetime was laid out before him and plants led the way.

Born and raised in the country near Baltimore, Maryland, Sam was influenced by both grandfathers. His maternal grandfather instilled the love of plants and growing things, and his paternal grandfather took him for walks in the nearby woods, looking for mushrooms. "We carried a basket for the mushrooms, but when we returned, it usually held more turtles than I picked up than mushrooms." Sam commented.

In 1969, he left the east and moved to Missoula to attend the University and study forestry. "The University had one of the best schools of forestry in the country and I wanted to try living in the west. I've been in Montana ever since," he said.

In 1978, Sam moved to Bigfork and shortly thereafter started his business, Renaissance Landscape and Silviculture. He explained, "Silviculture is to trees as agriculture is to crops. It means growing a healthy forest." He has been designing and building gardens in the area for the past 14 years or so.

Sam and Tara Luna, who works at Glacier Park, are making plans for their future. They met at a meeting of the Native Plant Society where he is a member of the board of directors. He also serves as a member of the board of the Montana Wilderness Society.

Audubon member Jack White asked Sam to attend an Audubon meeting in 1989 and that got him started. He's been attending ever since and became a member of the board as a director in 1991. He doesn't have a favorite bird because ".... it's not fair to the birds to choose just one."

Sam Culotta: Flathead Audubon's Member of the Month. Protecting habitats and biodiversity is what interests him most and he's willing to serve to achieve those goals. ❖

## Bird Seed Update

The 1993 Flathead Audubon bird seed sale was a "qualified success" according to Rod Ash, the chapter seed sale co-chairman. "Sales were down slightly from 1992," he said. "There were more seed customers than the previous year, but customers bought fewer bags of seed per customer. This reflects the report by many that there has been a decline in birds at feeders."

Sales to date brought in \$3,108 after cost revenue; 518 sacks of sunflower seed, or 13 tons, have been sold.

Ash praised the efforts of chapter seed sales persons: Neal and Pattie Brown and Ursula Whitney in Bigfork; Sharon Bergman, Elaine Corrigan and Lynn Kelly in Polson; Ferne Cohen and Vi Starks in Whitefish; Carole Purchase in Kalispell; Debbi Rossi and Malcolm Thompson in Columbia Falls; and Jodi Wolff of the Raptor Room and Rod and June Ash in Condon.

Special thanks goes to local business, including Gary Byrer of the Bigfork IGA who purchased 15 sacks at our price and will, in turn, sell the seed in his store at the retail price. Larry Johnson of Mountain Valley Foods also purchased seed to be available at his store, and Rovers at Seeley Lake continue to make their store available as a drop for customers in that area.

Additional sacks of bird seed are still available at locations throughout the chapter. Seeds can still be purchased by calling any of the seed sales persons mentioned above.







## Mission Statement Completed

The mission statement of the Flathead Audubon Society has been completed and the finished product appears on page 5.

Giving credit where credit is due, the statement was the creation of the following Audubon members who served on the committee: Leo Keane, chairman; and Pattie Brown, Ed Prach and Carol Purchase. The finalized version was approved by the Board of Directors on November 8.



## What Can I Do To Help?

We're all busy, but we are Audubon members out of choice and through our interest in birds and the environment. What can you do to help? If you want to do more than just pay dues to further the Audubon causes, read on.

❧ **Donate** an item to be raffled at the general meeting. It can be anything of interest to birders: a bird house, a poster, a feeder, a handcrafted piece, etc. Contact Pattie Brown for more information.

❧ **Volunteer** to serve on a committee. Choose one where your interests lie and contact the chairman. (See the Board Directory on the back page.)

❧ **Ask** a friend with mutual interests to attend a meeting with you and encourage him/her to become an Audubon member.

❧ **Sign up** for the Christmas Bird Count. You won't be sorry and it could be the highlight of your birding year.

## Swan Bird Count Circle Forms

A new Audubon Christmas Bird Count Circle has been accepted for the Upper Swan Valley. The new bird count is co-sponsored by the Grounded Eagle Foundation and Flathead Audubon. The count will center on the U.S. Forest Service's Condon work station.

Ken Wolff, GEF executive director and manager of the Raptor Room, said that GEF members and Flathead Audubon members in the Swan are enthusiastic about participating in the count. "Local birders have talked about having our own count for years," he said.

Wolff said that as well as sponsoring the bird count, the GEF hoped to expand its activity and cooperate with Flathead Audubon on other local bird oriented activities, including habitat improvement.

Local birders will meet before the bird count date to discuss the count ground rules and have a refresher on bird identification. A potluck dinner and count tally will culminate the Christmas Bird Count Day.

The dates for the count and meeting were not yet set at the *Pileated Post* deadline.

Those interested in more information and those who wish to participate in the count should contact Rod Ash at 754-2289.

## Meet the Board

(This feature spotlights Flathead Audubon members who serve on the Board of Directors.)



**Name:** Sharon Bergman

**Position:** Newsletter editor

**Board Member:** Since 9/90

**Originally from:** Arizona

**Present home:** Big Arm

**Occupation:** Retired

**Printed on Recycled Paper**





## ❖ President's Corner

Change is scary. The status quo may not be desirable, but at least you know what to expect.

As a chapter, we have changed. We started as the Bigfork Bird Club many, many years ago. Times were simpler then, change was very slow, the birders and conservationists were smaller in numbers, and we concentrated on our feathered friends -- identifying them, feeding them, watching their antics ... it was pretty noncontroversial bird watching.

We've grown larger and our membership has shifted over the last 15 years. We've taken on many more educational projects: Audubon Adventures for 40 school rooms, educational grants, field trips and special community programs. As a result, we began selling sunflower seeds to finance our projects. We local bird watchers feed birds all winter, and Audubon alone has sold upwards of 20 tons of seeds yearly to folks who like birds. Besides birds and their habitats, we've been involved in subdivision reform, recycling of solid waste concerns, wetlands and water quality issues, forest practices and biodiversity and parks issues. In short, we've come a long way.

Along those lines, the officers and board of directors, with input from the committee chairpersons, have decided to move the chapter's mailing address and financial accounts to Kalispell, in order to improve the flow of communications, and to gain easier access to our banking accounts, so we can pay bills a bit quicker. That move was pretty scary, even if it was necessary, because of our deep-seated ties to the Bigfork area.

Recently, we discovered that the Fish, Wildlife & Parks public meeting room in Kalispell would be available for our meetings on the second Monday of each month, for no charge. (We now pay \$20/month for the Methodist Church meeting room.) Now, the question -- should we take advantage of the Kalispell meeting place?

We will be polling the membership for input on this issue, and if we decide to move the meeting place, it will take effect in September, '94, about nine months from now. We will finish out this season at the Methodist Church. Since our membership is based mostly in the Kalispell/Whitefish area, we are hoping to get even better attendance by the people further north in the Flathead Valley. Polson people have a long drive, no matter what, but if the west side road is used, it's 3/4 of a mile shorter going straight to Kalispell than over to Bigfork.

Lots to think about, I know -- change can be uncomfortable for awhile. Come to our meetings and give us your ideas! ❖

**Brent Mitchell**

## Flathead Audubon Society Mission Statement

♦The Flathead Audubon Society is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society.

♦Our mission is to conserve birds, wildlife habitat and ecosystem diversity.

♦Awareness and appreciation of the natural world is promoted through educational activities and advocacy programs.

♦We work with diverse groups and agencies to achieve sound decisions on natural resource issues.

♦Our community outreach includes school programs, work projects and field trips.

♦While focusing our efforts in northwest Montana, we believe in the protection of the earth and all its inhabitants.





## 1993 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT APPROACHING

The **20th** annual Bigfork Christmas Count will be held on **Saturday, December 18th**. Part of the 94th annual nation-wide effort, the count comprises a one-day attempt to count all the birds within a 7.5 mile radius circle centered on the "Little Brown Church" north of Bigfork. A total of 129 different species have been seen during Bigfork Christmas Counts since 1974!

Over the past ten years, we have recorded an average of 9789 individuals of 75 species on the Bigfork count. Over 80 species have been recorded five recent years, the highest in the state. We also have the distinction of hosting the nation-wide high count for Wild Turkeys each of the last 5 years; 681 last year was the all-time national high count! Though we added no new species to our list last year, we had new high counts for 11 species, including species as diverse as Tundra Swan (233) and Snow Bunting (50). Sounds cold? It might not be. We also saw our first Three-toed Woodpecker since 1977, and Ruddy Ducks and Golden Eagles each for just the fourth time in 19 years. A 10-year summary of species recorded on the Bigfork count will be handed out at the December meeting.

We are hoping to have about 40 people in about 15 groups afield for this year's count. Dan Casey, the compiler, will be calling last year's participants to arrange area coverage. We will finalize arrangements at the December meeting, so plan to attend or give Dan a call at 857-3143 (evenings) or 752-5501 (days). There is a mandatory fee of \$5 per participant, to cover the editing and publishing costs of the annual CBC issue of American Birds. As in past years, there will be a potluck compilation dinner at the Bigfork Senior Center starting at 5:00 pm on the day of the count.

**Please plan on taking part in Montana's number one Christmas Count! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to join in, as are feeder-watchers and half-day helpers. Let's make this 20th count a special one!**



“...Birds are not rooted to the earth; they are the most elegant expression of the eloquence of life.”

— Roger Tory Peterson





## Give A Gift Membership That Shares Your Enjoyment of Nature All Year Long

When you give your first gift, you'll receive the limited edition 1993 Painted Bunting Suncatcher ornament. Give two or more gift memberships, and receive an additional bonus, Audubon's pocket guide, "A Selection of Familiar Birds of North America."

The more memberships you give, the more you'll save. Your first gift, or your own renewal, is just \$30, and each additional gift is just \$20 - a savings of 43% off basic membership dues! Remember, your chapter gets credit for each new membership and Audubon has more valuable members like you.

If the new member resides in our territory, they will be added to our chapter. If the new member lives elsewhere and in the territory of a chapter, they are assigned to their local chapter, and will receive the local chapter newsletter.

## Give the Gift of Nature and Help Audubon Grow!

Please enroll this individual as a member of the National Audubon Society and the chapter, with full membership benefits and a year of Audubon magazine.

Gift to:  
(PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Address

City State ZIP

Each additional gift at \$20 (and for your bonus gift):

Gift to:  
(PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Address

City State ZIP

Gift From:  
(PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Your Address

City State ZIP

7XSCO Chapter Code N 54

Please make your check payable to National Audubon Society and send to:  
National Audubon Society Membership Dept.  
P.O. Box 51000, Boulder, CO 80321-1000

## BETTER BIRDING



Owl: large head, short neck



Vulture: large bird, broad wings



Kite: pointed wings, long tail



Accipiter: short wings, long tail



Harrier: long wings and long tail



Buteo: broad wings, short wide tail



Falcon: long pointed wings, long tail





## Flathead Audubon Society Directory

### 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	Kent Miller, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
Treasurer	Holly Butlett, P.O. Box 7821, Kalispell, MT 59904-0821	257-2025
Past President	Robin Magaddino, 2100 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4294

### DIRECTORS

1991-94	Sam Culotta, 979 Eastman Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4298
1991-94	Malcolm Thompson, P.O. Box 1105, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	892-4208
1993-96	Elaine Corrigan, 7405 Valley View Rd, Polson, MT 59860	883-6895
1993-96	Carol Purchase, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100

### CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Rod Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Field Trips	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	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	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Membership	June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Newsletter	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Lane, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
Program	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028
	Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Refuge Projects	Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Schools, Clubs	Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Road, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-6344
Wetlands/Waterfowl	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
	Neil Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

### 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 p.m. followed by a special program at 8 p.m. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the 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 \$5.00 per year.

**Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month.**

### 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	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual Renewal	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$38	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Individual	\$21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Family	\$23	<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

N54 7XCHA

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 \$5 ☐

to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership;  
P.O. Box 1129  
Condon, Montana 59826



P.O. Box 9173  
KALISPELL, MONTANA 59904

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
Postage PAID  
Permit No. 3  
BIGFORK, MT  
59911-0715



DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY