



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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1995 Xmas Bird Count Approaching

The 22nd annual Bigfork Christmas Bird Count will be held on **Saturday, December 16**. Part of the 96th annual nationwide 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 134 different species have been seen during the Bigfork Christmas Counts since 1974!

In the past ten years, an average of 11,859 individuals of 79 species have been recorded on the Bigfork count. Over 80 species have been recorded in seven recent years — the highest in the state. We have the distinction of hosting the nationwide high count for Wild Turkeys in each of the last seven years, with the *all-time* national high count of 761 last year. A 10-year and 21-year summary of species recorded on the Bigfork count will be distributed at the December meeting.

With this fall's mild weather, like last year, will we again find more **Mourning Doves** than **Rock Doves**? Will there be more **Robins** lingering in the valley, joined by our first count record of **Varied Thrushes**? Or will a snowstorm bring back the hordes of **Common Redpolls**, **Pine Siskins** and **Evening Grosbeaks**? Will your group be the one lucky enough to see the blue bullet of a **Merlin** as it streaks into a flock of **Bohemian Waxwings**? What other new species await us? (Predictions at the December meeting.)

It is hoped there will be about 40 people in 15 groups afield for this year's count. Compiler Dan Casey will be calling last year's participants to arrange area coverage.

Arrangements will be finalized at the December meeting, so plan to attend or give Dan a call at 857-3143 (evenings) or 751-4581 (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 p.m. on the day of the count.

Plan on taking part in Montana's number 1 Christmas Count! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to join in, as are feeder-watchers and half-day helpers.

Other Bird Counts Scheduled

Eureka → Saturday, December 16
Contact Ellen Sullivan, 889-3983

Ninepipe → Sunday, December 17
Meet at Countryside Cafe (formerly Ruby's) south of Ronan at 8 a.m. Contact Jim Rogers, 883-3611.

Swan Valley → Saturday, December 30
Contact Rod Ash, 754-2289.

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The Editor's Spotting Scope

There are many songs, limericks, poems and jingles that are passed along from one generation to the next in perpetuity. A parent sings to the child, not questioning the wording of the song, and that child passes it along when adulthood and parenthood are reached, and so onward it goes.

For example, I have always known the lyrics to "Rock a Bye, Baby." My mother must have sung it to my sister and me when we were small. I passed it along to my youngsters and I imagine they, in turn, continued the tradition. I am now a great-grandmother and only now do I realize what we have been singing about down through those generations!

It's not a song for young children — it's a song for the birds! Check out these lyrics.

*"Rock a bye, Baby, in the tree top.
When the wind blows, the cradle
will rock;
When the bough breaks, the cradle
will fall
And down will come baby, cradle
and all."*

If a child hears that song and comprehends the words, a silent vow will be made to stay out of cradles in trees.

But this song is right on target for nonfledged birds. How many of us in our birding travels have found a chirping baby bird beneath a tree with the frantic parent circling the area.

Mom or Dad Bird can't lift the youngster up and return it to the nest, so what can the birder do? If the bird is of the raptor species, and the parent is nowhere to be seen, the fallen chick can be taken to The Raptor Room in the Condon area.

There are those who have the skills and facilities to care for and feed the chick until it fledges, but we are not all blessed with such endowments.

We have to do something because our conscience won't allow us to just walk away and leave the youngster thrashing and chirping in the dirt.

Generally, the best course of action is to place the young bird in the undergrowth or bush near the tree. The parent can find it and tend to it and Mother Nature will take her course. The birder can then walk away with a clear conscience, humming "*Rock a bye, Baby, in the tree top —*"

Sharon Bergman

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. Besides calling for the latest birding information, call the hotline and report any of your special sightings so they can be shared with others who call in.

Take Note

✓ December General Meeting

Monday, December 11, 1995

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell

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

Program: Dan Casey, the featured speaker, commented that this will be "— a bird ID class. We'll be looking at lots of birds." Plans for the Christmas Bird Counts will be highlighted at the meeting, and full particulars will be provided on the Bigfork, Eureka, Ninepipe and Swan Valley Counts.



In Memorium:

Barb Baxter

One of our favorite people is gone from our midst.

Barb was one of the charter members of Flathead Audubon, making her home in Somers. She was listed on the membership rolls in 1977, when the chapter submitted its charter application to National Audubon. In 1980, she was elected secretary and served in that capacity until February, 1985. She answered the call to serve again in 1986 and then retired as secretary in October, 1989.

The following appeared in the 11/15 issue of *The Daily Inter Lake*.

Special Thanks to dear olde Montana -
The Flathead Valley especially,
Somers, Bigfork, Kalispell and Swan Lake
For Your acceptance of me,
This olde maid, Ex-native Californian!
Who came to Montana to dwell
And found a little bit of heaven on earth
in this valley I loved so well.
I leave my extended good wishes and appreciation
to all those who made my life so great
All my dear friends, neighbors and acquaintances
of this grand and wonderful state.
Stay as sweet as you are —
There are none finer - anywhere!
Gratefully,
Barb Baxter

Everyone's Sweetheart left us on Nov. 11th.
Barb will be placed beside her beloved
Mama and Papa in California.
Following Barb's instructions there will **not**
be a funeral, memorial service or viewing.
The only obituary that she wanted is the
"Special Thanks" above.



THIS 'N THAT

Thank You, Thank You. A big thanks goes to **Montana Coffee Traders** of Whitefish and Kalispell.

That coffee we've been drinking at our meetings has been through the courtesy of Montana Coffee Traders. Started in the early '80's by R. C. Beall, it is a rare civic occasion when one does not see the Montana Coffee Traders carafes on hand and we Auduboners appreciate our good fortune.



New CBC Regional Editor

Named. After serving as the compiler of the Bigfork Christmas Bird Count for several years, **Dan Casey** has been named the Regional CBC Editor for Idaho and Montana. His official title is Audubon Field Notes Regional Christmas Bird Count Editor for Idaho and Montana, but we'll call him Dan for short.



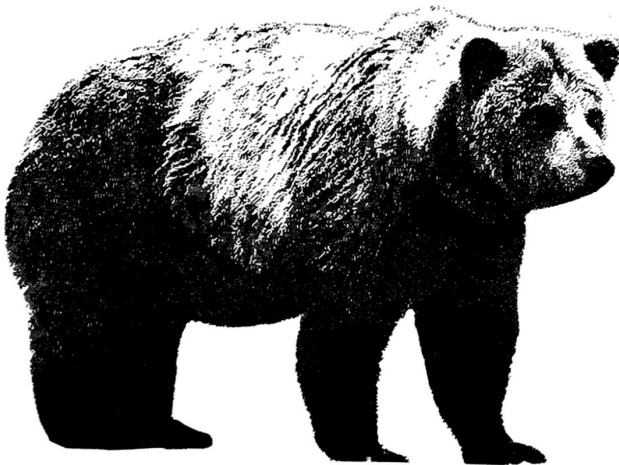
Auduboner Selected for Citizen Advisor Team. The selection of 11 volunteer citizen advisors to help Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks enhance the management of the natural resources in Northwest Montana was recently announced. **Brent Mitchell**, former president of Flathead Audubon, was named to this select group. Brent has a strong background in environmental issues and his knowledge and experience should be of benefit to the Advisor Team.



The Grizzly Needs Your Help —

Consideration is being given in Washington to the delisting of the grizzly bear in Greater Yellowstone. It is suggested that those who really care should send a letter to Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and ask him to "Put the brakes" on the premature delisting of the grizzly bear in Greater Yellowstone. The following points should be made.


- Habitat, the key to the bear's existence, has been steadily degraded since the grizzly was listed, and destruction of habitat will only be accelerated by delisting;
- Delisting is premature and based on a flawed recovery plan. The underlying science supporting delisting is questionable and in dispute;
- Bear numbers are still far too low for the grizzly to persist into the future.



Send your letter to:

Secretary Bruce Babbitt
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

If the grizzly could, he'd thank you.

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Endangered Species Act Update

Audubon's campaign to protect the integrity of the Endangered Species Act heated up this fall, as reauthorization bills picked up speed in Congress. Bills were introduced in both the House and Senate by hostile committee chairmen that would effectively repeal the Act.

In the wake of increasing public criticism about Congress's attempt to weaken environmental laws, Speaker Gingrich has stated publicly that there will be no floor action this year on the ESA. In the meantime, two other moderate ESA bills have been introduced in the House which are likely to be merged and become the bill considered on the floor.

While Audubon is not supporting these bills by Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (HR 2374) and Jim Saxton (HR 2444), they are much more responsible in addressing perceived problems with the Act without destroying its integrity. Unfortunately, they still need improvements and Audubon will focus its efforts to strengthen whatever bill reaches the House.

In the Senate, Senator Dirk Kempthorne (R-ID) has introduced S 1364 which closely resembles the Young-Pombo bill. The bill would:

- Abandon the goal of recovering species and allow the Secretary of Interior to settle for whatever goal thought appropriate.
- Turn the program over to any state that develops a conservation plan approved by the Secretary.
- Free federal agencies from consulting with Fish & Wildlife Service on most activities and projects on federal lands.

What You Can Do — Those living in states with Senators on the Environment and Public Works Committee are urged to write or fax the senator about their strong opposition to the Kempthorne Endangered Species Extinction bill, S 1364. (Senator Max Baucus is on this committee.) A copy of the letter should be sent to the committee chair, Senator John Chafee. Address: U.S. Senate; Washington D.C. 20510.



About the Population —

"No geological event in a billion years has posed a threat to terrestrial life compared to that of human overpopulation —" Paul Erlich in *Sex and the Single Planet*.

Wow! Is that an overstatement? Not by much, according to many scholars who make the study of human population growth their specialty. In 1993, in a survey of 37 leaders in the population field, all said they expect world population to exceed 10 billion (it is at about 5.6 billion now) in the next century. According to William Paddock, an expert on world food sources. He went on to say that 87% agreed that such a population burden would "place such enormous demands on the environment in much of the world mankind's very existence will be threatened."

Maybe we in this fortunate country can make it, but what about our wetlands, forests, prairies and wildlife?

All this gloom and doom doesn't have to happen if we face the issue squarely very, very soon. **Bob Ballou**, Quality of Life Committee, Montana Audubon Council



Re: The Precycle Program

Ferne Cohen reports that the 17 volunteers from Flathead Audubon, GFWC, Whitefish Women's Club and Citizens for a Better Flathead were successful in reaching shoppers during October and November and urging them to think before they buy in an effort to reduce waste.

A tip for all of us: shoppers should buy and use canvas or hemp shopping bags to reduce even more waste.

Trumpeter Swans to Ninepipe

An article in *The Missoulian* indicated that Trumpeter Swans, once teetering on the edge of extinction, may soon be a common sight in the Mission Valley.

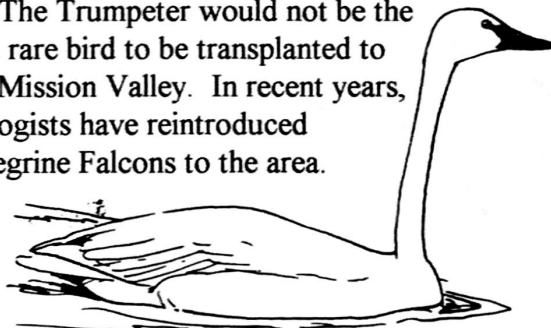
As early as next spring, Trumpeter Swans may have a new home at the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge. Trumpeters, the largest swans in the world, will be stocked in the Mission Valley if tribal, state and federal wildlife officials succeed with their joint plan.

"We are still in the real early planing stages," said Dale Becker, biologist for the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes. Becker said the small ponds and coves in the Mission Valley could act as steppingstones in the recovery of Trumpeter Swans.

Trumpeters are only occasionally seen migrating over the Mission and Flathead valleys. Tundra Swans, a smaller and more common species, are more often seen.

The hope is the Mission Valley could become host to up to 15 nesting pairs of Trumpeters. Becker said Trumpeters once nested in the Flathead, including Flathead Lake. Biologists hope that young and adult birds released in suitable nesting areas will continue to nest there on their own, returning if they migrate south in the winter.

The Trumpeter would not be the first rare bird to be transplanted to the Mission Valley. In recent years, biologists have reintroduced Peregrine Falcons to the area.



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO BIRDERS
EVERYWHERE** ● ● ●



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, 510 S. 5th W., Missoula, MT 59801	549-5692
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
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
Refuge Projects	Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
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

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.



P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904

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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 \$10 ☐
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