



Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 19

Number 8

November, 1994

Flathead Audubon to Host Spring Council Meeting

Plans are underway for Flathead Audubon to host the annual spring meeting of Montana Audubon Council. This special meeting will attract members of all the Montana local chapters.

At a recent meeting of the FAS Board of Directors it was decided that the theme will be "Development, Land-Use Planning, etc., etc."

An MAC committee will formulate plans for the programs, panel discussion, keynote speaker, meeting site, etc. Leo Keane and Patti Brown head up the committee and volunteers will be graciously accepted. Contact Leo or Patti and let them know you're interested. Your input is invaluable.



Endangered Species Reports Wanted

Flathead Audubon now has two Endangered Species Coordinators: Ron and Marie Sperandeo. They recently attended a special meeting in Helena with the Montana Audubon Council to learn more about the program. Your assistance is needed. If you see or hear any comments about endangered species — good or bad — contact Ron or Marie at 1550 Barnaby Lake Rd, Eureka, MT 59917; 882-4834.

Take Note!

➤ November General Meeting

Monday, 11/14/94

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell

Meeting: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

NOVEMBER PROGRAM —

Threatened by Success is a program that will be presented by Bob Ballou, former president of the Montana Audubon Council and previously a member of Flathead Audubon. He is a retired wildlife biologist with a long-held concern for our human population explosion.

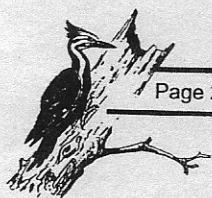
The program will examine how the problems of human population growth, natural resource consumption and polluting technologies are inseparable. The carrying capacity is the concept that unites them.

You will find out what is being done about the problems and learn what you can do toward a sustainable world.



Birding Hotline — 756-5595

Don't forget to make use of the Flathead Audubon birding hotline. It's a birding service provided by the chapter for members and non-members alike. In addition to obtaining information, you should call and report any of your special sightings so they can be shared with others who call in.



The Editor's Spotting Scope

Like other birders, when I go on a trip it's just as important to pack the binoculars and bird book as it is to pack clean socks and underwear. Regardless of the type of trip (business, pleasure, etc.) when I arrive at my destination, I check for potential birding areas. There's always the possibility of finding the time to explore a new refuge or preserve.

Recently, while visiting a friend in Reno, we drove away from the city and casinos and headed into the countryside for Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge. Anaho Island is a rocky peak that rises from the water of Pyramid Lake north of Reno. In 1913, the 248-acre island was set aside as a preserve and breeding ground for colony nesting birds. During the summer, nearly 9,500 American White Pelicans congregate on the island to nest.

Although this was early autumn, we hoped some of the pelicans would still be around to make note of and observe. The White Pelican would be a new species for me, and there was also a possibility of seeing a Caspian Tern, also new for me.

We enjoyed the fall day as we explored the shoreline of Pyramid Lake, seeing California Gulls, Great Blue Herons, Western Grebes and Mallard Ducks, but neither a white pelican or tern was to be seen.

We understood the birds might be observed at the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area, near Fallon, so off we went, even though we noticed storm clouds gathering in that direction. (Such is the tenacity of a bird watcher.) By the time we reached the wildlife area, the first storm of many weeks had passed through, leaving the road covered with a mantle of hail. Undaunted, we drove into the preserve and followed a dirt road described as a circle drive, with no success.

"How about that road?" my friend asked, pointing to another dirt road not too far from some outbuildings. And there it was: a huge wetland, complete with deep water pot holes, cattails and ducks, ducks, ducks, as well as geese. I had to get closer for a better look, so grabbed the binoculars and got out of the car to walk to a fence that separated the parking area from the pot holes.

I stepped into the gooiest mud I had seen (or stood in) for many years. A white, clay-like muck clung to my shoes, emitting a sucking sound as I walked and making me taller with each step taken. It never occurred to me not to continue to the fence. I mucked forward.

After spending several minutes looking at the geese and variety of ducks in the pot holes (no pelicans or terns around), I suggested that my friend drive back to the road and I would walk across the parking area and clean my shoes before joining her in the car. I sloshed through the muck until reaching a runoff of rain water between me and the road. A small rivulet of fast running, muddy water had to be crossed.

I found a place where the newly-created stream was rather narrow and there appeared to be some rocks on the far side. This was it — go for it! I leaped, cleared the water and sank in the mud up to my knee. Those weren't rocks at all! As I struggled to get myself out of the mud and the predicament, laughter could be heard from the car.

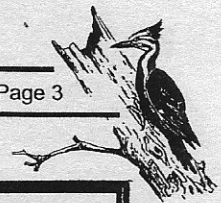
On the way back to town, we discussed the day and agreed it had been a good one. No White Pelicans or Caspian Terns were seen, but we had spent most of the day in the field, enjoying the outing and the birds that were seen.

Even though I returned with shoes full of mud, the day was more rewarding than if it had been spent in a casino. I guess one of the lures of birding is the personal satisfaction gained from what Nature has to offer — come rain or come shine.

Sharon Bergman



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ACTION ALERT

Conservation Comments

Did you know that there are approximately 4,000 miles of roads on the Flathead National Forest — enough to stretch from western Montana to New York City *and back*? Are you aware of their impact on water quality, native fisheries and wildlife habitat?

The comment period for Amendment 19 to the Flathead National Forest Master Plan is almost over. This amendment deals with, among other things, road building practices on the forest. It is imperative that you voice your support for *implementing* a program for *permanently closing* some forest service roads.

Roads impact Grizzly Bears by allowing human access into areas which used to be safe havens for the great bear. Roads also impact cavity nesting birds and mammals because snags along roads — sometimes even those left as "wildlife snags" during timber harvesting — end up as firewood! Finally, roads are the largest single source of sediments delivered to forested streams and rivers. These sediments clog spawning gravels used by Cut-throat and Bull Trout, two species of special concern.

Permanent road closure should involve obliterating the first several hundred yards of a road, seeding the road to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, and removing culverts and regrading unstable areas to prevent "blow outs" which release large amounts of sediment. It is not necessary to remove all trace of a road to realize the desired positive impacts.

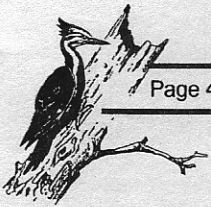
You can expect significant opposition from folks who enjoy motorized recreation. They'll argue that permanently closing roads is expensive and that public access to the forest will suffer. However: 1) it is less expensive to permanently close a road than to maintain a road; 2) many of the roads which are candidates for permanent closure are already closed by gates and berms; 3) even if 25% of the roads on the forest were permanently closed, 3,000 miles of road would remain. Access is the least of our worries!

Please take the time to write a letter stressing the importance of *implementing* a plan for *permanent* road closures! Outline the issues of concern (wildlife, water quality and control of noxious weeds) and remind forest managers that plenty of roads will remain on the forest. State that permanent road closures save money and that other forest values are being jeopardized by motorized access.

Before the end of November send your comments to Joel Holtrop, Forest Supervisor, and Jim Morrison, Forest Planning Staff Officer, Forest Supervisor's Office, 1935 3rd Avenue E, Kalispell, MT 59901. Or, if you prefer, call Jim Morrison at 755-5401.

Your comments as a concerned citizen of Flathead Valley will have more impact than you can imagine.

Geoff Poole, Conservation Chairman



The President's Page >>>

All day long I've been listening to the rumble and roar of heavy equipment down the hill from my house. Dump trucks are hauling in load after load of earth fill, while a bulldozer pushes the dumped mounds down the embankment and into the pond.

The pond, and the surrounding depression that forms it, is about half-filled now. They've been at it for two years. I've been surprised how long it has taken to level the pond. Perhaps it was larger than we thought. Too bad it wasn't born several acres larger.

My reckoning is the pond was born of a dislodged iceberg from the retreating glacier that scoured out Whitefish Lake. Sediments filled around the iceberg as the glacier melted, leaving a water-filled depression. Today, 12,000 years later, runoff from the surrounding uplands has kept the pond full through the spring and early summer. Each April, mallards used to arrive by the dozen to feast on the exuberant life of warming pondwater. Frogs would chortle through the spring nights. By June, the pond would teem with tadpoles, with kids coming to catch them in their gallon jugs. Summer after summer, horses would graze the upland pasture. In winter, all the neighborhood would turn out for sledding parties, down the snowy hill onto the ice enclosed pond.

Then one day the landowner put up a sign "FILL WANTED" and scraped a road across the pasture to the pond's edge. I was stunned. Other neighbors called the Army Corps of Engineers and asked about a permit. The engineers came out to look at the pond. They said this pond is too small, so no permit is required. I called the

landowner and inquired of his plans for the pond and pasture. This being valuable property, the place would be turned into house sites after filling. I asked if I might meet with him to discuss alternatives and he agreed.

That evening I sketched out a site plan for five homes on five acres with the pond as a common area and the natural focal point for the development. When the plan was shown to him, he was unimpressed. He wanted to build a lot of houses and the pond was in the way. In fact, he never called the pond a pond, but a "hole in the ground". Tough sell.

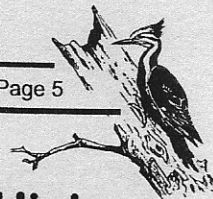
And so for these two years the filling has continued, accelerating now as the end nears, the bulldozers pushing dirt in from all sides. Soon there will be no evidence of the pond remaining. But then, I haven't looked over the edge for a long time, for that last look. It's too hard to take.

My daughter will never have known the pond and pasture. I picture us, years from now, walking down that street. I'll point to the houses along there and tell her of the pond: the mallards of spring, the tadpoles of June and the sledding hill. She won't be able to believe there was once a pond under there. Me neither. And yet it is just a small part of the legacy our generation is leaving the heirs of this earth.

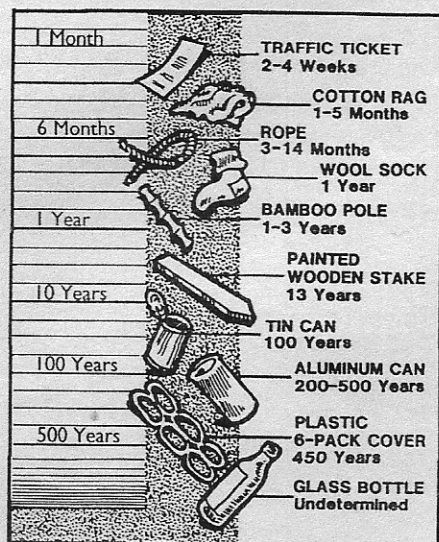
Leo Keane



Pete McDonnell From "RESOURCES"



The Life-Span of Trash



Source: Texas A&M University

from Resources In Environmental Subjects

Eastern Blue Jays (lots of them) Sighted

The National Geographic Field Guide states that the Eastern Blue Jay is a "casual fall and winter visitor to the west, especially the northwest," and it's certainly proving to be the case this fall. Reports of blue jay sightings at feeders come from Tom Weaver, Polson; Jacque Farnsworth and Steve Irwin, East Shore of Flathead Lake; Edna Hebard, Dayton; and Beverly Anderson, Bigfork.



Thank you, thank you 🐦

The birds thank you and Flathead Audubon thanks you for all the bird seed bought last month. If you run out of seed during the winter months, contact any member of the Board of Directors and you'll be directed to a supplier of sunflower seeds.

Thanks, also, to those hardy souls who distributed the seed orders from the trucks. In Whitefish, a special "right on!" to Bill Hayes, Vi Stark and Pete Metzmaker.

Montana Hunting History

(The following is an excerpt from *Inside Tracks*, a publication of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One.)

1869: First laws protecting game birds closes quail and partridge seasons for three years.

1876: First closed seasons on furbearers and waterfowl.

1877: Act made it unlawful to waste game meat.

1895: First fish and game board authorized by the Legislature.

1913: Montana Fish & Game commission organized; Sun River Game preserve created by the Legislature.

1923: Grizzly bears protected as a game animal.

1931: First big game resident licenses issued.

1941: First wildlife biologist hired.

1957: Deer and elk hunting units established.

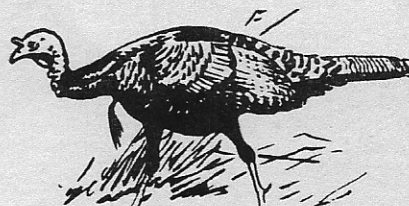
1962: Bounty removed on mountain lion.

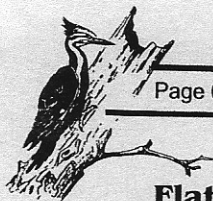
1986: Block management program established.

1988: Montana's elk harvest exceeds 25,000.

1991: Legislature establishes the third week in September as Hunting Heritage Week.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING





Flathead Audubon Society Directory

OFFICERS

President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Susannah Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Secretary	Kent Miller, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130

DIRECTORS

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
1994-97	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Ln, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
1994-97	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
1994-97	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
1994-97	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028

CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Field Trips	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Hostess	Carla Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
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	Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Publicity	Liz Hill, 888 McCaffery Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-1444
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	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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BIRDING HOTLINE: 756-5595

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. A business meeting is held at 7:30 p.m. followed by a special program at 8:15 p.m. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published 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.



the Pileated Post
Flathead Audubon Society

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Address Correction Requested

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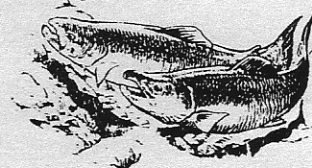
N54 7XCHA

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 ☐
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