



# Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 20

Number 5

May 1995

## **We're going to have company!**

The Flathead Audubon Society, with the Montana Audubon Council, is hosting a Spring Council Meeting, May 5, 6 and 7 at Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish — in case you haven't heard.

You, the Flathead Audubon member, are invited too, and the Board hopes you'll attend. There's a lot to see and do and hear.

On Saturday, May 6, the program will be centered around a morning and afternoon panel discussion featuring professionals in the fields of land use planning, open space preservation, wildlife habitat protection and ecologically sustainable development practices. All aspects of changing land use patterns and the effects of growth on Montana's quality of life will be explored.

Dr. Jack Stanford of the Yellow Bay Biological Station will present the afternoon address, and Donald Snow, director of the Northern Lights Institute, Missoula, is the keynote speaker for the evening banquet.

On Sunday, May 7, field trips are scheduled for recreational bird watching in several of western Montana's best habitats, including Glacier Park and Nine Pipes National Wildlife Refuge.

All events are open to the general public. See page 3 of the newsletter for the complete program. The registration fee is \$15, with meals and lodging extra.

## **Flathead Audubon Honored with Award**

The Flathead Audubon chapter was recently honored with the receipt of the 1995 Organization Award from the MT Environmental Education Association (MEEA).

According to Debbie Fassnacht, Missoula, chairman of the awards committee, the MEEA board created a new category to honor an environmental organization which has an educational impact on a large number of people in one area. Flathead Audubon met the criteria with environmental education activities in three categories: outreach to the community, school/classroom-related programs and education at regular FAS meetings.

Responding to Fassnacht and the MEEA, President Leo Keane said, "We are very pleased to have been selected for your 1995 "Organization Award". Environmental education remains the focus and the foundation of our chapter's work. We feel it is the most important thing we can do for the long term protection of the natural world."

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## The Editor's Spotting Scope

This column is being written in Tucson, Arizona, where I'm working at my annual parttime job. Each spring I work in a different city as the media coordinator for the women's national bowling tournament.

Being here on the desert brings back many fond memories. I spent my grade school years in Arizona and have to admit I returned with a little trepidation. What have "they" done to the state? Has the population growth created unsurmountable problems?

You can't help but notice the urban sprawl. Both Phoenix and Tucson have meshed with their neighboring towns, swallowing up the desert as unceasing development occurs.

On the plus side is the abundant use of cactus, arid plants, sand and rocks in the yards instead of lawns that would be in constant need of water. The happiest discovery about the desert though was made when I walked my dog.

Staff members are staying in an apartment complex that is in a neighborhood of apartment complexes. This is genuine city living: traffic day and night, crowded neighborhood stores and parking lots, etc. However, in the smack dab middle of the city hustle and bustle is a vacant lot, about the size of a city block. It has creosote bushes, foxtail and other wild grasses, young palo verde and mesquite trees and numerous desert flora and fauna. There is a dirt road and a few trails through the area and this is where those of us with dogs walk our dogs.

As Tana and I hit the trail in the early morning we are greeted with birdsong. Song sparrows are in abundance and the Mourning Doves call to each other as we walk along through their territory. Cactus wrens flit in and out, an occasional Quail runs through the brush and the finches perch on the creosote bushes and watch as we pass. Every few days a young jack rabbit crosses

the trail and Tana strains at the leash, wanting a closer look. One morning I was dumbfounded to see a coyote trotting down a side street with prey dangling from its clinched jaws.

Each day there seemed to be something new to look at, wonder about and be grateful for. As the temperature started to rise, the grasses dried and fox tails found their sticking way into sox, pant legs and little dog's fur, so we began to cut a wide berth of the pesky desert grass.

And then, as spring really got under way, the TV news report included a word of caution for everyone. In the spring a young man's fancy turns, and we were reminded that rattlesnakes also get amorous notions. Be on the alert for snakes!

So Arizona has changed over the years, but not completely. Yes, there are more people along with their living accommodations. Also, the news contains disturbing stories of gangs and drugs, and you lock your car when you leave it.

But you can still hear a bird sing and see a rabbit jump from one bush to another. And by golly, you'd better watch for snakes when you go outside. And that's exactly what my mother told me so many years ago.

**Sharon Bergman**

### Take Note! —

#### → May General Meeting

**Monday, May 22, 1995, 6 pm**

**Lone Pine Park, Kalispell**

This is our annual Potluck Meeting.

Bring a potluck dish and eating gear.

**Program:** Marcy Bishop, with the National Bison Range, will give a presentation on "Herons & Cormorants of Flathead Lake."

This will be the last chapter meeting until September. Join us for an evening of eating, meeting and exchanging bird stuff.



## Creating A Balance:

## Making A Place For People, Saving a Place For Wildlife

Montana Audubon  
Council Spring  
Meeting

Grouse Mountain  
Lodge — Whitefish,  
MT

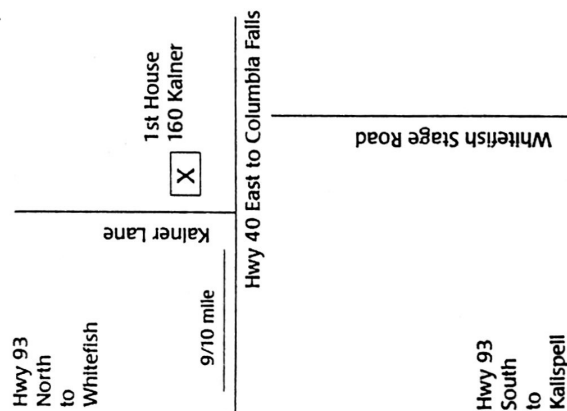
It's not too late to  
register.

### Friday, May 5, 1995

to 9:00 p.m. • **Executive Meeting**  
Montana Audubon Council  
Grouse Mountain Lodge

to 9:00 p.m. • **Wine & Cheese  
Coffee and Chocolate Social**  
Hosts: Feme and Martin Cohen  
with tour of resource efficient home at  
7:30 to 8:00 p.m.

#### Whitefish Map to Cohen Home



### Saturday, May 6, 1995

6:30 a.m. • **Early Bird Walk with Liz Hill**  
Meet in Grouse Mountain Lodge Lobby  
Birding at Whitefish Golf Course

8:00 to 8:30 a.m. • **Registration**  
Grouse Mountain Lodge

8:30 to 9:00 a.m. • **Introductions**  
Leo Keane - President, Flathead Audubon  
Welcome - Rod Ash, MT Audubon Council President  
Regional Review - Bob Turner and Ruth Russell

9:00 to 9:45 a.m. • **Business Meeting**  
Montana Audubon Council Review - Janet Ellis

9:45 to 10:00 a.m. • **Coffee Break**

10:00 a.m. to Noon • **Morning Panel**

#### MAKING A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

##### The Planning Issues

Moderator: Dr. Lex Blood • Geology Department  
Flathead Valley Community College, President and  
Co-founder of The Glacier Institute

##### The Planning Process

Tom Jentz • Assistant Director Flathead Co. Planning  
Janet Macewicz Camel • Resource Planning  
Coordinator, Confederated Salish/Kootenai Tribes

##### Takings

Janet Ellis • Montana Audubon Council,  
Program Director

##### Agriculture/Open Space

Dave Helne • Fl. Valley Farmer and Land Appraiser  
Amy O'Herron • Glacier/Flathead Director, Montana  
Land Reliance

##### Forestry

Mike Jostrom • Superintendent of Timberlands, Plum  
Creek's Flathead Unit

##### Noon to 1:30 p.m. • Lunch

Soup and Salad Buffet with Soap Box Open Mic

1:30 to 2:15 p.m. • **Afternoon Speaker**

Dr. Jack A. Stanford • Blerman Professor of Ecology  
and Director of Flathead Lake Biological Station, The  
University of Montana.

#### "Impacts of Development and Population Growth on Montana Watersheds"

2:15 to 2:30 p.m. • **Coffee Break**

2:30 to 4:00 p.m. • **Afternoon Panel**

#### SAVING A PLACE FOR WILDLIFE

##### The Habitat Issues

Moderator: Dr. Lex Blood

##### Habitat Protection

Gael Bissell • Habitat Protection Biologist, Fish, Wildlife  
& Parks, Kallispell

##### Areas of Riparian Resource:

##### Function, Value and Protection

Pat O'Herron • Senior Planner for Missoula County  
and Director of Brown Bear Resources.

##### Sustainability

Jim Richard • Planner and Lobbyist, Montana  
Wildlife Federation, Helena

#### Bringing It All Together/Building With Nature

Bruce Woody • Landscape Architect, Whitefish

4:00 to 4:30 p.m. • **Summary & Closing Comments**

Dr. Lex Blood

5:00 to 6:00 p.m. • **Happy Hour (no host bar)**

6:00 p.m. • **Banquet**

Keynote Address • Don Snow  
Executive Director Northern Lights Institute, Missoula  
Editor Northern Lights Magazine

#### "Protecting Habitat for The Earth Household"

### Sunday, May 7, 1995

Sign up for field trips at conference:

Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge • Jim Rogers  
Glacier West • Paul Rossi Glacier East • Lou Bruno  
Local Songbirds • Dan Casey Swan Valley • Elly Jones



## The President's Page >>

Wooly Bugger. Bitch Creek. Egg Sucking Leech. Road Kill. Sofa Pillow. Ah, these words ring like music in my ears. They are: a) some of the latest rock bands; b) far out snowboards; c) hip, new threads for teens or d) essential fly patterns for June Big Hole River brown trout?

Ding! You got it! Yes, it is nearly June. Time once again for "The Big Hole River Salmon Fly Hatch and Western Tanager Show." Pack up the babies and grab the old fly pole, hitch on the drift boat and throw in the camping gear. It's salmon fly time on the Big Hole!

Oh, by the way, don't forget your long-johns. And heavy wool socks. Probably your thickest pile hat. Also something impenetrable to wind-driven sleet, like a neoprene body suit or that waxed canvas rain parka they make in Scotland, with hood. Mittens. And all the rest of your survival gear.

Just in case, we always go prepared for warm, sunny days too: shorts and sunscreen and jaunty fly fishing caps. Who knows, one of these years we might actually wear them. Little need either for that wispy four weight rod. And those fluffy dry flies of the sun-dappled days. Forget it. These guys will just get blown off into the cottonwoods or sucked up in a whirlpool. The Big Hole River in June spells Big Water and Big Weather.

We've been struck by lightning, blasted with hail, marooned in rain storms. We've seen huge cottonwoods uprooted and pushed into the river. We've been blown upstream. And then when the weather really turns bad, we've even been forced to hove shoreward and crawl *under* our boats.

Yet, invariably, the storm clouds

recede over yonder mountains. The wind settles down. Then we creep out from under the boats and blink in the midday sun. We slip back into the river and slide away. The cottonwoods glisten. The air is pungent with sage. We're casting again, lapping the water with our big wet flies, rolling along on the belly of the river.

And then it happens. A salmon fly, incongruously large, takes flight from its green sanctuary in the willows. As the air warms, another and another take wing till the canyon is a haze of salmon flies. Their fluttering wings are translucent on the blue sky and they seem as big as birds. Hey, wait a minute; that one is a bird!

As if the river, the weather and the salmon flies aren't beauty enough, these luscious birds – Western Tanagers, in all their tropical glory – sweep from the trees to begin the feast of the salmon fly hatch. This is the moment we've been waiting for.

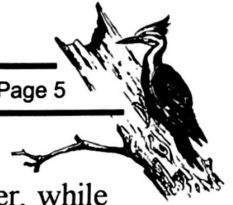
Trout leap around our boat. Our casts are straight and true and our big Sofa Pillows mimic perfectly the growing armada of naturals bouncing down the river. Browns and rainbows are slurping up everything. The forest drifts by. Above us, the green canopy is alive with birds: the beautiful Western Tanagers, and now too Orioles and Vireos, Warblers and Flycatchers. They glimmer like jewels and whistle their songs and dash again and again over the river to catch another salmon fly.

This too is all we've come to catch: this crystal moment, adrift on this sparkling river, watching once again the performance of the salmon flies and songbirds.

Leo Keane







## Elly's Annual Banding Report

The results of the first three years of the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) program on the Flathead National Forest and the first two years at the Flathead Indian Reservation have provided useful data to add to the continent-wide MAPS program.

On a local level, MAPS data reveal some important trends in population sizes and productivity of Flathead's birds. The relationships among the eight banding stations remained quite consistent over the three years and suggests that the relationships are real, year to year changes, particularly in the indices of productivity, seem reasonable in light of the markedly different weather conditions and timing of each year's breeding season.

Capture rates of adult birds were higher at the seven stations that included some meadow or riparian habitat and lower at the single station (Corma Experimental Forest) that lacked such habitat. In 1994, the totals for all eight stations combined are: 845 birds of 57 species newly-banded; 261 recaptures and 75 birds unbanded, including 35 hummingbirds.

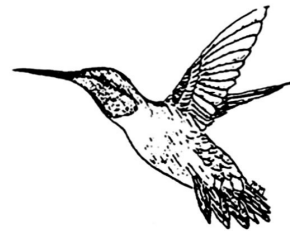
Species with persistently low productivity on the six forest sites were Dusky Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Cedar Waxwing and MacGillivray's Warbler. Three of these species are long distance migrants (wintering primarily south of the contiguous 48 states) while Cedar Waxwing is considered a short-distance migrant (a migratory species wintering within the contiguous 48 states). The only two species having persistently high productivity were Black-capped Chickadee, a resident species, and Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, a short-distance migrant.

Overall species of concern for survivorship problems are Common

Yellowthroat and Western Tanager, while Cedar Waxwing, American Redstart and Western Tanager should all be carefully monitored for productivity declines in subsequent years.

Anyone wishing more information may contact, the Flathead Forest, Flathead Indian Reservation, Dan Casey or Elly Jones.

**Elly Jones**



## Ecosystem Workshop Scheduled

"Educating Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow" is the theme for a workshop which has been scheduled for September 10-16. Co-sponsored by the Glacier Institute, Boone and Crockett Wildlife Conservation Program and the Nature Conservancy of Montana, the workshop will provide the basis for understanding whether sustainability of an ecosystem in transition is possible.

In a time of rapid social and economic transition worldwide, local and regional efforts are being undertaken to address the future sustainability of large areas, including their human communities and bio-physical resources. There is an emerging acknowledgement that the long-term social and economic health of resource-dependent communities is ultimately connected to the ecological health of associated wildlands.

The cost of this fall workshop is \$585, which includes room, meals, speakers and instructors, and transportation during the workshop. For further information, contact Robin Magaddino, 837-4294.



## Lower Valley Waterfowl Trip a Blustery Success

Eleven birders followed leader Dan Casey on a briskly cold, squally Saturday (3/25) to Somers Bay and from slough to slough and the Flathead River. Everyone had binoculars and Casey and Elly Jones brought tripod-mounted scopes.

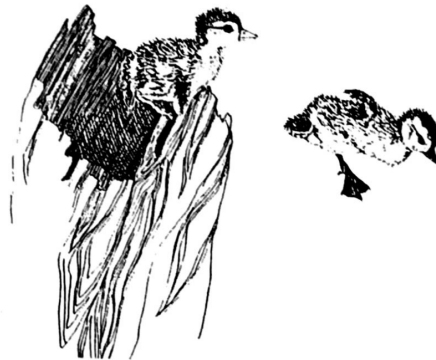
Two ponies seemed to find our group as watchable as we found the birds, running along a fence line and observing us as we took turns on the scopes at Somers Slough. At our last slough of the day, visible from busy Highway 93, a Flathead County deputy sheriff stopped and asked what was so interesting. He seemed momentarily perplexed when we enthusiastically replied, "Buffleheads and Goldeneyes!"

Elly was the first to spot an immature Bald Eagle perched on a distant snag near Somers, and we saw a Red-tailed Hawk close-up at Weaver Slough and another immature eagle at Church Slough. Dan's sharp eyes picked up three Mountain Bluebirds at least a quarter-mile away on Somers Slough. And Gladys Fredenberg of Lakeside checked off the first jet-skier of the year in Somers Bay.

Kathy Higgins of Byrn Mawr, Penn., who was visiting her sister, member Molly Bruce, was a special guest. She came a day early just to join the expedition and was rewarded with the addition of two species to her life list.

Ducks were the focus of the day, including: Mallards, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, Canvasbacks, Lesser and Greater Scaups, Ring-necked, Buffleheads and both species of Goldeneyes. Also included in the 39 species observed were Canada Geese, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gulls, Great Blue Heron, Magpies, Evening Grosbeaks and Northern Flickers.

**Janet van Swearingen**



## Birdathon '95

Here's your chance to be an active participant and help to benefit the special programs sponsored by Audubon.

The following pledge lists the various opportunities for you to become involved in a positive way.

Birdathon is fun because birding is fun. Go ahead — have some fun!

### 1995 BirdAmerica Pledge

Yes, sign me up for the following Flathead Audubon fund raising activity:

- ☐ Participate fully in a Birdathon: solicit pledges, count birds, collect pledges.
- ☐ Sponsor a Birdathon team.
- ☐ In lieu of active participation, I will contribute to the fund raising effort by enclosing a donation of ☐ \$15 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your pledge to Susannah Casey,  
Birdathon Coordinator, P.O. Box 7922,  
Kalispell, MT 59904



## 1995 Field Trips

The following field trips are open to members and non-members alike, so please *post this list and copies of it* in prominent places at home and work! Like last year, additional field trips sponsored by the Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) have been incorporated. Trips vary from short hikes and roadside stops to longer hikes or boat trips as noted. You'll note there is a variety of trips, all suitable for families, throughout the spring and summer. Come and enjoy.

Standard recommended equipment includes comfortable clothes and shoes, binoculars, cameras, field guides, "fowl" weather gear and a sack lunch or snack.

Call the Field Trips Chairman, Dan Casey, (857-3143 evenings or 752-5501 days) with any questions or for more detailed information. Individual trip leaders are listed with the trips.

**We are seeking a new Field Trips Chairperson for 1996. If you are interested, contact a Board Member.**

**Saturday, May 13: International Migratory Bird Day.** Celebrate this day, dedicated to the plight of migratory landbirds, and with a 1995 theme of "Sharing a Passion for Birds", by joining us at **Lawrence Park**. Help survey migrants at Kalispell's premiere birding hotspot. Results of recent years will be compared and the role that parks can play in the conservation of migratory birds will be discussed. Meet at the north end of the park (end of the road) at 7 a.m. Dan Casey, 857-3143.

**Saturday, May 20: Philips Creek Bear Dance Trail** (MNPS) An easy 3.5 miles, level or downhill, for early wildflowers. Meet in Bigfork. Call Anne Morley (886-2242) for details and to reserve a spot.

**Saturday, June 3: Birdathon/BirdAmerica.** Sponsor any one of our teams, or spend the day afield raising funds for the chapter and regional office. Susannah Casey, 857-3143. (This is not an organized field trip.) See page 6 of the newsletter.

**Sunday, June 18: Father's Day at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area by Canoe.** Half-day trip for breeding birds at this river island County park. Flat water paddling and bush-whacking on the island. Bring canoe, life jackets; dress for brush. Meet at Rosauer's parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Dan & Susannah Casey, 857-3143.

**Saturday, July 1: Swan River Research Natural Area.** (MNPS) With Neal and Pattie Brown and the Montana Wilderness Ass'n. A moderately strenuous to strenuous 4-5 miles, no trail; several stream crossings, so wear shoes that can get wet. Meet at the Swan Chapel parking lot in Swan Lake at 9 a.m. Call 837-5018 by June 30 for information/reservations.

**Saturday, July 8: Little Wolf Fire.** (MNPS) Explore the fire area for plant regeneration with Steve Wirt. Call 862-5452 for reservations and details.

**Saturday, July 8: Loon Trip to Thompson Chain of Lakes.** Meet at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg. (490 N. Meridian, Kalispell) at 9 a.m. to join Lynn Kelly for a tour of known and potential loon nesting lakes in this chain of lakes west of Kalispell. Return at approximately 3 p.m. Call 883-5797 for details.

**Sunday, July 9: Squirmy, Scaley Critter Search.** Join MDFWP/USFS biologists on a search for salamanders, snakes, frogs and other reptiles/amphibians. Half-day trips at a site and time to be announced, but plan on rubber boots! Dan Casey, 857-3143.

**Saturday, July 15: Montana Loon Day.** (Not an organized field trip.) If you could spend all or part of the day visiting one or more lakes, contact Lynn Kelly, 883-5797. She will send the necessary forms and you can take part in this annual census of all Montana lakes likely to have loons.

**Friday, July 21: Siveh Pass Trail, Glacier National Park.** (MNPS) A strenuous, diverse trip, climbing 2,600 feet from montane to alpine and down through grasslands. Call Rachel Potter, 892-2446 for information.

**Sunday, July 23: Flathead River Float.** Canoe trip from Presentine Bar Fishing Access to Leisure Island at Kalispell. About 6 easy hours on the river, through a variety of riparian habitats. No white water. Bring canoes, life-jackets (one for each person), lunch and rain gear. Meet at the K-Mart parking lot at 9 a.m. The Caseys, 857-3143.

**Saturday, August 12: Purple Loosestrife Control - Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge.** (Co-sponsored with MNPS.) Come help birds and native aquatic plants by reducing competition from the invasive, introduced purple loosestrife. Bring lunch, gloves and shoes (boots, waders) to wear in water. Call Neal Brown, 837-5018.



## 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 \$10.00 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"/>
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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 \$10 ☐

to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership;  
P.O. Box 1129

Condon, Montana 59826

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