



Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 19

Number 2

February, 1994

Ninepipe Needs Your Help!

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, writes that we have a golden opportunity to help the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge and to stop uncontrolled subdivisions that are threatening this important wetland complex.

The Ninepipe Ecosystem proposal seeks to get Land and Water Conservation Funds to acquire 3,000 acres of fee title and 10,000 acres of conservation easements in the Ninepipe area. The proposal has been approved by the Salish and Kootenai tribal officials and by the Lake County Commissioners.

Letters need to be written to all three members of our Congressional delegation by February 8. U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service will be contacting our delegation during the 3rd week of February about the proposal and they will be more interested if they have heard from people in Montana.

The delegation needs letters of support for the project. The main point to make in your letter is that we would like them to request that Congress allocate \$1.5 million dollars of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) money for the Ninepipe project. Emphasize that the money is LWCF money which is to be allocated.

The project is rated 8th out of approximately 150 projects slated for LWCF money, but unfortunately, it did not make it into President Clinton's budget because of the paperwork.

MAKE NOTE Of It! ✍

◆February General Meeting 2/14/94
United Methodist Church, Bigfork
Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

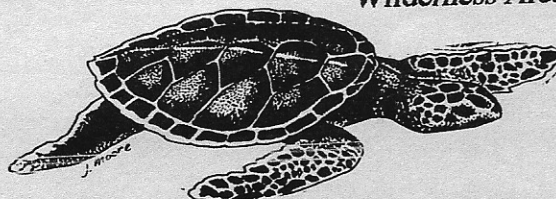
◆March General Meeting 3/14/94
United Methodist Church, Bigfork
Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

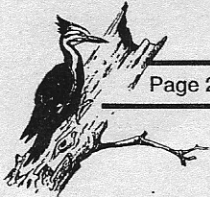
◆The regular monthly meetings are preceded by a dinner meeting of the Board of Directors, which is held at the Bigfork Inn at 5 pm. The board meeting is open to all interested people.

Program for February Meeting

Al and Beth Koss, both employees of the USFS, Flathead National Forest, will give a joint presentation on their "Russian Forestry Tour". The program will include a slide presentation, providing a glimpse of Russian natural resource management in the Moscow and St. Petersburg areas, as well as a view of Russian culture.

Beth is a forestry technician at the Glacier View Ranger District, with the responsibility for providing silviculture input for ecosystem management projects throughout the forest. Al is a recreation forester for the Spotted Bear Ranger District and he is responsible for recreation and wilderness management. He spends considerable time in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. ✍





The Editor's Spotting Scope

During the holiday season I spent several weeks in California (BE: before earthquake), with the opportunity to do some bird watching during my travels. Always seeking potential subject matter for this column, I wondered what bird would be the most memorable of the trip.

Would it be the mockingbirds in my nephew's backyard? the hawks soaring over Salinas Valley? or the cormorants and brown pelicans on Bird Rock near Point Lobos? They were all fascinating to watch, but it was a small bird on the beach at Monterey Bay that caught my fancy and continually held my interest.

A member of the sand piper family, the sanderling is described in the bird book as a shore bird which "chases the retreating waves like a clockwork toy." I came across large flocks of sanderlings when I took a morning walk on the beach and, because they were there, I took morning walks for the duration of my stay. During those walks I developed a theory about the ocean tides.

A flock of sanderlings operates as one unit while feeding, chasing the waves back into the ocean and then running like hell for the shore when the next wave breaks, their tiny legs a blur of energy. I never ever saw one caught unaware by an incoming wave; if the water came too close, they just lifted off and flew.

With this activity on the shore, following the waves in and out constantly, I came to the conclusion that sanderlings, not the moon, control the tides. The tide goes out when they retreat to the beach to rest after their frenetic activity. When they return to work the waves, the tide comes in, with the ocean challenged to catch and douse them.

The scientific world may not accept my theory about sanderlings and the tides, but it's almost as logical as their notion that a bright ball of light in the sky at night controls the tides.

Sharon Bergman



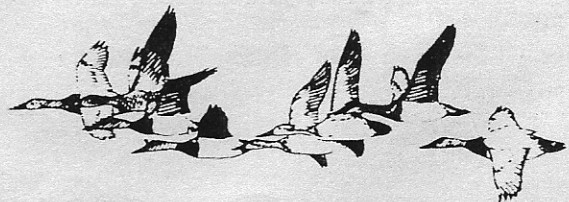
BirdAmerica

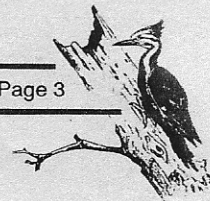
The annual Audubon Birdathon has grown over the past decade into **BirdAmerica**. The new title and guidelines were created to: a) involve chapters which would like to be a part of the fund-raising effort, but were not birdathoners, and b) give additional fund-raising opportunities to those chapters that would like to expand the birdathon event.

BirdAmerica guidelines are this: Flathead Audubon should do any combination of fund-raising events desired: i.e., an auction, raffle, birdathon or any other creative means of raising money. One-half of the monies raised goes to the regional office and the other half stays here to help support our programs. (We usually describe the Audubon Adventures program for schools as a tangible result of our efforts.)

The Grand Prize for BirdAmerica 1994 will be an all expense paid trip for two, including airfare, for one week in New Brunswick, Canada. Our chapter goal for fund-raising this year is \$2,500. If we can raise over \$2,000 we will earn two chances toward the Grand Prize for the chapter (one chance for each \$500 sent to regional).

At each of our meetings, we will be open to new ideas for fund-raising and will have sign-up sheets for various events. The task of fund-raising becomes an attainable goal when each person does a small part! Susannah Casey





❖ President's Corner - Brent Mitchell

Suspicious confirmed.....we were right!

In Flathead County, the Cooperative Planning Coalition hired Design Workshop to do an updated master plan based upon the wishes of the people in the several neighborhoods in the county. The results are coming in, and environmental, wildlife, and scenic values are high on the list.

Participants were asked, at public meetings, their goals for updating the master plan. 79% wanted to protect water quality (#1), 74% wanted air quality protected (#2), 62% wanted other natural resources protected (#5). When asked if certain land types should be further developed, they said protection was needed for:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-------|
| #1 | Underground water supply areas | (66%) |
| #2 | Scenic areas | (61%) |
| #4 | Sensitive wildlife habitat | (54%) |
| #5 | River areas | (53%) |
| #6 | Farm and ranch lands | (52%) |
| #7 | Wetlands | (52%) |



The 5 most important land uses identified were:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-------|
| #1 | Underground water supply areas | (53%) |
| #2 | River areas | (50%) |
| #3 | Farm and ranch lands | (47%) |
| #4 | Scenic areas | (45%) |
| #5 | Sensitive wildlife habitat | (43%) |
| #6 | Wetlands | (25%) |

(For 10 bonus points, look at the lists above, and count how many of these categories account for prime bird habitats!)

Were the folks who answered the survey a bunch of newcomers from out of state who live in vacation homes a few choice months of the year? Not a chance!

46% have lived here over 20 years (56% over 16 yrs)

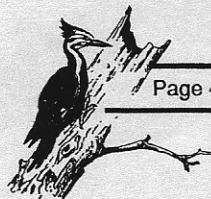
90% live here year round

86% own land or buildings, and

91% are registered voters

Sounds like citizens concerned about environmental, wildlife, and scenic issues are actually "locals." Now that makes me feel good!

Flathead Audubon donated \$500 to the CPC in 1993. Why? We believe in land use planning and we believe that valuable resources and the quality of life will be lost if we don't plan for the increased growth that's expected. Other counties might like to try the Flathead Solution. So far, the process is working.....let's stay involved!



Bigfork Bird Count a Success

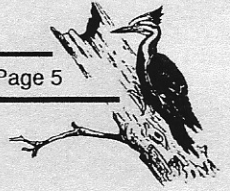
by Dan Casey

December 18, 1993. Totals: 82 species, plus 4 during the count week; 16,646 individuals.

The totals are higher than our 10-year averages of 75 species and 9,789 individuals. This was the 6th year that over 80 species were seen. There were 35 observers in 12 field parties and another 8 at feeders. They logged over 75 hours and 350 miles. Mild weather contributed to the excellent count totals.

This 20th Bigfork count set several new milestones. Two new species, the Sandhill Crane and Yellow-rumped Warbler, brought our list to 129 species seen. New high count totals (in bold below) were set for seven other species. Yes, another (probable) national high count for Wild Turkeys was set, with 706 counted. The other species in bold print have been seen three or fewer times on the Bigfork count. Four species were seen during count week (cw), but not on count day. Most notable was a female Brambling which showed up at a feeder on the day after the count, for Montana's 4th state record, all from the Flathead/Swan Valleys. This Eurasian finch species shows up consistently in the United States only in the Aleutian Islands and coastal Alaska!

Common Loon	1	Hairy Woodpecker	18
Western Grebe	1	Northern Flicker	38
Great Blue Heron	11	Pileated Woodpecker	14
Tundra Swan	243	Gray Jay	2
Canada Goose	4326	Steller's Jay	13
Green-winged Teal	1	Blue Jay	2
Mallard	4974	(Clark's Nutcracker)	cw
Northern Pintail	3	Black-billed Magpie	78
Gadwall	13	American Crow	24
American Wigeon	4	Common Raven	162
Canvasback	71	Black-capped Chickadee	306
Redhead	920	Mountain Chickadee	67
Ring-necked Duck	2	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	19
Greater Scaup	548	Red-breasted Nuthatch	206
Lesser Scaup	9	White-breasted Nuthatch	6
Common Goldeneye	321	Pygmy Nuthatch	37
Barrow's Goldeneye	24	Brown Creeper	5
Bufflehead	70	American Dipper	10
Hooded Merganser	15	Golden-crowned Kinglet	48
Common Merganser	81	Townsend's Solitaire	5
Red-breasted Merganser	3	American Robin	1
Bald Eagle	22	Bohemian Waxwing	475
Northern Harrier	3	Cedar Waxwing	311
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Northern Shrike	7
Cooper's Hawk	1	European Starling	64
(Northern Goshawk)	cw	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Red-tailed Hawk	5	American Tree Sparrow	20
Rough-legged Hawk	22	Song Sparrow	14
Golden Eagle	2	White-throated Sparrow	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	18	Dark-eyed Junco	78
Ruffed Grouse	5	Snow Bunting	30
Wild Turkey	706	Red-winged Blackbird	236
American Coot	751	(Brambling)	cw
Sandhill Crane	2	Pine Grosbeak	26
Killdeer	6	(Purple Finch)	cw
Ring-billed Gull	11	Cassin's Finch	18
Herring Gull	2	House Finch	126
gull, species	8	Red Crossbill	148
Rock Dove	18	Common Redpoll	125
Mourning Dove	27	Pine Siskin	122
Great Horned Owl	1	American Goldfinch	42
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	Evening Grosbeak	340
Belted Kingfisher	5	House Sparrow	119
Downy Woodpecker	24		



More Successful Bird Counts

Upper Swan Valley. The first Upper Swan Valley Christmas Bird Count was held on December 29. The 15-mile diameter count circle was centered on the Condon Work Station, USFS and was co-sponsored by the Grounded Eagle Foundation and Flathead Audubon. Participating in the count were 31 field and feeder observers, all but four of whom were Condon residents.

Seen on count day were 31 bird species and 1,178 individuals, with two additional species seen during count week for a total of 33 species. The most unusual sighting for the winter time was a Lincoln sparrow. The largest numbers of birds were Ravens (142), Black-capped Chickadees (196), Mountain Chickadees (149) and Red-breasted Nuthatches (73). Two Golden Eagles and 17 Bald Eagles were sighted. The lack of Juncos (only one observed) was a matter of some concern.

Ten field parties traveled 25 miles by skis, 7 miles on foot, 5 miles by snowmobile and 101 miles by car on count day. There was a total of 75 hours spent in observation. Among the participants there was much enthusiasm for the event and future counts are planned.

Ninepipe Wildlife Refuge. The bird count at the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge was conducted on a mild January 2 and led by Jim Rogers of Polson. Six field parties were formed from the 14 people participating.

Jim reported that 54 species were tallied, which is an average count for the area, and included 10,175 individuals. The largest number counted of one species was 5,036 mallards. A record number of Rough-legged Hawks, (226) was sighted which surpassed the previous high of 133. Two new species for this count included two White-breasted Nuthatches and 5 Turkeys. Jim commented, "With so many turkeys in the Bigfork area, it was natural to expect some of them to wind up at Ninepipe."

Member of the Month

☼ Elaine Corrigan

The newsletter was at the printer's when catastrophe struck – the building next door caught fire and burned to the ground. Fortunately, Gull Printing in Polson sustained only water and smoke damage. Elaine Corrigan was responsible for the newsletter mailing; and it was her first time to do it alone. Undaunted, she worked things out with the printer and the newsletter was mailed with only a slight delay.

That's typical of Elaine, to meet problems head-on and get them resolved.

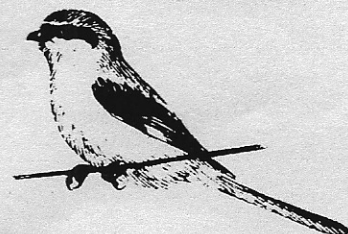
Born in Glasgow, Montana, and raised and schooled in Ronan, she took advantage of the close proximity to the Mission Range to further her interest in wildlife. "My sister and I hiked the Missions," she said, "and watched the deer and bear around our place."

She met her husband while attending nursing school and they were married right after her graduation. They have five children and five grandchildren, and now reside in Valley View out of Polson.

Elaine commented, "I was an RN first in obstetrics and then in ICU, but I'm now retired, to have more time to play." Playing includes hiking, cross country skiing and birding.

She first became involved with Flathead Audubon when she started feeding birds and wanted to be able to identify them and to learn about habitat. She was elected as a Director last year and serves on the newsletter committee. Her abiding interest is "trying to protect the wilderness so my grandchildren can enjoy some of it as I have."

Elaine Corrigan - Flathead Audubon Member of the Month; serving with firm resolution and tenacity for the betterment of the chapter. ☼





Grounded Eagle Notes

Here it is, the middle of winter already, and by this time eagles are usually paired and slowly working their way northward. We have had several reports of Golden Eagles wintering in western Montana this year ... more reports than in previous years. We usually discount some reports as immature or subadult Bald Eagles. However, we have treated more Golden Eagles this winter than in any previous year, which may be a reliable indicator of more 'yellow-heads' wintering in western Montana.

The Eagle Flight Room. At this writing, the Eagle Flight Room contains five eagles: three Golden Eagles and two Balds. Two are vehicle collision victims, one is here due to a gunshot, one from a powerline strike and one from a train collision. Two, one of each flavor, will be released later in the month.

We have two permanent resident eagles, a male and a female. Both birds are nine years old and have lived here for six years.

Interesting to Note. It is possible to determine the sex of both the Bald Eagle and the Golden Eagle by measuring their feet and toes! The procedure was pioneered at the Bald Eagle Recovery Center in Oklahoma. Females have considerably larger feet and toes.

Both species may winter roost together and have been seen locally feeding on carrion at the same time. We keep both species together in the Flight Room (we also keep them well-fed). The Balds seem to realize they are overmatched and will keep a distance of a couple of feet. Although I have broken-up many dog fights, I would not relish having to separate eagles doing serious battle. Luckily, they do not battle like domestic dogs will.

Thanks to the Fish & Wildlife Service in Creston, we were able to document that Golden Eagles will readily eat fish ... namely fresh salmon. A friend at the hatchery delivered 276 pounds (482 fish) of two-year old male salmon, which was about a 60-day supply for the ospreys and eagles.

Golden or Balds?. How can you tell the difference? Subadult Balds can appear similar to Golden Eagles, especially when viewed without binoculars and at a great distance.

First-year Golden Eagles grow the characteristic golden nape by their first fall and will usually have white wing patches, carpal (wrist area) patches often visible from the top and bottom of the wings. Young Golden Eagles will have solid white at the base of the tail; often about half the tail will be white. The young Balds do not have white on the tail, and will be mostly dark, gaining white on their bellies and backs for the next couple of years.

By the third year, a Bald's bill begins to turn yellow as do their eyes. A Golden's eyes remain brown and the bill remains a 'horn' color. The Golden Eagles have feathers to the toes, while the lower two inches or so of a Bald's legs are without feathers. Balds have noticeably larger heads and beaks: some Golden Eagles have heads that appear small for the size of the bird. As a Golden Eagle ages to maturity, the white in the tail decreases, replaced by wavy, gray bands.

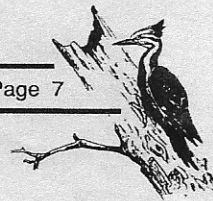
The greatest threat to eagles is too much humanity causing the loss of habitat integrity. Every time an eagle dies from human causes, a part of us also dies.

Ken Wolff, Director

Welcome to Those New Among Us



Charlo: Nancy Goss; **Columbia Falls:** Jonathan Alper; **Dixon:** Gertrude Breuer; **Hungry Horse:** Helen Hay; **Kalispell:** Rozanne Bischoff, Denise Conner, Lona Lee Evans and Judy Powell; **Lakeside:** Philip Iverson; **Marion:** Sid Goodrich; **Plains:** Phyllis Falconer; **Polson:** Rebecca Dubois, John Gilmer, John Latrielle, Phyllis Miller and P. Quail; **Ronan:** Jim - K Bird Pelletier; **Troy:** B. Leisz; **West Glacier:** Jane Cole; and **Whitefish:** Arden Joy.



⌘ Announcements ⌘

⌘Citizens for a Better Flathead will hold their 1994 Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 26 in Ballroom A at Cavanaugh's in Kalispell. The meeting will bring together the CFBF members with public officials, department staff personnel and representatives of other organizations, (Flathead Audubon) to discuss local issues.

The public is invited to attend the afternoon session, from 1-4:30 pm, to discuss transportation, land use and solid waste management issues in Flathead County.

The evening program begins at 7:30 pm and the featured speaker will be Edward T. McMahon, Director of the American Greenways Program at The Conservation Fund in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. McMahon is co-founder and former president of Scenic America.

⌘The Flathead Audubon Nominating Committee has been appointed and will prepare a slate of candidates for presentation at the Annual Meeting in May. Those on the committee include Rod Ash, Elaine Corrigan and Ed Prach, with Brent Mitchell an ex-officio member. Positions to be filled include all officers and four directors. Those interested in running for office or nominating someone should contact any member of the committee.

⌘Address changes for Audubon members or questions about membership can be made simply by calling the National Audubon office 1-800-274-4201. Your correct address is important to *The Pileated Post* because without it, the newsletter cannot be forwarded. If you have a problem receiving the newsletter, contact June Ash (754-2289).

Opinions Sought by Board on Meeting Room

The Flathead Audubon Board of Directors wants YOUR opinion and input. A ballot will appear in the March issue of the newsletter on the question of whether the Chapter should move the regular membership meeting place from the Bigfork Methodist Church to the Fish, Wildlife & Parks meeting room in Kalispell, beginning with the new fiscal year (September). To enable you to be an informed member in making your choice next month, the following is the basic information on each meeting room.

BIGFORK METHODIST CHURCH

Yearly rental: - \$126

Kitchen facilities: Full kitchen

Meeting Room: Chairs, display tables, good lighting.

Parking: Street parking, gravel & dirt, street light.

Access: In Bigfork residential area, at the junction of Commerce & Electric Streets.

FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS BLDG.

Yearly Rental: -00-

Kitchen Facilities: Sink, cupboard and coffee pot.

Meeting Room: Chairs, tables for display and meeting usage, black boards, audio/visual facilities, good lighting.

Parking: Black-top parking lot, well-lighted.

Access: In Kalispell, on Meridian Road, just off Highway 2W, near the Mall.



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
	Neal 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
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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

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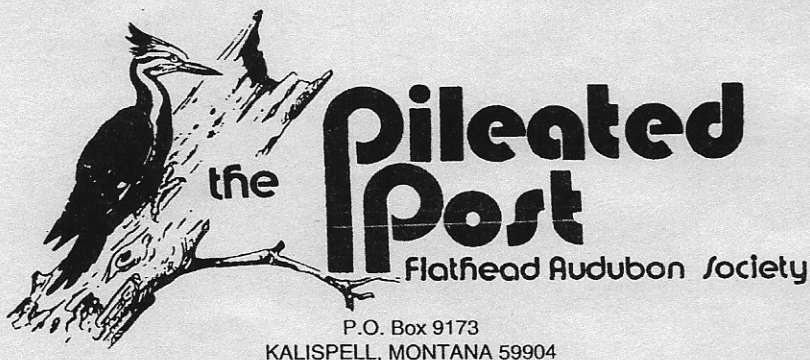
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Send this application and your check to:

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

For Newsletter Only Send \$5 ☐

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



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