



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 23

Number 6

September 1998

Purple Loosestrife at Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge

August 8, 1998 at 1:00 PM with 30 garbage bags of purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, in the back of the pick-up, we applauded ourselves for another year of pulling the noxious weed at Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge.

Lythrum invasions degrade and can eliminate wetlands. It has no value to wildlife and quickly replaces native vegetation. If it is allowed to flourish it could radically change the character and value of Montana's pristine wetland resources. Lythrum is a stout erect perennial herb that sends up multiple stems from a dense, matted root system. Plants can grow to ten feet in height. The stem is four to eight sided; leaves are opposite or whorled along the stem. Flowers are pink to purple with six petals. Old stems with seed capsules can persist through the winter. A single stem of this noxious weed can produce 120,000 seeds a year and the seeds are viable for 50 years.

Flathead Audubon has been sponsoring the purple loosestrife pull since 1989. The weed was found in a number of the wetlands in the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge, the weed originated in a domestic garden in Ronan and it spread down a creek and eventually dispersed into the Ninepipe wetlands complex.

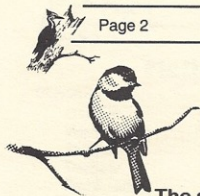
There were six of us veteran weed pullers this year: Neal and Pattie Brown, Bill West, from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bison Range, Ed Prach and Brett Thuma with his friend from California, Adam.

Pattie modeled her new purple loosestrife pulling leisure suit. She was a vision in pink, no way to mistake that color. And so we slogged off into the wetland. Because of a wet June the water table had been high and we found the loosestrife growing in dry sites that had been inundated in June.

In 1996, we missed a plant, pulled it in 1997 and by this year the seedlings were as thick a grass in an area the size of a small garden plot. Ten garbage bags were filled with seedlings from this area alone. We know we will be pulling purple loosestrife until we are in nursing homes.

We enjoyed a gourmet picnic and a discussion with Bill West regarding wetland issues. Join us next year and please watch for purple loosestrife in other wetlands and waterways. We found a huge plant last year and again this year in the Swan River a few miles north of the Ferndale Bridge. If you are uncertain what it looks like come to our first Audubon meeting on September 14, 1998 at 7:30PM and see Pattie Brown in her hot pink leisure suit.

By Neal Brown



Chickadee Chatter

The summer is passing by quickly now, just a few more days of hot August nights. This summer seemed to pass more quickly than it had any right to. I have been lead to understand that this is what happens as one gets older. I am not sure I like this kind of reasoning and I am not sure that I am old enough to have witnessed this phenomenon. Never the less it is nearly September and fall is just around the proverbial corner.

The Osprey and their young ones have been talking all morning, since just before 6AM. The last week or so they have been perching on the thick cable of the power poles that run across the river here at Holt. Apparently, the fishing has been good using this technique and it is something that should be passed on to the new generation. It seems like a good way to fish if you are a large bird with wonderful eye-sight and very swift of wing.

The Osprey spend their summers flying over the Flathead River here and it is a rare day that I don't get to enjoy their effortless flight and conversation. On a beautiful sunny day not long ago four of them were flying in a huge circle over the house and the river. It seemed they were just enjoying the day, I wonder if Osprey do that?

It is always with regret I see them teaching their young, who are nearly a large as the adults now, the ways of the Osprey as I know it will soon be time for their long and perilous flight to South America. It is also with joy and great curiosity I watch them. Less than twenty years ago these beautiful birds were on the verge of extinction because of the dreaded pesticide DDT, shooting and habitat encroachment.

The Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus Linnaeus*, are a conservation success story with the ban of DDT, strict laws that ban hunting of raptors and conservation programs, such as the nesting platforms we see all over the Flathead Valley, the Osprey population has recovered. They are multiplying and are now found in many places all around the United States. And so I watch them and they give me a modest

sense of hope for the future. All summer I watch, as the young ones stretch their newly made wings and learn the intricacies of flight. Soon they are flying over the rivers and lakes learning how to detect the subtle movement of fish just under the surface. Learning how to dive into the water to just the right depth to get that fish. Some days are better than others although lately they have been more successful than not. They have been perching on top the power poles just out the backdoor to eat that fish. Occasionally, they catch a fish that is just a bit to big and it is all they can do to hang on to it and get it to shore. It is almost humorous to watch but it is yet another reminder of the seriousness of life. The daily struggle to survive in a world of "no free lunch" (to coin a human term).

The summer comes to an end and the Osprey take flight for the long journey south. Fall is waiting in the wings and a new season for Flathead Audubon awaits us. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the meetings and if anyone has a wonderful birding story to tell please do.

Leslie L. Kehoe



SEPTEMBER MEETING

Monday, September 14, 1998
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.
490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell
Meeting starts at 7:30PM

PROGRAM: Swift Fox: Return of a prairie native by John Winnie Jr. Tens of thousands of swift foxes once roamed the prairies of the Great Plains. By the late 1930's they were extinct in Canada and rare in the northern U.S. Swift foxes are currently up for listing in the U.S. and a small reintroduced population in Canada is considered endangered. Join us for a look at the history, biology and controversy surrounding these tiny, elusive prairie predators. John Winnie Jr. is nature photographer and author. He is currently doing research and writing on Swift Foxes.



Audubon Membership Increases

Flathead Audubon's share of income from National Audubon membership has been increasing due to the thoughtfulness of those making application for new memberships and using our code number according to June Ash, Flathead Audubon chapter membership chairman.

When prospective new or returning members apply for National Audubon membership they should use Flathead Audubon's name and chapter number. If the number is used the chapter's share of the membership fee increases from \$5.00 to \$15.00, which represents a considerable increase for funding our activities.

The chapter number is N54 7XCHA and should be placed on the membership application form or use the form on the back of the Pileated Post.

Flathead Audubon membership now stands at 440. Twenty one new members joined in August this year.

By June Ash

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

Flathead Audubon would like to take this opportunity to say welcome and thank-you, we look forward to meeting you.

Bigfork: B. Gamble, Sheila Lemeke, Beverly Sherman, The Kuhn Kids, Robert Borchardt, Donald Gee, Cas Still, and Dan Hartwell.

Big Arm: Barbara Weld.

Columbia Falls: Mike Yelinek and Irene Burgi.

Condon: Bob Newman and Clint Deshotel.

Dixon: Svetlana Volbarth.

Eureka: John Mack, Gordon Ambrose, and Suzanne Smith.

Fortune: Isabella Mustad.

Hot Springs: Pat Davis.

Kalispell: Richard Haney, Lucia Alleruzzo, Pat Bailey, Bonnie Boles, Joyce Lapp, Debra Parker, Kari Goltz, Elizabeth Powell, Ken Beck, Donald Gatzke, Marian LaPlume, Caroline Sime, Don Burtch, Theron Holland, Danette Dobyns, Jeanne Linrude, May Loveless, Donald Rasmussen, Georgia Young, Mrs. G. Miller, and Anne Yasenchak.

Lakeside: Judith Spence.

Libby: Dr. L.J. Phelps, Dawn Gremmer, and Mrs. G. Candee.

Pablo: Ruth Davis.

Polson: Harold and Gail Knapp, Lonnie and Margery Durham, Jean Anderson, John Conder, Barbara and Bill Tremper, Di Wells, Edie Carlson, John and Betty Couch, Carla Mapston, Jerry Berner, J.W. Eichhorn, and Carol Tiernan.

Ronan: Betty Warner, Teri Hradek, and Jean Neusse.

St. Ignatius: Tom Keast.

Thompson Falls: Ralph Young and Karla Murphy.

Trout Creek: Melinda Ferrell.

Troy: Pam Kroschel, Richard Jones, and Linda Larson.

Whitefish: Richard Haney, David and Margie Rasmussen, Brian Ruffalto, Barbara Taylor, Steve Clemens, Peggy Lodinoff, Alice Cameron, Pamela Crobar, Suzanne L. Jones, James Hass, Susan LeValley, Derek Williamson, Margaret Bronder, Dr. A.R. Wilson, Chuck Kempner, Diann Heivilin, and Michael McCane.

West Glacier: Edna Ridenour.



For The Birds: Birdseed is Still Available

If Flathead Audubon members or friends are in danger of running short of sunflower seed for the favorite birds before the annual fall sunflower seed sale, there are sacks of seed available for purchase at several locations.

Seed is currently available at Condon 754-2289, Polson 883-5797, Kalispell 755-2142, and Whitefish 862-5560.

The fifty pound bags of high quality, clean seed cost \$17.00, with the proceeds going to finance Flathead Audubon chapter conservation and education activities.

Don't forget Flathead Audubon's major fund raising event is the fall sunflower seed sale. The October issue of the Pileated Post will provide details of time, place, and costs for this fall's sale.



From the President



"It was God who made me so beautiful. If I weren't, then I'd be a teacher."
-Linda Evangelista, super model

I confess! Now you know why I teach. But there are some other reasons as well.

I am reminded of the lobbying efforts by the Audubon Society involving the passage of the Migratory Bird Act in 1913. A United States senate leader wondered "why there should be any sympathy or sentiment about a long-legged, long-beaked, long-necked bird that lives in a swamp and eat tadpoles and fish and crawfish...why worry ourselves into a frenzy because one lady adorns her hat with one of its feathers which appears to be the only use it has?"

Although the U.S. plume trade had been effectively stopped, a legality still allowed the feather traders to obtain plumes from foreign countries. In response, the Audubon Society utilized its far-ranging teacher network and young naturalists program to alert the public about the problem to alert the public about the problem. An immense letter writing campaign by the teachers students saved the day! The politicians were so moved by the children's concerns that they deserted their party leaders and voted to close the loophole.

Please understand that I am not suggesting that Montana's students become environmental activists. For me, the story demonstrates the importance of education which is why I teach (and yes, I am not pretty).

Simply put, I believe education is the most important thing that Audubon can do.

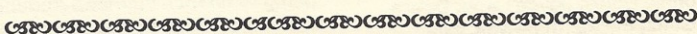
The environment is modified by human activities, largely as a consequence of the ways in which human societies value and use Earth's natural resources. For a number of our most pressing social, economic, and political problems, an environmentally informed citizenry aware of the complexity of today's challenges is vital for identifying alternatives, predicting consequences, and implementing the most effective solutions.

Furthermore, Montana's Constitution guarantees every citizen a clean and healthy environment. This depends on an ecologically literate public that is motivated to solve existing problems and prevent new ones.

I share these thoughts to encourage you to reflect on why you joined Audubon and to think about what you would like to see us accomplish. For example, I intend to focus on expanding our chapter's education efforts over the coming year. More on that in future issues of the Pileated Post.

So there you have it. Perhaps what I just described is disagreeable to you? But that is exactly the point. Bring your ideas and wisdom to business meeting or contact one of our directors and let us know what is on your mind. Of course, I would be most pleased to hear from you. After all, it's my job as your new president.

Jim Rogers



Reverence for life comprises the whole ethic of love in its deepest and highest sense. It is the source of constant renewal for the individual and for mankind.

Albert Schweitzer



Field Notes by Pattie Brown

The warbler field trip was rained out. Ten hearty folks showed up. It was rescheduled for June 6, at 7 AM so we could find some birds before joining the Sprunger-Whitney Trail plant hike with botanist Anne Moreley. We started at Swan Campground and learned the song of MacGillivray's Warbler and the Northern Waterthrush. We went on to the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge where we heard and/or saw the American Redstart, Black-headed Grosbeak, Red-eyed Vireo, and the Common Yellowthroat. We heard the Bitterns, so we walked out to try and see them. A Sora rail called just once and Snipe winnowed all around. We then drove down to the Nature Conservancy Swan River Oxbow at Porcupine Creek and heard a Townsend's Warbler. The Lincoln Sparrow is no longer singing here. We checked out the river by the bridge on Porcupine Creek and watched the Cliff Swallows gather mud for nests. A pair of Northern Waterthrush were also coming out of the willows to feed and collect mud. A hen Common Merganser floated by with eight chicks, four of which were riding on her back. It was quite the scene. We spotted a Vaux Swift among the swallows and noticed how different they look and fly, compared to the swallows.

We then joined Anne and others for the trail hike. We saw and listened to the Western Tanagers. Anne has watched them feed on the orange honeysuckle. Anne and I were charged by a hen Ruffed Grouse as we approached her nest. It scared the pee out of me, and I nearly flattened Anne as I backed up. The grouse was so upset and scolded, charged and tried to get us off the trail. She was all "ruffed" up. I regretted having disturbed her to that great extent.

The plant highlight of the day was the queen of the lady slippers, *Cypripedium montanum*, the Mountain Lady-slipper, blooming in full splendor by the side of the trail.

Join us next year for this trip. It's a dandy!

By Pattie Brown

Flathead Audubon's Mission Statement

The Flathead Audubon Society is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society.

- Our mission is to conserve birds, wildlife habitat and ecosystem diversity.
- Awareness and appreciation of the natural world is promoted through educational activities and advocacy programs.
- We work with diverse groups and agencies to achieve sound decisions on natural resource issues.
- Our community outreach includes school programs, work projects and field trips.

While focusing our efforts in northwest Montana, we believe in the protection of the earth and all its inhabitants.



Election Results

Flathead Audubon has new officers. Elections were held at the May potluck meeting and the results are as follows:

President: Jim Rogers
Vice-president: Neal Brown
Treasurer: Bruce Tannehill

Many congratulations to our new officers and many, many thanks to Leo Keane, Geoff Poole, Brent Mitchell, and Susan Hitchcox.

Gail Sullivan will continue to serve as chapter Secretary and Leo Keane will fill Brent Mitchell's shoes as Past President.

Several new directors have also been appointed, Linda Winnie, Pat McLaughlin, and Dick Moore will fill the chairs vacated by Neal Brown, Jim Rogers, and Bruce Tannehill.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered time and energy for Flathead Audubon last year. A new season awaits us and we hope many of you can join us.



Flathead Audubon Society Directory

OFFICERS

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Past President

Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860
Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911
Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Ave., Whitefish, MT 59937
Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937
Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937

883-3611
837-5018
862-5775
862-4548
862-5807

DIRECTORS

1999-1999
1997-2000
1997-2000
1998-1999
1998-2000
1998-2001

Sonja Hartman, P.O. Box 1388, Columbia Falls 59912
William Breen, 335 Mountain Meadow Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901
Sharon DeLong, 2495 Grave Creek Rd., Eureka, MT 59917
Dick Moore
Pat McLaughlin, 223 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937
Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920

758-8516
755-2142
862-6083
862-4559
755-1406

CHAIRS

Conservation
Field Trips
Hospitality

Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901
John Ashley
Lois Drobish, 324 Helena Flats Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901
Tracy Schiess, P.O. Box 154, West Glacier, MT 59936
Pattie Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Rd., Bigfork, MT 59911
Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937
June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826
Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911
Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860
Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920
Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937
Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860
Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911

756-8130
892-3825
756-7405
892-3825
837-5018
862-5807
754-2289
837-4467
883-3611
755-1406
862-2028
883-5797
837-5018

Librarian
Membership
Newsletter
Program
Publicity
Quality of Life
Refuge Projects
Wetlands/Waterfowl

Montana Audubon

OFFICE
PRESIDENT

Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
Howard Strause, 1917 W. Hill Pl., Great Falls, MT 59404

443-3949
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@digisys.net



P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904

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
to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership;
P.O. Box 1129
Condon, Montana 59826
For address change, call 1-800-274-4201

Non-Profit Org.
Postage PAID
Permit No. 115
Kalispell, MT
59901-9173