Volume 22 Number 4 April 1997

Earth Day Celebration Planned

EARTH DAY GREETINGS! Join in a new focus and new location on Saturday, April 19, at Woodland Park, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A parade with the theme "Green and Going" will demonstrate a transportation mode. Those interested in participating are to meet at the Old Central School at 10:30 a.m. with creative ideas and costumees.

Food, music and awards will be presented at ll a.m.at the park. Hands-on project booths will be open from 1p.m. to 4 p.m.

The hands-on projects will consist of construction activities and contests. For example, Leo Keane will be building floating "Loon Nesting" signs. Classroom projects will also be displayed during the day.

Flathead Audubon plans to display a variety of bird feeders, and there will be a drawing for 50 pounds of premium sunflower seeds.

The precycling program, where consumers are encouraged to buy recyclable items, such as milk in plastic jugs and purchases in bulk, will take place in Kalispell at Tidymans and in Whitefish at the Food Depot and Safeway, as well as at Woodland Park. This project is in conjunction with the Whitefish Women's Club and Citizens for a Better Flathead, which produces the recycling list.

Shoppers will be encouraged to tote their own reuseable bags as an affective way to reduce waste.

A slide show presentation by photographer Rich Botto, which features his trek along the Continental Divide and the Canadian border, will be presented at the Kalispell Junior High School Library at 7 p.m. This show will conclude the day-long Earth Day celebration.

Hats off to Citizens for a Better Flathead for planning and organizing this event for the participation of local organizations and schools and for the general enjoyment of the Flathead public.



In This Issue—
Meeting Notice
Great Horned Owl
Field Trip Schedule
Population Connection

page 2 page 3 pages 5/6

page 7



The Editor's Spotting Scope

My birding experiences have been rather sporadic. There have always been the feeders to view and the highway to be alert on (for birding as well as driving) and the special field trips and vacations, but I've never resided where the birding was laid out before me — until now.

My temporary home is in Reno, and I never expected to have a pond and wetland right next door to an apartment complex, but blessings on me! there it is, made to order for birding.

On my first walk in the area, I was instantly aware of the Canadian Geese, American Coots and Gadwalls. Each morning after that I was pleasantly surprised with new arrivals. On one occasion I looked away from the pond to the trail ahead and couldn't believe my eyes. A Great Blue Heron was standing statuesquely, observing the pond just as I had been. Two days later, he was in the water, checking for breakfast goodies.

On another day, a Northern Harrier swooped silently by, totally unexpected, and several American Avocets stood in the water up to their tail feathers, sharing the pond and all it had to offer with their feathered neighbors. Several days later a Stilt checked out the same area. Killdeer have skittered and flown around the outside perimeter and the Mourning Doves usually greet me each day as I walk from the apartment to the wetland.

The ducks are always present: Canvas Backs, Cinnamon Teals, Northern Shovelers, Pintails and the ever-present Mallards. Yesterday a lone loon ran across the water and finally took flight. Gulls can usually be seen every day, but I have long since given up on identifying them without an expert at hand for guidance. Redwinged Blackbirds are setting up housekeeping in the cattails that fringe the pond.

It was hard to believe my good fortune in housing. Then one afternoon I noticed a large sign posted near the entrance to the area. Curious, I walked over to read it.

"Coming Soon. Heron's Landing. Homes in the high \$110,000's" I should have known. If it's a natural for the birds and the beasts, it will be a natural for development. I felt anger for all the wildlife that presently enjoy the habitat. Would they get through the spring before the bulldozers and electric saws arrive?

A few days ago, I watched as the heron flew in and landed on a small island of grasses and reeds, populated by a pair of nesting geese. They quickly dispatched him with loud squawks and a flapping of wings.

If only they could defend themselves as easily from all intruders on their territory.

Sharon Bergman



The May issue deadline for news items is April 15. Fax to (702) 323-8228, Attn: Sharon Bergman.

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Take note!

April General Meeting

Monday, April 14, 1997 Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg. 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Program: J. Kirwin Werner, Ph.D., a research associate and part time instructor at Salish Kootenai College, will present a program on "The Amphibians and Reptiles of Western Montana." Using slides and tapes, Werner will focus on the ecological role amphibians and reptiles play in our mountain ecosystems and some of the problems that have surfaced in the past several years.

Born and raised in Cutbank, Werner has a B.A. in biology from Carroll College and a Ph.D in zoology from Notre Dame. He has been investigating the status of amphibians and reptiles in Montana for the past four years in conjunction with several agencies.



Journaling with a right-brained twist

Most people who enjoy activities like bird watching end up writing down their observations in hopes of keeping track of what they have seen during the year. We have been inspired by the journals of John Muir, Lewis and Clark and present day researchers like Frank Craighead.

These people kept detailed records of daily observations which continue to be invaluable resources. Included with these "left-brained" scientific observations are wonderful passages revealing the "right-brained" emotions felt by the observer. This reveals that these seasoned scientists have not lost their "sense of wonder". They can still thrill at the sight of a grizzly, the sounds of swans arriving during a foggy, snowy night or the unexpected encounter with a favorite star or comet.

My journal entries seem to be dominated by a "just the facts, Ma'am" type of scientific reporting. When I do venture out into the realm of emotion, I find that my vocabulary is limited to a few over-used words like "beautiful", "awesome", etc. — BORING!

As an environmental educator, I attended a workshop which introduced me to "vertical poems". I was intimidated! I am NOT a poet! But, there are NO RULES (that's encouraging) except one! All you do is list the letters of the word or words you want to write about down the side of a page. Then, each sentence must start with the letter on that line.

There are no concerns about punctuation, rhyming, rhythm or anything. You can use just a single word per letter or you can expand into phrases and sentences, as I did in the example that follows. (Remember, I've been doing this for awhile and I started with one and two words per letter.)

Try getting the basics of your thoughts down and then use a *Thesaurus* to find other words which not only express your thoughts better, but also add to your vocabulary.

The next time you are adding a new bird sighting into your journal, turn it into an opportunity to express your thoughts and emotions into a vertical poem. I never thought poetry could be such fun!

Greathorned Owl -

Grayish-brown shadow on
Respected silent wings;
Ear tufts raised for courtship
And late afternoon flirting.
Twilight tete-a-tete vocalized in
Hoots which hang and harmonize

Over the treetops and through the frozen air.

Returning calls echo,

Negotiating nuptial terms.

Evening darkens the sky,

Dipping temperatures well beyond frozen

Obscure but optinistic signs that

While still cold and snowy, the

Language of earth says "Spring is coming."

Lynn Kelly

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President's Page >>

Let's talk about money. Now hold on. I know what you're thinking — BORING! Very true, and I'd surely rather be writing about the great outdoors and all that good nature stuff, but we have some housekeeping to attend to this month and it is the "M" word.

Which really is a lot like cleaning house in that once you fall behind, be it with dustballs or dollars, it takes triple the work to get caught up. I speak from experience. That's why I made one of my priorities during this second term as chapter president of organizing the treasury.

Not that Susan, our treasurer, and her handy assistant Geoff have produced anything less than an enviable and precise ledger. They've kept us up-to-date and on track with both our spendings and earnings the last several years, plus have made more dollars out of our dollars through thoughtful investing. We couldn't ask for more.

Our "problem", so to speak, is a good one; that is, what exactly to do with our financial resources? After all, Flathead Audubon isn't in business to acquire a portfolio. We're in business, ultimately, to conserve wildlife habitat. And we do that well, at least when measured in terms of the time and energy our volunteers put into environmental work. But when it comes to capitalizing on our financial resources — well, we've been all over the map. Simply, we had no idea where we were going.

Ergo, our January, 1997 meeting of the chapter board of directors in which we hammered out "What should we do with our money?"

Idealist and occasional spendthrift that I am, I quickly proposed we buy it all, the rest of Flathead County, and turn it over to wildlife and nature. The board, in its wisdom, kindly suggested our entire bank account wouldn't cover the closing costs on one transaction. Point well taken. After that I kept my mouth shut and took notes.

As is often the case, the wisdom of the group prevailed. The plan we settled on is simple enough; even I understand it. Our financial account will be divided into three parts, thus:

1. The Operating Fund. This shall consist of the money we earn and spend on a year-to-year basis. (For example, we earn money from the sale of sunflower seeds

which we spend on a School Book Award.) Additionally, we shall keep in reserve a liquid account of one year's operating expenses, about \$16,000.

This is in honor of Barb who left
Flathead Audubon a generous portion of her
estate. The fund of about \$8,000 shall be kept in
an interest bearing account, the revenues from
which shall be available quickly and easily for
conservation/wildlife/education projects, such as a
wildlife viewing platform built in cooperation with
the Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

3. A Habitat Acquisition Fund. (This is my favorite.) This fund shall be initiated with an interest bearing investment of about \$10,000. It shall remain a long term growth investment until such fortuitous time as we can roll it into something real (like real estate) and create a habitat preserve, a Flathead Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary, if you will. Wouldn't that be a return on our investment?

There you have it — more than you may have ever wanted to know about what your Flathead Audubon is worth. Still, we hope you like this plan. And now that we know where we're going, we look forward to your input even more. Please call us.

Leo Keane

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Speaking of money —

Funds can be generated for Flathead Audubon by taking your reclycling materials to Valley Recycling on Hwy 2, just west of Kalispell. Valley takes materials in a variety of categories: newspapers, junk mail, thin cardboard, plastics, aluminum cans, other cans. It's very easy to drop things off. Just drive into the building and they will take the recyclables from your car and weigh them. When you mention you're donating your proceeds to Audubon, they react enthusiastically. It may not be much, but every little bit helps.



1997 Spring/Summer Field Trips

The public is invited to all trips. Come and enjoy!

Standard equipment for ALL trips includes comfortable shoes, binoculars, scopes, field guides, "fowl" weather gear and a sack lunch or snack. Further special requirements for some trips are noted. When possible, car pooling for trips will be arranged at the meeting site.

Call Field Trip Chairperson Betty Winzenburg, 755-1697, with questions, changes or for more information. Check the Birding Hotline, 756-5595, for updates or to network for informal outings.

Sunday, March 23 Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour Leader: Dan Casey, 857-3143.

A 4-hour tour of wetland sites in the Somers area with one of Audubon's birding experts. Features large numbers of dabbling ducks as well as early spring arrivals—perhaps even Eurasian wigeons.

Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m., Ramada Inn parking lot, at intersection of Highways 93 and 38.

Sunday, April 6 Second Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour Leader: Dan Casey, 857-3143.

A 4-hour guided birding tour of wetland sites in the Somers area, featuring a variety of resident and migrating waterfowl, including recent spring arrivals — at least 20 species in all. Expect to see ducks engaged in courtship behavior, as well as local raptors and songbirds.

Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m., Ramada Inn parking lot, at intersection of Highways 93 and 38.

Saturday, May 3 Ruth White's Birthday Walk Leader: Robin Magaddino, 837-4294.

A 3.5 mile hike along the Swan River outside Bigfork. Features early migrants and wild flowers. In years past, American dippers have been spotted.

Meeting time and place: 9 a.m., Kootenai Gallery, downtown Bigfork.

Saturday, May 10 International Migratory Bird Day (National Bison Range)

Celebrate this day dedicated to the plight of migratory birds in a unique setting. The National Bison Range is holding an open house. Here's a chance to explore the 2-hour Red Sleep Mountain Drive through the Bison Range and see the excellent exhibits at the Range's information center.

Hours and directions: Red Sleep Mountain Drive is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Take Hwy 93 south of Ronan to Hwy 212, turn west to the Bison Range. For more information, contact Pat Jamieson, Bison Range, 644-2211.

Sunday, May 18 Church Pond Walk (1401 Church Dr., Kalispell) Leader: Bruce Tennehill, 862-4548.

Leisurely walk exploring the ponds near Stillwater Lutheran Church. Here is a great opportunity to see a variety of shorebirds, possible also Sora and Sandhill Cranes.

Meeting time and place: 9 a.m., parking lot of Stillwater Free Lutheran Church.

Saturday, May 31 Little Wolf/Blackback Woodpecker Search Leader: Amy Jacobs, 862-2508 or 862-4275
In the Talley Lake area, explore the Little Wolf Creek burn area. Learn about forest bird use of a post-fire habitat. A chance to see Blackbacked Woodpeckers and discuss fire ecology. Until early afternoon.

Meeting time and place: 9 a.m., Tally Ranger District Office, west of Whitefish, 1335 Hwy 93 West.

Sunday, June 1 Warbler Walk (Swan Lake area) Leaders: Leo Keane, 862-5807 & Neal Brown, 837-5018

A guided birding trip into the Swan Lake Waterfowl Production Area. Find and identify a wide variety of migrating warblers by sight and sound. A great opportunity for novices to learn from local warbler experts and for experienced birders to brush up on their warbler skills. Until 12:30.

Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m., Swan Lake Campground (north of Swan Lake townsite).

Saturday, June 14 Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail (Swan Lake area) Leader: Anne Morley, 886-2242
Sponsored jointly with MNPS, explore the new nature trail located near the Point Pleasant Campground south of Swan Lake. Flathead Audubon and MNPS helped Friends of the Wild Swan identify the plants and birds that appear along the trail, providing the information for the interpretive signs. Note: The Trail is on Montana State lands, so a state recreational use permit is needed. Permits can be purchased anywhere that fishing licenses are sold; \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors. Proceeds go to the Montana State School Trust.

Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m., at Nature Trail site. Turn right about 9 miles south of Swan Lake at the Point Pleasant Campground sign. At the first switchback there is a trail sign. Turn right to the parking area.



1997 Field Trip Schedule continued



Sunday, June 15 Father's Day Canoe Trip/ Owen Sowerwine Leaders: Dan & Susannah Casey, 857-3143.

Half-day exploration of Flathead Audubon's island park in Flathead River. Canoe to the island (easy flat-water paddling) and bushwack through the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Features breeding birds and close-up look at the diversity of endangered cottonwood forests. Bring canoe and a life jacket for each person.

Meeting time and place: 7:30 a.m., parking lot of Rosauers, Kalispell.

Saturday, July 12 Loons of the Thompson Chain Leader: Lynn Kelly, 883-5797

Tour of known and potential loon nesting lakes in the Thompson Chain of Lakes on Hwy 2, west of Kalifpell, conducted by expert loon researcher. At this time, the loons in the area will be off their nests for 3 to 6 weeks. Expect to see loon families with one or two chicks. 6 hours, including driving time.

Meeting time and place: 9 a.m., Kalispell office of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 N. Meridian.

Sunday, July 13 Squirmy, Scaly Critter Search (Site to be announced.) Leader: Dan Casey, 857-3143.

Join biologists from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the U.S. Forest Service on a search for salamanders, snakes, frogs and other reptiles and amphibians. *Bring rubber boots*.

Meeting time and place: To be announced.

Saturday, July 19 Montana Loon Day Contact: Lynn Kelly, 883-5797

Take part in annual census of Montana's loons. The goal is to count all resident or migrating loons on likely lakes in the state, so lots of volunteers are needed. If you can spend all or part of the day at one or more lakes, call Lynn Kelly. She will provide census forms and assign lakes to volunteers according to their preferences.

Sunday, July 20 Flathead River Float (Kalispell area) Leaders: Dan & Susannah Casey, 857-3143.

Canoe trip from Presentine Bar Fishing Access to Leisure Island in Kalispell. An easy 6 hours on the river (no whitewater) through a variety of riparian habitats. Bring canoe, rain gear and a life jacket for each person.

Meeting time and place: K-Mart parking lot in Kalispell.

Saturday & Sunday, August 2/3 Open House at Grounded Eagle Center

Visit the nationally know rehabilitation center for birds. Grounded Eagle has the largest flight arena in the U.S. **Hours and Directions:** The Center will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is located on Hwy 83 in the Swan Valley, at mile marker 37 (corner of Kroft Creek and Hwy 83). **For more information:** Call Ken Wolf, Center Director, 406-754-2882

Saturday, August 9 Purple Loosestrife Pull at Ninepipe Refuge Leader: Neal Brown, 837-5018
Sponsored jointly with MNPS, this will be a working trip. Help birds and native aquatic plants by reducing competition from the invasive, introduced purple loosestrife. An opportunity to be a hands-on conservationist, plus get up close and personal with the Marsh Wren. Bring gloves and shoes (boots, waders) to wear in water.

Meeting time and place: To be announced.

Sunday, August 10 Danny On Trail Nature Walk (Big Mountain) Leader: Susan Hitchcox, 837-4645.

Enjoy a walk (moderate difficulty) or gondola ride up Big Mountain. Bring lunch to eat at the top while we enjoy a fantastic view of Glacier Park and Flathead Valley — all the way down Flathead Lake to Polson on a clear day! Special invitation to Snowbirds. Come meet local Audubon members.

Meeting time and place: 9 a.m. at the gondola ticket booth. Tickets are \$9.50 per person; ages 6 and under, free. If you walk up, the ride back down is free.

Saturday, August 16 Coal Ridge Lookout Hike Leader: Betty Kuropat, 862-0877.

8 mile hike to Coal Ridge Lookout (moderate difficulty, elevation climb of 1,600 feet). See and discuss old growth forest habitat and sub-alpine wetlands, fire and timber harvest history. Lunch at old forest service lookout with view of Glacier National Park and Whitefish Range. May see Clark's Nutcrackers, Grey Jays, Golden Crown Kinglets and Brown Creepers. Bring a container for huckleberries! Pre-register if possible.

Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot of Nite Owl Cafe, Columbia Falls.

More Field Trips will be included in the May issue of the newsletter.

crisis is fully as serious and urge else we get disturbed about, and we can and will try to do to impr

Very briefly, Montana Audubon has a new program underway that we are initially calling "The Population Connection." It has financial backing from, and is working closely with, the National Audubon Society. A committee has been named, along with the MT Audubon staff, to plan and guide it. Activists will be recruited from throughout the statewide membership to be advocates. And, we are in the process of hooking up all chapters on the Internet to improve communications.

The Population

Connection

Before going futher, I need to make it clear that the views expressed in these columns are my own and do not necessarily represent Montana Audubon or the new committee. To be more specific, as mentioned before, the matter of immigration limitation is highly controversial and not all Audubon members go along with what I confess are my views on the subject, although I deliberately tried not to take a hard line.

Now, on to the "connection". It seems to me there is one goal we in Audubon can try to accomplish with our new population connection program. It is to help all of us better understand the link between what is happening to human populations and the impact this has on just about everything else, but especially to what matters most to those of us in Audubon. We must then develop the will and means to do something about it.

The problem is not really that we do not understand an ever-increasing population cannot be sustained, and that it has all sorts of bad consequences. The real problem may be that perhaps we don't see how it is going to directly affect us in ways we really don't want. It also may not seem to assume the urgency, immediacy or have the personal impact of a new mine in a cherished piece of habitat or the cutting of a favored stand of old growth timber. Or we simply tend to throw up our hands because we don't think we can do anything about it — que sera, sera, as the song goes, if you will.

Well then, the job, worded differently, is to bring home that ever more people impact all of us, very undesirably, in just about everything. The crisis is fully as serious and urgent as anything else we get disturbed about, and there is much that we can and will try to do to improve the situation. More on this later.

So this is much of what the committee will be about. I hope you approve. Bob Ballou, Montana Audubon Population Connection Committee

Wildlife Program Supports Many Projects

Do you use the Wildlife Checkoff box on your state income tax form? It's one of the easiest ways to donate to a good cause.

Montana's Watchable Wildlife program continues to enhance wildlife viewing experiences across the state and promotes increased awareness and appreciation of Montana's wild residents. Approximately \$25,000 is contributed each year through the Wildlife Checkoff and these funds are then matched to specific projects in conjunction with partner agencies or organizations.

There are more than 28 projects completed or underway thanks in part to past contributions. Birders around the state welcomed the completion of the revised *Montana Bird Distribution Guide*, which benefitted from checkoff dollars.

Other projects included a new nature trail at Beavertail Hill in the Missoula area, along with a guide to all FWP recreation sites open to the public in FWP's Region Two area.

Interpretive planning along Montana's Missouri River and the Great Falls/River's Edge trail is nearly complete. At the Makoshika State Park Visitor Center, interpretive panels detailing the life history of the remarkable paddlefish are now complete.

Montana's unparalleled wildlife resourses provide residents and visitors with recreation and educational opportunities, as well as significant economic benefits for local economies.

Don't forget to put your mark in the Wildlife Checkoff box when you file your state tax return. It's an investment for our wildlife's future and it's one investment you won't regret.

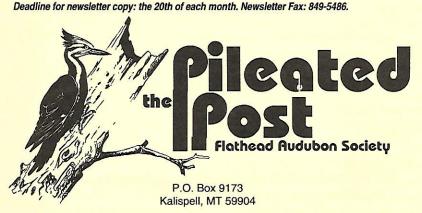


Flathead Audubon Society Directory

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President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
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Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Road., Bigfork, 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
DIRECTORS		
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
1996-99	Sonja Hartman, P.O. Box 1388, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	758-8516
1996-99	Jim Rogers, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
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Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
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Hospitality	Betty Winzenburg (see above)	
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	Wanten B. J. L.	
Montana Audubon		
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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. The regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. and includes a featured guest who will present a conservation or nature program. 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.



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