



Pilented Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 19

Number 3

March, 1994

VOLUNTEERISM UNDER ATTACK

Almost one hundred years ago, the National Audubon Society initiated the nation's first coordinated bird monitoring effort, the Christmas Bird Count. The data base provided by the Christmas Bird Count constitutes the longest continuous record of bird populations available in North America. **The value of the data generated by the Count and the motives of volunteers like you were recently viciously attacked on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.**

Late in October the House passed H.R. 1845, a bill to establish the National Biological Survey (NBS), a new agency within the Department of Interior. The purpose of the Survey is to better assess the Nation's biological resources, including birds.

Unfortunately, when the House passed this bill it also adopted harmful amendments, including one by Rep. Billy Tauzin (D-LA) to remove a provision authorizing the Secretary of Interior to accept the services of volunteers in conducting the Survey. Although attorneys are still evaluating the practical effect of this amendment (if it becomes law), the sponsors' intent is clear: they do not trust Audubon members and others to gather data, such as the Christmas Bird Count, for a national biological data base. Consider these comments made on the House floor:

"It is hard to believe that an interest group could actually be one of the volunteers, that we could have the...Audubon Society...qualify as volunteers to go out and collect data...And in essence we are creating an environmental gestapo that will

go on people's private property..." [Rep. Jack Fields, R-TX].

"Our complaint is that the volunteers, nonscience volunteers with a special agenda...are going to be part and parcel of...the survey...You start with bad science, you end up with bad science..." [Rep. Tauzin].

The Members who supported this amendment insult the quality and integrity of volunteers whose efforts date back almost a century. If the opponents of the National Biological Survey have their way the Secretary of the Interior would be prohibited from putting CBC results and other volunteer-generated bird data into a national data base. This would be a disaster for bird monitoring programs—CBCs and Breeding Bird Surveys, to name two—most of which rely heavily on volunteers in the field.

What You Can Do:

Tell your Senators (Honorable _____, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) and Representatives (Honorable _____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515) that you oppose the "volunteer provision" in H.R. 1845 as passed by the House, and ask them to support the use of volunteers to collect data that could be used in the NBS. If you prefer, call your Senators (202-224-3121) and Representatives (202-225-3121). **For more information, contact Star Senner, Director, Migratory Bird Conservation Program, National Audubon Society, 4150 Darley Avenue # 5, Boulder, CO 80303. Tel: 303-499-7855.**


MAKE NOTE of it!

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

◆ **April General Meeting** 4/11/94
United Methodist Church, Bigfork
Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

Program for March Meeting

Denver W. Holt, founder and president of the Owl Research Institute, Missoula, will be the featured speaker. His presentation, "The Natural History of Montana Owls," will be accented with his personal experiences and illustrated with slides.

Holt is a field researcher and has contributed significantly to the knowledge of Montana owls. He has published numerous papers at the scientific, natural history and agency report levels. His research includes owls of the east coast of the country as well as the west. 



The Editor's Spotting Scope

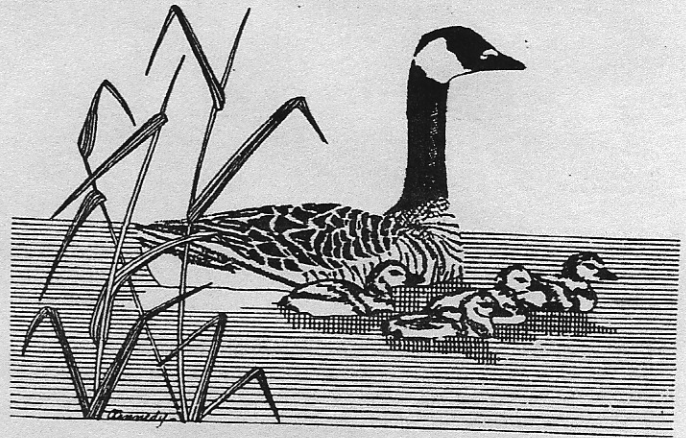
Not long ago, I was surprised to see a young Canada goose munching on the fallen goodies beneath one of my feeders. My first reaction was "Isn't that neat," and the next thought was "Don't go tell your family and friends about this – there'll be a real mess in the yard."

That's not an uncommon reaction to geese. A special Fish, Wildlife & Parks scoping meeting was held recently in Big Arm on "how to deal with geese congregating in residential areas." It's a problem that's had to be dealt with for many years.

Canada geese are easily recognized, not only at ground level, but also flying in the familiar "V" formation. The sight and sound of flying geese stirs feelings deep within most of us. (How do they decide who will lead? Is that a job that falls to the male or female or do they share the work equally?) I have a friend who counts the geese in each formation and if there is an uneven number, she is saddened because geese mate for life and it is obvious that one has lost its mate.

Many of us have hummed along with Frankie Laine when he sang about the wild goose. (And if you did, that places you in my generation ... aren't you lucky!) In the book "Chesapeake", James Michener had a secondary story about a goose pair that held your attention as much as the main story on the history of Chesapeake Bay.

When I lived in Wisconsin, many years ago in the fall, some friends and I drove to Horicon Marsh because we heard we could see geese as they migrated south. What an understatement! Wave after wave of V-formations flew in from the north and landed with a cacophony of goose conversation. We were overwhelmed. Less than 20 feet from the parking lot were hundreds of geese, and



thousands were spread out across the marsh and still more continued to fly in.

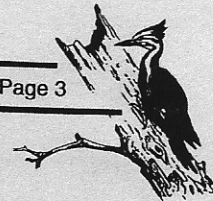
Where do you put them? The Horicon Marsh Wildlife Refuge was fenced and clearly marked, but the only ones who could read the signs were those of us who came to watch. Those who flew in, to rest and eat, landed in the most inviting place – the farmers' corn fields.

And here you had the age-old confrontation: Do what you want in the refuge, but stay out of my fields! For many years the farmers worked with the Horicon Refuge people to solve the problem. Among the strategies tried were shooting off noise cannons and paddling canoes through the marsh waterways, but nothing seemed to work.

The geese kept coming ... and so did the people who wanted to watch, increasing more each year. On fall weekends, the main roads through the marsh and the few parking lots were clogged with cars, vans and pickups – mine included. (I went every year for 15 years.) It is a continued favorite segment with Charles Kuralt and his "Sunday Morning" television show.

The cannons didn't scare them: people paddling canoes, taking pictures and looking at them with binoculars didn't phase them. "....I don't know what the wild goose knows; and I can't go where the wild goose goes....", so sang Frankie Laine, and that just about says it all about our fascination with geese. But, please, geese, not in my yard.

Sharon Bergman



Member of the Month

☼ Carol Purchase

A black bear walked into the King Canyon, California camp, looking for food. Spotting an ice chest, the bear walked over the top of two young sisters in a sleeping bag and picked up the chest, flinging it across the camp to get it open. The bear eventually got to the food and the girls quickly lost their sleep, but the experience did not sour the family on camping, "although my mother has never liked bears since," Carol Purchase added.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area, Carol was exposed to the outdoors at an early age, as the family did a lot of camping. "We lived in Los Altos," she said, "and the community was a good example of a lack of planning. It went from orchards and light agriculture to what is called 'tract-mansions' in about 10 or 15 years."

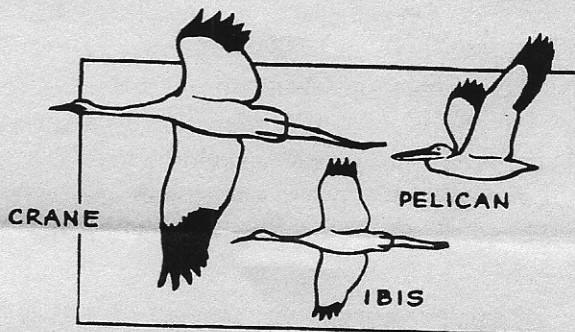
Carol obtained a botany degree at the University of Washington and getting into watershed management, she attended the University of Minnesota for her masters degree in forest hydrology. She spent time in West Africa with the Peace Corp, and commented that there are no waste management problems in Africa "as nothing is ever thrown away. Everything is used and reused and used again."

In 1987, Carol went to work for the Forest Service in La Grande, Oregon, and it was here that she met her husband-to-be, Kent Miller. "I was working in Stand Exams and he was in Wildlife and we were married on Thanksgiving Day in 1988."

Currently, she is a hydrologist with the Forest Service in Whitefish. "When both of you work in forestry, you have to make career decisions based on a lot of factors, such as which one can get the best job which will support the family until the other one can find a good slot. We transferred here when I put in for it, and we feel we are so lucky to be in this area."

Carol had been an Audubon member when she attended college in Washington and after moving to Whitefish, she and Kent started attending the meetings and going on field trips. She was elected as a director in May, 1993. "I am very interested in recycling and waste disposal," she said. "It just seems to me that we could do more than we're doing."

Carol Purchase — Flathead Audubon's Member of the Month: dedicating her vocation and avocation to the entire watershed and not just a part of it. ☼



☎ Birding Hotline Coming Soon

The Flathead Audubon Board of Directors recently authorized the installation of a Birding Hotline which can be used by members and non-members alike. This special service to birders will be installed possibly by the time the newsletter is in the mail, and the new hotline telephone number will appear in the April issue and in all future issues.

The birding hotline will have a taped response for the caller, which will have up-to-date birding information. The caller may then leave a message, if desired, about bird sightings that could be included in the next taped response. The hotline will be managed by Audubon volunteers. ☎

Printed on Recycled Paper.



From the Raptor Room

Soon the spring and summer birds will be showing up. Now is the time to clean birdhouses and to put up more.

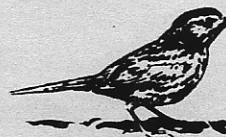
When putting up birdhouses, face them to the south or southeast. Different species of cavity-nesters have different placement requirements. For Chickadees and Nuthatches, place the houses in wooded areas, 6'-12' high; for Kestrels, at least 10' high along the edge of meadows; for Bluebirds, 5'-6' high along fields (fenceposts work fine); for Flickers, 6'-12' high in wooded areas; and for Tree Swallows and Violet-green swallows, 6'-10' near the water.

On our place, we maintain 8 to 10 houses of swallows each year; consequently, we do not have a mosquito problem. Some quick math: we have eight pairs of swallows, each pair raising four babies, and each swallow eating over 100 mosquitoes daily. In one month, the eight families of swallows will eat at least 150,000 mosquitoes



right here in the yard.

Nearby nesting nighthawks also help. Prey and predator in action.

The same rules apply to mice and owls, ground squirrels and hawks and to deer and lions. The greater the prey, the more predators. Ken Wolff, Director



Thank you! Thank you!

 A big Flathead Audubon thanks goes to Tom Ulrich of West Glacier. Tom is a professional wildlife photographer and he recently donated two boxes of slides of local birds which will be put to use in the chapter's educational programs. Your donation is much appreciated, Tom. 

(Please Clip & Mail)

Flathead Audubon Meeting Site

The Flathead Audubon Board of Directors wants YOUR input on whether the regular membership meeting should continue to be held in the Bigfork Methodist Church Meeting Room or should be held in the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Meeting Room in Kalispell, starting with the September meeting.

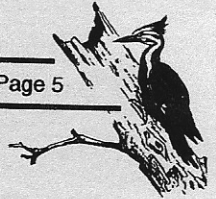
Please mark your choice, clip this form and mail in an envelope to:

Flathead Audubon Meeting Site

**P.O. Box 9173,
Kalispell, MT 59904.**

☐ **BIGFORK METHODIST
CHURCH MEETING ROOM**
Commerce & Electric Streets
Bigfork, Montana

☐ **FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
MEETING ROOM**
490 N. Meridian Rd.
Kalispell, Montana



President's Corner

The following letter has been sent to each member of the Flathead County Parks Board:

Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, a unique 440+ acre island area is located in the floodplain between the main stem of the Flathead and Stillwater Rivers. It is unique beyond the ecology that surrounds it, because it is the only state natural area in Montana, and the state has leased it to the Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department. But, according to news articles and board minutes, the county parks board may want to dump it. This is the second time the parks board has given serious consideration to letting the lease go. Originally, the cost of the lease was \$200/yr and the board thought that was too much. So the Flathead Audubon Board of Directors said, "We'll pay it and do the studies that the lease requires." That was 1-1/2 to 2 years ago. The board backed off of our offer to pay the lease, but said we could vie with another group (Biological Station at Yellow Bay) to do the studies. We studied, Yellow Bay did not. Dan Casey and field trip participants surveyed the bird life and made notes on trails, vegetation (weeds), and violations of the lease; i.e., tree stands for hunting. Others have noted evidence of baiting with salt and corn, also illegal.

Last week in the Daily InterLake, the parks board said they needed help (again) because the state had increased the lease fee to \$550 and they needed money from "somebody" or they would drop the lease. Again, Flathead Audubon stepped in, and said again that we would pay the lease, and that we are interested in managing the natural area for the public. After discussions, FAS wrote a check to the county Parks & Recreation Dept on 2/17/94, to cover the lease for another year. In that year's time, we'll try to solidify an agreement with the state and/or FCP&R, so that we don't have to go through this "on again/off again" lease problem. We want to stabilize the management of this beautiful and biologically rich public natural area. Perhaps the County will buy it outright? Perhaps we can stabilize the lease price for a longer period of time. The community is behind retention of the island area and two individuals have contacted us and will split this year's added lease cost with us. Additionally, others have donated money to a trust account for the lease payment in the future.

I hope I'm wrong when I say this, but in my conversations with Parks Director Norwood and park board members, I sense a reluctance to acknowledge and accept Flathead Audubon's involvement in this lease issue. Perhaps, it is because FCP&R really has no plan and only a passive (at best) commitment to the natural area. If the park board has "bigger fish to fry," then let us take over, sublease, and manage the Owen Sowerwine Area. We are more than willing to fulfill the conditions on the natural area, pay the lease, and keep it open to the public. With our involvement, everyone wins.

Brent Mitchell

**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

Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949

OFFICE

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"/>
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Family	\$38	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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

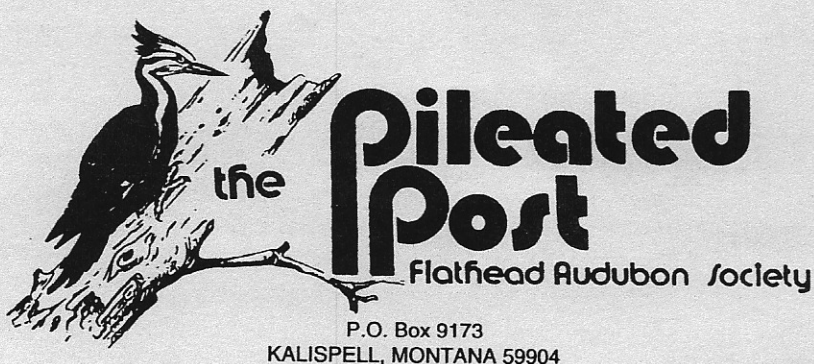
City

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



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