



the Flatheaded Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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Plans Made For Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, in cooperation with the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Mission Valley Wildlife Foundation, propose to initiate efforts to restore a breeding population of Trumpeter Swans to the southern portion of the Flathead Valley. The project will be coordinated with the Pacific Flyway Council and its supporting agencies, with appropriate state and federal agencies and the interested public.

Trumpeter swans occurred historically in western Montana. The primary factors in their disappearance included over harvest and habitat destruction and degradation. Although Trumpeter Swans occasionally utilize portions of the southern Flathead Valley as a migratory stopover, no recent breeding records have been recorded.

The stated goal of the "Rocky Mountain Population of Trumpeter Swans - Pacific Flyway Management Plan" is the restoration of the Rocky Mountain population of Trumpeter Swans as a secure and migratory population, sustained by naturally-occurring food sources in diverse breeding and wintering sites.

Initially, two release sites will be identified. Sites will be evaluated for particular foraging, security and water criteria during the period of April to August. Other considerations will include the presence of appropriate food resources, shallow foraging sites, the absence of lead shot concentrations, minimal human disturbances, potential for power line or fence collisions and potential for predation.

To accomplish the project, approximately

20-40 swans will be captured in Idaho each year during a 3 to 5 year period. These birds will be relocated to the Flathead Valley and released at the determined sites. Strategies are currently being developed to encourage the swans to migrate out of the area during winter. A population goal of 10 breeding pairs has been set.

Although currently limited, Trumpeter Swans are not listed as a threatened or endangered species. The proposed restoration project will help to preclude such listing in the future and return a native species to its former range.

The project will be undertaken after completion of a thorough environmental analysis, in which an environmental assessment will be completed. Comments, concerns and questions in written form can be directed to Dale Becker, Wildlife Program Manager, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, P.O. Box 278, Pablo, MT 59855 or by telephone (406) 675-2700.

The planning team for the project also requests that anyone with information or observations on locally breeding Trumpeter Swans during the past contact Mr. Becker and provide that information.

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The Editor's Spotting Scope



The day was Montana at its winter best: a few white clouds, the blue sky living up to its name of Big Sky and a warmth in the air that made you think of April rather than February. You can't stay home on a day like that so dog/pal Tana and I headed for Lake Mary Ronan, an out-of-the-way special place full of fond memories.

Yes, when we left the pavement, the road was muddy in some places and icy in others, but no matter — this was a day to experience and enjoy and a slick road wasn't going to spoil it.

But something did spoil it for me. A mile or so up the road, just past the turnoff to 20 acres I used to own, a logging project was underway. They were leaving a few trees, but damn few; the stumps and battered tree limbs bore evidence to the pillage.

As I turned the pickup around, a sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach, I rationalized that "they" owned the property and had the right to sell off the trees. After all, some were left, so it wasn't barren, and more would grow. Besides, everyone doesn't feel as you do about conifers, especially those that grow in close proximity to a body of water.

When I was a child growing up in the Arizona desert, I was familiar with trees — palm, mesquite, palo verde, citrus and others native to the area. The only fir trees I ever saw were decorated in our living room for the holidays. And then one summer I was taken to Mt. Lemmon and saw my very first forest of conifers and I was awe struck. I walked on a cushion of needles to the tallest tree I had ever seen and put my hand out to touch it. From that moment, a deep respect and love was instilled in me for what nature had created.

It was a dream come true when my family moved to Montana, and I consider myself lucky that I originally lived here when I did. It was the best of times for the trees and me. I gradually learned to accept the logging operations and recognize their worth. Trees were to be used, for fire and construction, but in my mind they were not meant to be abused.

After years away pursuing a career, I returned to find clear cuts in what were once magnificent forests, and I became an environmentalist. As time went by we all learned to work together for the good of the trees and our offspring, through compromise and an attempt to understand the other's viewpoint. It's something you accept when you want the best possible solutions for the most of those concerned.

But I guess I'm two-faced. Even though I accept the inevitable, deep down inside I still want those trees left alone. When Montana is at its winter best, I want to be able to drive into a forest and marvel at the trees, and know they'll still be there when my grandchildren go looking.

Sharon Bergman

Take Note

✓ March General Meeting

Monday, March 11, 1996

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell

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

Program: Bea Vogel, recently retired from the State Dept. of Revenue, will give a presentation on "Butterfly Watching". Her program will be extensively illustrated with slides and specimens, and will be based on her experience at studying and collecting butterflies along the eastern front of the Rockies. A founder of the American Arachnological Society, Vogel earned her B.S. in Mathematics at Stanford and her Ph.D. in Biology at Yale.



Field Trips Scheduled

The Raptors of Mission Valley Tour on Saturday, **March 16**, will be the first field trip of the spring season. Chad Olson of Columbia Falls, currently attending the U. of M., will lead the group through the Ninepipe Area, and he anticipates that most of the raptors native to the refuge will be seen.

The touring group will meet at Allentown, south of Ronan, and be prepared to leave by 9 a.m.

The Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour, an annual spring event, is scheduled for **March 23**. The 4-hour tour of wetland sites in the Somers area should feature large numbers of dabbling ducks, as well as early spring arrivals. According to Dan Casey, Field Trip Leader, those interested will meet at the Ramada Inn parking lot, at the intersection of Highways 93 and 38. The tour will start at 8:30 a.m.

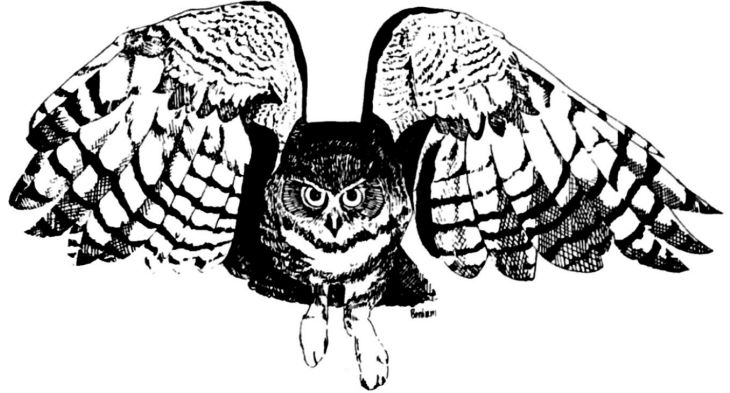
Birders may want to bring a sack lunch or snacks along with their binoculars or scopes. Members and non-members alike are welcome to participate.

Precycling Program Planned for Kalispell

Tidyman's Grocery in Kalispell will host the Shop Smart/Precycling program, which will educate shoppers to think before they buy. Beginning on Friday, March 1, it will be featured on Fridays and Saturdays through March 16. Volunteers participating in the program are members of Citizens for a Better Flathead, Flathead Audubon and Whitefish Woman's Club and they will serve from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. on Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays.

The program encourages shoppers to purchase products in recyclable packaging, such as plastic milk jugs. Shoppers will also learn to look for labeling that identifies products or packaging made with recycled materials, such as cereal containers. Shoppers will also be encouraged to bring bags for their purchases (receiving a 5¢ refund and saving trees at the same time), to choose concentrates and to buy in bulk.

More volunteers are needed and those interested in lending a hand should contact the office of Citizens for a Better Flathead at 756-8993.



About the Population —

For a number of months this little column has been attempting to show that unless we deal — soon — with overpopulation here and throughout the world, we have little hope of achieving our goals for most everything we hold dear. Overpopulation is indeed the critical element, but that in itself, of course, is not the only ingredient in the recipe for reaching a sustainable future. Over consumption, especially by us in this fair land, is the other critical ingredient.

It has been often truly said and written that we in the U.S., with 5% of the world population, devour 25% of the energy resources consumed. The remaining developed nations boost this percentage even higher. It therefore follows, surely, that we are primarily responsible for the gaping holes in the ozone layer, for the troubling warming trend of the earth, for acid rain, for depletion of marine resources and for a host of other ailments that cause this lovely green planet to be less livable and perhaps ultimately unlivable.

Confronting our Over consumption is certainly a daunting and fractious problem. We like our spendthrift ways and many third world people want to emulate us. But even if we should be able to solve this problem, sustainability is unattainable with our existing and increasing population. There are simply too many of us.

So ~ population reduction is still the key, along with sensible use of our limited resources, of course. How do we start the ball rolling?

On March 10, from 2 - 5 p.m., Pat Waak and Ken Strom will lead a workshop in Missoula in the Fireside Room of the University Congregational Church on what activists can do on the local level. On March 11, the program will be presented at the monthly meeting of Five Valleys Audubon, in the Fireside Room at 6:30 p.m.. Pat is director of National Audubon's Human Population & Resource Dept. Her husband, Ken Strom, is Director of Audubon's Ecology Camp near Dubois, Wyoming. **Bob Ballou, Quality of Life Committee, Montana Audubon Council**



The President's Page ➤➤

Our 22-month old daughter, Linnaea, waddled across our icy street yesterday (closely guarded, of course) and into the vacant lot there. Watching her wade into the snowy woods and seeing the wonder light up her eyes rekindled memories of the vacant lot in my childhood. It, too, was right across the street from the home where I grew up in Minneapolis.

That vacant lot was everything a vacant lot should be: a tangle of brush overshadowed by graceful oaks and crisscrossed with paths of "Indians" — in other words, a remnant of the oak savannah our neighborhood was before it was a neighborhood. It was that odd lot that got lost in the shuffle, forgotten or waylaid as the houses grew up around it, and so it remained an island of nature. For me, the vacant lot was the essential geography of my first years.

This is one of my earliest memories: I've ventured across the street. I'm alone and walking into the grass and brush of the vacant lot. It must be late spring. The trees are bare and I'm wearing a brown corduroy cap. While gazing up at the big oaks a bird flutters down and lands on my head. Instinctively I whirl around to see it and a sparrow flies off into the trees.

I remember so well my young imagination racing with the possibilities. Had the bird mistaken my corduroy clad head for a tree stump? Or even better, perhaps mistaken me for an Indian? Either way, the significance of the moment was clear: wild nature had taken me as one of hers. Forty-some years later this remains a crystalline memory. But now I must wonder whether a single moment in one's early life can be so decisive, so far reaching to set the course for an entire life of interest — for me, a lifelong love of nature.



I know that as the backdrop of my childhood, the vacant lot brought a wealth of other early experiences and first impressions: a strange and beautiful walking bird that favored our yard en route to the oaks (my first pheasant); a wondrously large, black bird glimpsed vanishing on deep wing beats through the tree branches (my first crow); and a squirrel named Chico who we tamed to eat from our hand.

Those moments, and the sunny summer mornings my dad and I rode bikes around nearby Lake Harriet where I discovered muskrats (and rescued a drowning bat), seem so long ago and distant they could be someone else's life. Yet they're still the most vivid memories of my childhood. And if, as they say, the most influential experiences of your life are within the first five years, then certainly that's where my eyes were opened to the beauty and wonder of nature.

Linnaea is too young to ever remember the adventures of these first two years: her wide-eyed expedition into the vacant lot, the pheasants, moose and deer we've watched this winter from our window, calling back at crows when they land in our treetops, or her first sighting of the squirrel we call Skippy.

But now I think I know Mother Nature is planting another seed, and my daughter too will someday be "one of Hers".

Leo Keane



Word From Eureka

Dear Audubon Friends:

I am writing to thank you for making it possible for us to purchase the Songbird Blues educational trunk, and to let you know how the box is being used here in the Eureka area. You will be excited to know that it is receiving rave reviews!

In September we took the box to Eureka, Fortine and Trego schools to present it to the teachers and give them an idea of how to use it. At this time we had the teachers sign up for 1 to 2 week periods throughout the coming school year. By the end of September 17 teachers from grades K-8 scheduled the box for all but two months (January and February).

In order to fill these months I approached area home schoolers to see if they would be interested — and they were! They quickly filled up January and February and I had to turn others away. Homeschoolers have the flexibility to dedicate a whole week to doing nothing but activities from the Bird Box. One family spent over 30 hours using the box over a two-week period. They also invited some neighborhood boys to view some of the videos with them. (These are the boys who terrorize the neighborhood shooting anything that moves with their BB guns.)

Once again we would like to thank you for your support of our schools here in the Eureka area. You have made it possible to increase the awareness of hundreds of children to the diversity of migratory songbirds that make their homes here, and to the perils passerines face in their summer and winter homes.

Many thanks.

Lynne C. Rosario

Interpretive Specialist
Rexford Ranger District
Eureka, Montana



Bird Banding Training and Certification Courses Offered

Are you looking for new birding frontiers? The world of bird banding awaits you!

Banding is a fantastic opportunity to see birds up close; learn about their plumages, molt sequences and life habits; and, by participating in established banding programs, contribute in a direct way to their conservation.

The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP), based in California, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a global approach to the preservation of birds and their habitats. IBP coordinates a large-scale, cooperative program called Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) that consists of a network of about 400 banding stations throughout the continental U.S. and Canada. MAPS is endorsed by the National Biological Service and Partners in Flight and relies primarily on the contribution of data from volunteer cooperators.

IBP offers low-cost bird-banding courses at locations throughout the U.S. during June and July. The registration fee for a one-week course is \$400, which includes all instruction and materials; room and board is usually \$100-\$200 additional. Upon completion of the course, capable students will be certified as banding assistants. Graduates are encouraged to assist at (or establish) a MAPS station in their area. The operation of a MAPS station requires a commitment of one morning (six hours) every ten days from May or early June through August for a total of 9-12 mornings a year, all of which can be on weekends.

For additional information and registration materials, please contact Kenneth Burton, The Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956; phone: (415) 663-2051; fax: (415) 663-9482.



Flathead Audubon Society Directory

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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
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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	Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920	755-1406
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.

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