



# the Flatheaded Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 23

Number 4

April 1998

## AUDUBON CELEBRATES THE WINGS OF SPRING

Every year, hundreds of thousands of birds make their way from wintering grounds to summering nesting homes in North America. Traveling hundreds of miles nonstop, using the sun, moon and stars as guides, these birds never cease to amaze millions of people around the world.

This spring, Audubon and its family of chapters plan to celebrate the yearly mystery by hosting migration celebrations and birdathons, nominating Important Bird Areas, conducting wetlands tours and organizing other community based events.

Collectively called the Wings of Spring, these events will also shine a light on the many threats these migratory birds face. Important staging areas where these birds refuel increasingly succumb to population pressures and development. Refuges set up to provide sanctuary for wildlife, including birds, suffer from neglect and backlogs in funding. Wetland, arguably the most important habitat for birds, continue to disappear, either drained and plowed under or paved over.

And what better timing?

International Migratory Bird Day, scheduled for the first weekend in May, along with Earth Day, April 22, and American Wetlands Month, May, all fall within the Spring Migration. The Audubon family has many reasons to celebrate this spring, and through these celebrations, we can raise environmental awareness across the nation.

This Earth Day Citizens For a Better Flathead is sponsoring an event called "Walkable Communities", Dan Burden a transportation and land use expert "will take to the streets with community leader and conduct walkability audits of areas of concern". He will discuss how transportation and new development projects can build more livable communities. Watch the local papers for dates and times. For more information call Citizens For a Better Flathead at 756-8993.

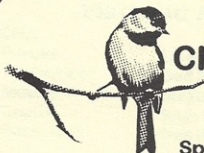
International Migratory Bird Day is sponsored by Partners in Flight, an alliance of bird conservation advocates. The annual spring observance helps educate people about bird migration and conservation. The 500 refuges that are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System are favorite places to see migrating birds.

May is also American Wetlands Month, sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. The designation helps promote wetlands for values such as a habitat and storing and cleaning water and as sources of life and places of beauty.

Flathead Audubon will be conducting several field trips to view migrating birds. A warbler walk will be conducted by Leo Keane and Neal Brown on May 17 to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day.

-National Audubon Society





## CHICKADEE CHATTER

Spring is here! Spring: a time of new beginnings and fresh starts. This spring will be no exception. The robins are back and singing their timeless songs, the swans are here on their stopover to places north, there are geese by the hundreds and ducks of all kinds, even a meadowlark or two have been spotted. All the birds are ready for spring beginnings, as am I. This will be the first issue of The Pileated Post with me as the editor. I am looking forward to working on the newsletter, it is something I have never done before and I hope I can fill the shoes of Sharon Bergman.

Flathead Valley has been home to my family since 1915 when my grandparents moved here from Chicago. They had heard of Flathead Lake and its steamboats. My grandfather had been a marine engineer on the Great Lakes and dreaming of a better life (which is the American way) decided to move his family to Bigfork, Montana. They built a steamboat at the mouth of the Swan River in Bigfork and named it the *Helena*. The *Helena* sailed up and down Flathead Lake and River carrying freight of all kinds and the occasional passenger, until the fall of 1932. The building of a passable road along the west shore of Flathead Lake (known today as Highway 93) and the Depression lead to the demise of the steamboats. The *Helena* was laid to rest in Holt in 1932. Kehoe's Agate Shop, the shop that many of you may be familiar with was built that fall out of lumber salvaged from the ship. My father started the shop in 1932 and my brother, James, and I own and operate it today.

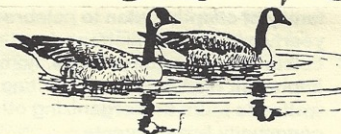
Montana and, more specifically, the Flathead Valley are two of the most wonderful places in the world. We are so fortunate to live in a place where we can look out of our windows and see all kinds of flora and fauna in their natural surroundings. I was born and raised here in the Flathead Valley, spent a few years in Bozeman at Montana State

University in pursuit of a degree in business, spent another few years working on a masters degree in international business at a school in Arizona, graduated, and came home to Montana. I truly believe that this is the most wonderful place to live.

Birds have always held a certain fascination for me, although it has only been in the last six or eight years that I have gotten the bird books out and become a "serious" birdwatcher. I am really only a rank amateur, I take the bird books and binoculars on all my little outings and the world of birds is very slowly unfolding. I will never tire of the natural world and birding has been one of the great pleasures in my life.

I would enjoy hearing from any one of you who might have thoughts on or for the newsletter. You may contact me at the address on the back page, at 837-4467 after 5:00PM or at my e-mail address at [ljkehoe@digisys.net](mailto:ljkehoe@digisys.net).

*Jessie L. Kehoe*



### APRIL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, April 13, 1998  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.  
490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell  
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm

Program: "Riparian Blues and Greens: the Threats to Montana's Cottonwoods", by Susan Lenard, Wildlife Specialist for Montana Audubon. She will discuss the importance of cottonwoods and the threats that they are currently facing. The health and future of the cottonwoods of Montana has been the topic of recent year long study by Montana Audubon. Cottonwoods provide critical habitat for birds and other wildlife. Because of an increase in our impact on the landscape, Montana is in danger of losing its cottonwood communities. Among the sources of danger are dam management, grazing, logging, and competition from exotic species.





### LOOKING FOR BLUE JAYS

Wayne Tree who lives in the Bitterroot has been keeping track records of Blue Jays since last fall. He has found them in Kalispell, Great Falls, Billings, Chester, Lewistown, Hamilton, Stevensville, Missoula, Dillon, Twin Bridges, Glen, Sheridan, Bozeman, Helena, and in his own backyard. He reports they have not been seen in large numbers but seem to be fairly stable. Mr. Tree is interested in knowing if there are Blue Jays in our area. He believes if they persist into April there is a good chance they may be breeding. They have been found breeding in the Kalispell area. If you have seen Blue Jays this year and especially recently please give him a call at 777-3159 or e-mail at [wetree@montana.com](mailto:wetree@montana.com).

-Wayne Tree

### MARK YOUR CALENDERS THE MONTANA AUDUBON ANNUAL CONVENTION IS MAY 1-3

Montana Audubon will hold its 1998 convention on May 1-3 at the Holiday Inn in Great Falls. The theme for this year's conference is *Montana's Wetlands: Where the Wild Things Are*. The Conference will focus on the ecology of Montana's wetlands and the threats they are facing. Highlights include presentations on Montana's wetland birds, the kinds of wetlands found in our state, rare plants, and a panel discussion on why private landowners protect wetlands.

All Audubon members and friends are invited to join in the weekend's sessions and festivities. The convention is being sponsored by the Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Chapter. You can obtain registration information and forms by calling the Montana Audubon office at 443-3949.

-Montana Audubon

### SILENT AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED

Help support Montana Audubon by donating to the Silent Auction at the annual convention! In order for this fundraiser to be a success we need as many silent auction items as possible. In the past we have learned that the most popular items either directly concern birds or are food, i.e., birdhouses, bird feeders, T-shirts with bird picture on them, homemade jams, sauces or cookies. Donations can be brought with you to the convention or mailed to the Montana Audubon office at P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. If you have any questions you may call Montana Audubon at 443-3949. Your donations will be greatly appreciated.

-Montana Audubon



### GLACIER INSTITUTE FIELD SEMINAR OWLS OF GLACIER - APRIL 4-5

The Glacier Institute will present another bird adventure featuring the owls of Glacier National Park. Join two researchers, Michael Maples and Denver Holt, from Missoula's Owl Research Institute for day and night field trips to learn about the habits, adaptations, and life histories of these impressive creatures. There is a course fee of \$100.00. For more information please contact the Glacier Institute at 406-755-1211 or at [glacinst@digisys.net](mailto:glacinst@digisys.net).

-Glacier Institute





## President's Page

Looking back on the 20 plus years I've been involved in the business of building homes there is one aspect of my career I've never had to question. I'm always outside. Even when we are inside, say doing finish work on a new home, I'll be in and out all day, so I never feel trapped. Out in the fresh air and weather is where I love to be. That's a strange motivation for a career choice I suppose, but I know when I'm happy.

A breathtaking reminder of that fact occurred this week—the second week in March of our earlier than usual spring. I was working on the roof of a home we're building just east of Kalispell, on the Creston Bench, surrounded by the valley's finest farmland.

Without having to take my eyes off my work, I was thoroughly enjoying myself; the warmth of the sun, the smell of fresh earth, and jingling, lilting music of migrating birds. Snow buntings, longspurs and pipits have flight calls that sound like this—a sweet sprinkling of song drifting to earth from a clear sky. While making a mental note to review my field guides for verification of these lofty songsters, my ears picked up another unmistakable call: Canada geese.

This may seem like heresy, but I've actually grown a little tired of Canada geese; or at least that incessant wailing and moaning and strident honking of our local flocks. They sound, and look, like they're never really sure of what they want or where they are going, flying indecisively way over here, then way over there, never quite finding the perfect place to settle down. I almost feel like I'm wasting my time watching them anymore! This is probably just my own bad attitude from having the fickle critters ignore my decoys so thoroughly each hunting season, but sometimes I wish they were about half as smart.

The call that caught my attention on this afternoon, however, was something different: not aimless, but urgent; not a long, lazy wail, but quick, excited yelps. And lots of them. It sounded like a big flock. Nothing thrills a waterfowl lover, which I truly am, like big flights. This is certainly one of the attractions of waterfowl. In good years, when the earth moist and verdant, they can

replenish themselves in legendary numbers, producing flights that give us a glimpse into a long forgotten world. To be in that picture when the birds are on the move is a riveting experience. I have, and I've become forever captivated by waterfowl.

So I set aside my work and looked up. The southern horizon was speckled with advancing flocks. From the Flathead River to the foothills, wedges and skeins and bunches of geese were winging their way northward toward my position on the rooftop. They came quickly, noisily and with purposefulness, as though by a magnetic pull toward true north. For the next several hours I was witness to a grand passage of Canada geese as flock after flock clamored across the sky, flew over the fields and farms of the Creston Bench, over me and my rooftop grandstand, and in turn disappeared into the northern horizon. I did complete my work that afternoon, thrilled with the background music and motion of migrating geese.

The wonder of migration. Where had these legions come from? Up which valleys and over what mountain ranges would this flight path take them? Would they advance under the stars tonight, or come to rest on some wild, northern lake? Is there a natural cue that moves them all at once, some signal in the weather or the wind? Why am I so fortunate? What if I'd been stuck indoors?

To witness a grand passage of waterfowl is an unforgettable experience. In the 35 years since my eyes have been turned skyward I recall exactly the seasons and the places where the blue horizon suddenly darkened with birds, and ducks and geese moved across the sky like curtains. Minnesota lake country, the Dakota prairie, Montana's front range of the Rockies. Each time and place I've felt the wild heart; a pulsing, abundance of life in what seemed like a still natural creation. I've found too the wilderness of my self, summoned from these memories—that recurring dream where I enter a world quickened with life and birds of the wing.

It's my favorite dream. But infinitely better when it comes true, outdoors, under the real sky, where I still find myself most at home.

Leo Keane





## 1998 SPRING AND SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ALL TRIPS. COME AND ENJOY!

Included are trips cosponsored with Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) and local events of interest to birders.

Standard equipment for ALL trips includes comfortable SHOES, BINOCULARS, SCOPES, FIELD GUIDES, "FOWL" WEATHER GEAR, and a SACK LUNCH or SNACK. Further requirements for some trips are noted below. When possible, car pooling for trips will be arranged at the meeting site.

Call Linda Winnie at 755-1406 with questions, changes, or for more information. Check the AUDUBON BIRD HOTLINE, 756-5595, for updates or to network for informal outings.

### Sunday, April 5 Second Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour Leader: Dan Casey, 857-3143

A four-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 Eurasian Wigeons, ducks engaged in courtship behavior, as well as local raptors and songbirds.

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 AM, Ramada Inn parking lot, at intersection of Hwy 93 & 38.

### Sunday, May 17 Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day on a Warbler Walk

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 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 warblers. Until 12:30PM.

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30AM Swan Lake Campground (north of Swan Lake town site)

### Saturday, May 23 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the National Bison Range

Details to be announced.

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

### First Week in June 1998 Birdathon/Bird America

Details to be announced. Contact: Lisa Bates

### Saturday, June 6 Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail Leader: Anne Morley 886-2242

Swan Lake Area. Sponsored by the Montana Native Plant Society. An easy two mile walk along the new Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail, near the Point Pleasant Campground south of Swan Lake. Focus will be native plants, but birders are welcome!

Note: The trail is on Montana State lands and a State recreational use permit is needed. Permits anywhere fishing licenses are sold: \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors.

Meeting Time and Place: 10AM at the Nature trail site. About 9 miles south of Swan Lake on Hwy 83, turn right at the Point Pleasant Campground sign. At the first switchback is a sign to the nature trail; turn right to the parking area.

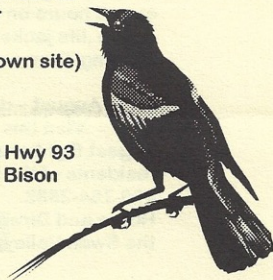
### Saturday, June 20 Loons of the Thompson Chain Leader: Lynn Kelly, 883-5797

Tour of known and potential loon nesting lakes in the Thompson Chain of Lakes conducted by expert loon researcher. At this time the loons on this 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: 9AM at the Kalispell Office of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

### Saturday, June 21 Father's Day Canoe Trip to Owen Sowerwine Leaders: Dan and Susannah Casey, 857-3143

Half-day exploration of Flathead Audubon island park in Flathead. Canoe to the Island (easy flat-water paddling), and bush-wack through the Owen Sowerwine Natural





**1998 Field Trips Continued...**

Area. Features breeding birds and a close-up look at the diversity of endangered cottonwood forests. Bring canoe and one life jacket for each person.

**Meeting Time and Place:** 7:30AM at the Rosauers parking lot in Kalispell

**Sunday, July 12 Squirmy, Scaly Critter Search Leader: Dan Casey, 857-3143**

Join biologists from Montana Fish, Wildlife and 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 18 Montana Loon Day Contact Lynn Kelly at 883-5797**

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

**Sunday, July 19 Flathead River Float Leaders: Dan and Susannah Casey**

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 a canoe, life jackets for each person and rain gear. Dan Casey 857-3143

**Meeting Time and Place:** 9AM at the K-Mart parking lot in Kalispell.

**Early August - dates to be announced Open House at Grounded Eagle Center.**

Visit this nationally known rehabilitation center for birds. Grounded Eagle has the largest flight arena in the U.S. View a variety of this region's raptors who are permanent residents of the facility. For more information contact the Centers Director Ken Wolfe at 406-754-2882.

**Hours and Directions:** The Center will be open 10AM to 5PM. It is located on Hwy 83 in the Swan Valley, at mile marker 37 (corner of Kroft and Hwy 83)

**Saturday, August 8 Purple Loosetrife Pull at Ninepipe Refuge Leader: Neal Brown**

Sponsored jointly with the MT Native Plant Society. A working trip! Help birds and native plants by reducing the competition from invasive, introduced loosetrife. An opportunity to be a hands on conservationist, plus get up close and personal with the Marsh Wren. Bring gloves and shoes (boot or waders) to wear in water.

**Meeting Time and Place:** To be announced. Neal Brown, 837-5018

**Saturday, August 16 Coal Ridge Lookout Hike Leader: Betty Karopat, 862-0877**

Sponsored jointly with the MT Native Plant Society. An 8 mile hike through a sub-alpine forest to Coal Ridge Lookout, of moderate difficulty with an elevation climb of 1600 feet. See and discuss old growth forest habitat and sub-alpine wetlands, fire and timber harvest history, Forest Service road management for wildlife security and water quality. Lunch at the old forest fire service lookout with a view of Glacier National Park and the Whitefish range. May see Clark's Nutcracker, Grey Jay, Golden Crown Kinglet and Brown Creepers. Bring a container for huckleberries! Pre-register if possible.

**Meeting Time and Place:** 8:30AM in the parking lot of the Nite Owl Café, Columbia Falls.

**Late August - date to be announced Swan Valley Logging Tour Leader: Rod Ash**

Tour of various logging practices in action, with discussion of effects of various logging techniques on wildlife, and of light-impact logging methods available to landowners. Rod Ash, 754-2289

**Meeting Time And Place:** To be announced





## PRECYCLING, RECYCLING AND EARTH DAY

Earth Day is April 22 and we should be thinking good thoughts and doing good deeds for our environment.

We can help by pre-cycling, recycling, reducing and reusing. The pre-cycling program encourages consumers to buy recyclable items, such as milk in plastic containers and purchasing in bulk to save money and reduce waste. All it takes is a little extra thought at the grocery store. Check the packaging, is it recyclable; buy the contents not the container. Try to avoid buying disposable items, such as plastic or foam cups, plates and tableware, paper towels and diapers. Use canvas or string shopping bags and leave the plastic and paper decision behind you. Reuse ribbon, wrapping paper, string, paper clips and rubber bands, plastic and paper bags. Throw vegetable scraps and lawn clippings in a compost pile instead of the garbage can. Buy recycled products.

A new recycling location for Auduboners has appeared in Kalispell. Valley Recycling has taken over the old Flathead Industries recycling site at 56 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW. (Valley has hired some of the previous Flathead Industries workers.) At this new location Valley will, currently, only pay for aluminum cans; but they hope to upgrade that facility and pay for more things soon. When you drop off cans there you can request that they donate your payment to Flathead Audubon. They will, also, honor this request at the old Valley location on Highway 2, just west of Kalispell. There they are paying for aluminum cans, newspapers, magazines, cardboard of all kinds (including brown paper bags), office paper and computer paper. Valley also accepts junk mail, steel cans and #1 and #2 plastic, but doesn't pay for them.

All it takes is a little more time and some extra thought. Here's to Earth Day and our environment!

-Ferne Cohen and Linda Winnie



## Montana's Watchable Wildlife Program Needs Our Help!

Since 1983 Montana's Watchable Wildlife Program has relied heavily on the Wildlife Tax Check-off for funding. Montana's Income Tax forms include a line and a box for those check-off contributions.

Montana received more than \$35,000 from more than 6,600 taxpayers in 1983, who contributed to the check-off. In 1996 only 1,951 taxpayers contributed \$16,081 to the nongame wildlife check-off. Because of legislation, the wildlife check-off will be dropped from tax forms if the fund receives under \$20,000 in two consecutive years. As a result, this year is crucial. Montana's Watchable Wildlife Program may be discontinued if this check-off is dropped from the tax forms.

Please remember, on April 15<sup>th</sup>, to check the box and make a donation that makes a difference!



## International Wildlife Film Festival - April 11-18

Mark your calendars for this wonderful series of wildlife documentaries. It is to be held in Missoula at various venues. If you are interested you can call the International Wildlife Film Festival office at 406-728-9380 for further details.

Birds are the life of the skies, and when they fly, they reveal the thoughts of the skies... -D.H. Lawrence





## Flathead Audubon Society Directory

### OFFICERS

President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Secretary	Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Avenue, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5775
Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130

### DIRECTORS

1997-2000	William Breen, 335 Mountain Meadow Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-2142
1997-98	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
1997-2000	Sharon DeLong, 2495 Grave Creek Rd., Eureka, MT 59917	
1996-99	Sonja Hartman, P.O. Box 1388, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	758-8516
1996-99	Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
1997-2000	Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-4548

### CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Field Trips	Betty Winzenburg, 1436 Rogers Lane, Kila, MT 59920	755-1697
Hospitality	Betty Winzenburg (see above)	
Librarian	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Membership	June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Newsletter	Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4467
Program	Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
Publicity	Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920	755-1406
Quality of Life	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028
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

OFFICE	Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624	443-3949
PRESIDENT	Howard Strause, 1917 W. Hill Pl., Great Falls, MT 59404	727-7516

### 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.

Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month. Newsletter e-mail [ljkehoe@digsys.net](mailto:ljkehoe@digsys.net)

### 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"/>
Student	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual Renewal	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$38	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior	\$15	<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

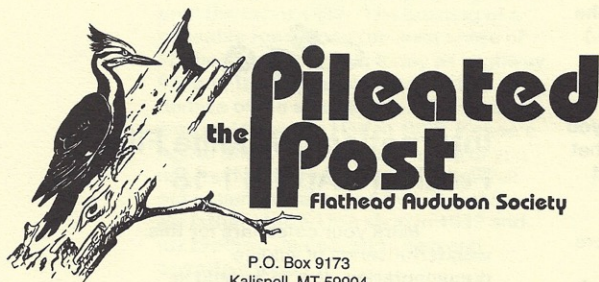
State  Zip

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  
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