



the pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF ENLIGHTENMENT (AND A DAY AT THE ZOO)

Many moons ago, when the Missoula hills were soft and green on a spring morning such as this, I walked across the campus of the University of Montana beside my moccasin clad teacher and we talked about the world. His moccasins swished on the grass and he strode with bent knees and firmly planted steps, much as I would picture an Indian to carry himself on the earth. He spoke as precisely as he walked, with well-chosen words and in rich sentences, even to me. And I tried intently to keep up, to glean every parcel of wisdom from this chance moment; for this teacher was no less than a hero to me, my mentor and my "master" in the Socratic sense of the word. As we neared our destination, the lecture hall where he was to speak, I asked, or, more exactly, blurted out for lack of something intelligent to say: "Gary, what are you afraid of?"

The time was April of 1973, and Gary Snyder—teacher, poet, philosopher, logger, Zen master, outdoorsman, and not an Indian at all but very much a Chief in my eyes—had come from his Sierra Nevada home to lead a group of students in the Round River Experiment, an environmental education program. It was my luck to be in the right place at the right time, UM in the early seventies, and to be selected for this unique and broadly conceived experiment. The month of April with Gary Snyder would be the pinnacle of our, or especially my, learning experience. To this day the concepts of environmentalism pioneered by Gary Snyder, Aldo Leopold and the teachers of Round River remain the basis of my relationship and concern for the earth. To this day as well, I remember Gary's clear answer to my off-the-cuff question as he swung open the door to

the lecture hall and disappeared inside. "Loss of the gene pool", he replied.

I all but scratched my head as I pondered this thoroughly perplexing response. Expecting something considerably more dramatic, more dangerous and more believable, like being attacked by a grizzly or swallowed up in an avalanche, "loss of the gene pool" was not quite an answer so much as another question. I wondered, what on earth is "loss of the gene pool" and why should we be afraid? And furthermore, how come your best teachers never give you the easy answer?

I've had 26 years to think about it—this chance question, and Gary Snyder's memorable, thought provoking and profound reply: "Loss of the gene pool". Although a vague and puzzling concept to an idealistic college student in April of 1973, it was among the basic tenets of enlightened scientists, ecologists and conservationists who were at that moment crafting the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and which would be authorized by Congress in the final weeks of that year. The concept was and is, of course, that as wildlife populations dwindle, the earth loses genetic information and variability, the gene pool, which allows for the diversity of life on earth. Drain the gene pool too far and all the connections and adaptations that bind species together come undone and the whole system fails, with very disquieting ramifications for mankind. And, I would suppose, especially disquieting for those of us who, like Gary Snyder, appreciate the significance and beauty of earth's life.

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CHICKADEE CHATTER

Happy spring one and all! It officially started on March 20th sometime in the afternoon. The question I have is: what happened to winter? We did not have much in the way of snow on the ground down here by the river this year. It seems to me there were a lot of gloomy days, some wind, and there were snowflakes, in abundance, they just didn't stick around for very long. Even after the winter that never really was it is good to have spring appear with the promise of warmer days and little growing things poking their green noses out of the ground. The first of the buttercups (*Ranunculus glaberrimus* aka Sagebrush Buttercup) are already blooming, they are in my neighbor's yard in a protected hollow. They are always a week or so earlier than the ones in my yard and I look forward to seeing those early golden blossoms every year. They are one of those few things in life that are completely predictable, I may not know when they will appear but they always do. Little golden blossoms always warm my heart and make me smile.

Several weeks ago, before the official arrival of spring, I decided to go owl watching. March 13 dawned partly cloudy and warm for early March a prized pre-spring spring day. After hopping in the car with a quick stop at the grocery store for donuts (a rare indulgence), a friend and I headed down Highway 35 on our way to meet Denver Holt and about 48 other would be owl watchers at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Polson. Denver Holt is the founder and president of the Owl Research Institute and has studied owls all over the world, especially here in Montana since 1978. He and his crew of researchers have studied and banded Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus* Linnaeus) for the past 12 years. He has identified one of the largest winter communal owl roosts in the United States. They have counted up to 88 Long-eared owls in a dense thicket of trees near the Pablo National Wildlife Refuge.

The owl population depends heavily on the vole population in the Mission Valley. The vole population fluctuates but this past year it has been very high and all kinds of birds from Rough-legged Hawks to Long-eared Owls have benefited.

We were soon sitting in a small open space in that dense thicket of trees awaiting the arrival of the owls. These trees were planted some time ago and are mostly exotics such as the Russian Olive. The sun decided to come out and lady bugs and spiders were keeping us company. Rough-legged Hawks flew overhead and Red-winged Blackbirds were singing loud songs all around us. Denver and his researchers set up mist nets in an attempt to capture the owls and several folks walked through the thick bushes to flush the owls out. There were, probably, 20 to 25 owls whose afternoon naps

were disturbed and of those, four were captured in the nets, three males and a lovely dark female.

They are beautiful birds and their coloring would make them very difficult to see hidden in the trees. They are beautifully streaked and barred in myriad shades of brown and tan and cream, with little tufts of feathers on top of their heads that stick up if they are annoyed which give them the name long-eared. They are nocturnal birds and hunt mostly rodents such as voles. If the rodent populations are adequate they will stay in the Mission Valley and mate.

Denver has banded over 700 different Long-eared Owls over the past 12 years in the Mission Valley and he had two more to band on that sunny day in March. My guess is the owls were none to excited to be captured and held by humans but the humans were quite enchanted by the owls. It is rare we get an up close view of such secretive birds, all of us have heard their calls or glimpsed the silent hunters flying overhead and felt shivers running down our spines. Thanks to Denver and crew for a peek into the world of the Long-eared Owls of the Mission Valley. It was a wonderful few hours and not soon to be forgotten.

BY LESLIE KEHOE

MEETING THE LONG-EARED OWL



I halted in the shadow
of blue mountains;
your yellow eyes a stop sign
amidst the gray juniper bark
and brittle brown branches
of the shelterbelt rows.

What a brazen stare
warmed my skin to a flush
and a rush of awe.
I stood so close to you
on that raw November day.

With measured languor
your gray feathered head
swiveled, and then you rose
on great silent wings.

By Ann Haggett, Flathead Audubon Member

APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 12, 1999

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Building

490 W. Meridian Rd., Kalispell

Business Meeting begins at 5:15PM

General Meeting begins at 7:30 PM

PROGRAM: Noted Owl researcher and Head of the Owl Research Institute, Denver Holt will present a slide presentation on "Montana's Owls". Holt will talk about the natural history of the owls of Montana, and show how to identify them in the field.



PILEATED POST-IT NOTES

DANCING PRAIRIE BIRDERS MEET

The Dancing Prairie Bird Club meets the fourth Monday of every month at the Eureka Ranger Station at 7:00PM. Everyone is welcome to attend. The March meeting featured Rox Rogers of the US Fish and Wildlife Service with a program on "Partners for Fish and Wildlife". On April 26, 1999 at 7:00PM Bill Swanson will present a program on "Wildlife Photography". For more information please contact Sharon DeLong at 882-4501.



IT'S BIRDATHON TIME!

We are starting to see the first migrant birds returning to the Flathead Valley so birders get your binoculars and start watching. And while you are out there having fun watching and counting birds one day, why not raise money for your local Audubon Society at the same time. You can do this by simply participating in the Audubon Society's annual Birdathon, which is one of our biggest fundraising events of the year. The Audubon Birdathon is a nationwide social and sporting event that takes place in every state. Half the money raised will go to the National Audubon Society's work to protect wetlands and the other half will go to local wetland conservation efforts.

This event can be as simple or involved as you choose. Birdathons work like a walkathon. You can ask any number of people you want to sponsor your birding efforts for one day. They can either pledge a certain amount for each species you see during a 24-hour period, or they can pledge a fixed amount of \$10, \$20, \$50, or \$100. Let your sponsors know how many bird species you expect to see in one day. This will help them decide how much they want to pledge. And remember, all donations are tax deductible.

So set aside some time during the week of May 30th to participate in the Flathead Audubon's Annual Birdathon. Have fun! Start asking family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers now if they would to be your sponsor. You can start by obtaining a sponsor sign-up sheet and pledge forms. Forms will also be made available at the next Audubon meeting. To get started call Lisa Bate at 756-0462.

MONTANA BIRDING HOTLINE

At the January meeting of Montana Audubon, the Board of Directors agreed that the Montana Birding Hotline should be officially recognized and expanded. Your help is needed to make the Hotline interesting and effective by reporting your observations of unusual bird sightings. This includes rare birds, birds occurring out of season, and birds that can be difficult to find regularly or observe for one reason or another. Observations are needed from birders everywhere in Montana. Our hope is that birders in Montana and out-of-state alike will find the Hotline useful for planning birding activities.

Terry Toppins from Missoula has agreed to continue compiling Hotline observations. He will collect observations from birders around the state and prepare a report for the Montana Birding Hotline. The report will be transmitted to the National Birding Hotline Cooperative where it will be archived under Bird West and made available to email users by accessing birdwest@listserv.arizona.edu. Eventually, the Hotline report will be available to internet users by accessing the Montana Audubon homepage or the Five Valleys Audubon homepage. You can also access the Hotline by calling the State Hotline number: 406-721-9799. This number is listed in the American Birding Association's national hotline directory as the Montana Hotline.

Another opportunity to learn about interesting bird sightings is provided by Wayne Tree from Florence, MT. Wayne serves as a focal point for exchanging interesting bird news via e-mail.

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FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



"The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives" Indian Proverb

What is the connection between this proverb and Audubon? It is not hard to draw parallels to the rapid population increase in the valley, the loss of open space and sensitive habitats, and a seemingly short term planning strategy in place of a more long term, or "sustainable" vision for the future of the valley. I tend to use the term sustainability in the same way it is used in the Flathead Gauges, which is a bi-annual publication, put out by the Sunrift Center for Sustainability, that tracks social, economic and environmental trends in the Flathead. They consider a sustainable community to be one that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs".

As an Audubon representative, I had the opportunity to be part of a group of people working towards a healthy, even "sustainable" future for the Flathead Valley. The Flathead Conservation Roundtable is an informal association of conservation organizations and individuals that are working to restore, protect and/or enhance the environmental health of the Flathead. These organizations have come together to "promote community dialogue on conservation issues and to increase understanding of the interdependent relationships between people, the economy and the environment".

One of the first challenges for this group of diverse conservation organizations was to find common ground from which to work. There are about 20 different groups involved in the FCR, including Audubon, Citizens for a Better Flathead, The NW Farm Improvement Association, The Flathead Economic Policy Center, The Glacier Institute, The Flathead Land Trust, and the MT Wilderness Association. What is encouraging is that these diverse groups have been able to find common threads in their visions for the future of the valley. This common vision led to an exciting day spent at The Flathead Ecosystem Analysis Workshop, which took place on February 27th, in Kalispell. The purpose of the day was to pull together scientific experts and the Flathead conservation community to "positively influence the environmental health of the Flathead basin and enhance the effectiveness of all our work". The tasks set for the day were not easy ones; to identify key environmental indicators that could be used to monitor the health of the valley, and create an action plan to influence these indicators.

The first part of the day, 30 scientists/experts who had already filled out surveys on the Flathead ecosystem tried to identify the most important Flathead environmental indicators. By lunch time, three indicators floated to the top; Water Quality, Indicator Species, and Changes in the Landscape. These scientists did a great job keeping discussions focused and polite, and there was an amazing amount of consensus throughout the process.

In the second half of the day, the conservation groups put their heads together. Our task was to take 2 of the 3 indicators (we chose water quality and changes in the landscape), and write down action steps that our organizations were already taking towards enhancing the indicators. We were pleasantly surprised at how little overlap there was, and how much was already being done. Audubon field trips visiting Owen Sowerwine and other special places in the valley, Dan Casey's Bird Survey work and the Annual Great Backyard Bird Counts are some of the actions Audubon is taking to increase general knowledge about the indicators chosen. The last task for the day was to look at how to reach different segments of the population with our message. My group looked at reaching teachers, hoping that they will educate themselves on sustainability issues in the valley and bring to their students the message that the balance between our needs and the limitations of non-renewable resource extraction must be found that will allow the highest quality of life for everyone.

The day was an affirmation of this hope for me. Often there tends to be a gap between scientists, managers, conservation groups and the general public. This day brought us together and may have been historic, if for this reason alone. Eventually, these environmental indicators will be added to The Flathead Gauges. Hopefully Audubon and other conservation groups, in cooperation with the science community, land managers and citizens of the valley can continue to work towards these goals together to keep the Flathead the special place it is, for future generations.

BY SONJA HARTMAN, FLATHEAD AUDUBON BOARD MEMBER

MORE POST-IT NOTES



- Raven Ridge Farm is in its second year of offering garden shares. Shareholders get a weekly box of garden fresh ORGANIC produce from late May to Oct. Community Supported Agriculture is an important concept which brings the consumer and the farmer together. Want more information and a brochure contact Kip Drobish at 752-6837(PLA-NTER).
- Montana Audubon Annual Meeting will be April 23 and 24 in Hamilton. Please call MT Audubon at 406-443-3949 for more information.
- Sunflower seeds still available. In Bigfork call 837-5018, in Kalispell call 755-2142, in Whitefish call 862-2028 and in Condon call 754-2289. They are also available at the monthly meetings.



MONTANA BIRDING HOTLINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Montana birders and some from adjoining states send Wayne interesting bird reports. Wayne, then sends out reports of bird sightings and behavior that he thinks other birders would like to read. Bird observations that you consider interesting but perhaps not unusual should be sent to Wayne Tree. These messages along with hotline observations are forwarded to email subscribers as Interesting Bird News (IBN) reports. You can subscribe to Wayne Tree's IBN by contacting him.

In summary, your help is needed to keep the Montana Bird Hotline and Interesting Bird News current, interesting and useful by sending your bird observations to:

HOTLINE: Terry Toppins, phone 1-406-549-6027 or email tertop@aol.com
IBN: Wayne Tree, phone 1-406-777-3159 or email wetree@montana.com.



EARTHDAY IS APRIL 23 HERE'S A FEW THINGS WE CAN DO TO HELP

Montana sends 93 percent of the waste it produces to landfills - a higher percentage than any other state. The remainder of the state's processed waste is recycled (5 percent) or incinerated (2 percent). Source: EPA Municipal Waste Factbook

Flathead Audubon is dedicated to decreasing the amount of garbage. We emphasize not only recycling, reducing garbage and saving resources, but we also advocating source reduction. We urge people to Precycle and SmartShop, think before we buy to reduce waste and purchasing recycled items.

Reduce: Check packaging. Buy contents not the container. Avoid disposables: plastic/foam cups, plates, napkins and tableware, paper towels and disposable diapers, etc.

Reuse: Seek reusable or returnable containers. Reuse cans and jars at home or donate them to the Food Bank. Use canvas or string shopping bags. Reuse wrapping materials: paper, ribbon, and string and plastic or paper bags.

Repair: Rather than disposing of the item, fix it.

Recycle: Let someone else use your discards. Take clothes, furniture, and appliances to rummage sales, charities, and second hand outlets. Buy second hand, rent or share. Make compost for your garden from vegetable scraps

and lawn trimmings. Buy recycled products such as paper and clothing.

Remember no recyclable items, such as cardboard or newsprint, should end up in the landfill. We will not only preserve space in our landfill, but save money as well!

Please visit the Precycling effort at Smith's Grocery in Columbia Falls on Earth Day, April 22, and April 23 & 24th from 10am to 2pm. Volunteers will distribute recycling information and encourage customers to reduce waste and save money. Volunteers will show shoppers polar fleece clothing manufactured from 2 liter soda bottles. Precycling is a project of Flathead Audubon, Citizens for a Better Flathead and the Whitefish Woman's Club.

Ferne Cohen, Quality of Life Committee

SPRING HAPPENINGS AT JEAN ROBOCKERS

St Patrick's Day activity: For the past several weeks there has been great activity in the Albert Spruce by my front door. **HOUSE FINCHES** As many as 7 different Finches were going in and out of the small tree, some hanging over the gutter above and looking down, waiting for their turn to go in for a look. There would be 3 or 4 in the thicket at a time. (Last year the Finches nested there twice—took the first nest out after the children fledged and they built a clean new nest and hatched a second family). Last week, I looked in, after seeing some females carrying nesting material for most of the week prior. The nest seemed about finished, but this week, 2 females are still taking nesting material in. This appears to be the family, 1 male and 2 females, at least at this time. This nest will soon be underway, and barring any interruption, the nestlings will fledge before the cowbirds arrive! Why 2 females? There were 2 or 3 females attending the nest last year—only 5 eggs each nesting. Are the eggs from more than one female? Not likely, as 4 or 5 eggs is the usual number for each female. The females are not exactly alike, so there is no doubt that there are 2, and often both females are in the tree at the same time—no squabbles—this is a joint venture! Have been trying to get a video of the activity—not very good, so far. The male sometimes sits on the tree to inspect the work going on. This morning a Song Sparrow sat on the treetop, looking at a nice prospective nest site, both females chased him/her away. The chickadees frequently go over the spruce for tiny insects, and are not disturbed in their food-search. Is this joint effort a way to offer some insurance for a successful hatch? There are many more House Finches in this territory, no shortage of either sex. I'm going for the theory that this is a normal thing—and may be one explanation for the enormous success of the House Finch population.

BY JEAN ROBOCKER





TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF ENLIGHTENMENT (AND A DAY AT THE ZOO) CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Just days ago under a blue Canadian sky and in the company of my wife Gail and daughter Linnaea I enjoyed a long walk through the Calgary zoo. I hate zoos. Any wild animal in any enclosure is sad, and I feel invasive and as out of place as the animals as they ignore or stare back at me. But it was a warm and brilliant spring day, most of the enclosures are outdoors, and Linnaea had never seen an elephant or a giraffe. Nor I for years and years. So we took the stroll: through "Primates" and "The Big Cats", through "African Veldt" and "Asian Jungle" and "The Aspen Parklands". In spite of my misgivings the animals were fascinating and beautiful; the tigers mysterious, the monkeys playful and familiar, the giraffe extraordinary. But as we made our rounds, and as I read the biography of each species—their natural history, habitat, range and status—I felt increasingly disturbed. By far the majority of these animals, from the great tigers to the smallest monkeys, are threatened with extinction. Most disheartening, several races of tigers are already gone from the wild and exist only in zoos. Indeed for species after species that we would visit this day, zoos are actually the last stronghold of their existence on earth. It is an alarming and saddening documentary. Certainly not what you want to read to your four year old.

On the drive back to Montana, Gary Snyder's reply of 26 years ago echoed through my thoughts: "Loss of the gene pool." What prophetic words. The obvious fact is we are in the middle of losing not just the gene pool, but the very gifts of nature that were bestowed on this green planet: the beautiful and fascinating animals of our world and the magnificent ecosystems they inhabit. A world without tigers? Without wild elephants or a wilderness big enough to hold them? How much will we plunder from our children's inheritance? A day's stroll through the Calgary zoo made it seem like we're going to take it all.

But finally, a day at the zoo also offered some unexpected renewal of hope. For as many species as there are teetering on the brink of extinction, relatively few have gone over the edge. If the zoos of the world must serve as their current stronghold, my hope is that this will not be their ultimate destination, but a temporary home. A safe haven perhaps, until some miracle of enlightenment dawns on enough of us, or more likely, another generation of us. That's when the restoration will begin. I envision Asian jungles spreading back across the lowlands, African savanna resurrected from desert, Brazilian rain forest spared from the axe and burn pile, American prairies and wetlands reweaving their tapestry across our continent. And then the return of the animals, the rarest and most endangered having been carefully protected in zoos, reconditioned and released into their natural homes. And the

more fortunate, preserved however tenuously in the wild by laws like our Endangered Species Act, flourishing again in their rightful habitats.

From vague concept to glaring reality, from "loss of the gene pool" to a startling exodus of species, in hardly more than a twinkling of an eye. Twenty-six years, 40, 50 years, my lifetime. Extinction is happening fast and the need is urgent. We must not only cling to our Endangered Species Act; we should elevate it to a world model for an enlightened response to our troubled planet.

BY LEO KEANE

CLUSTERING TO PREVENT SPRAWL

From 1990-1996, Madison County, Montana, grew from 5989 to 6773 people or 13.1%. The town of Ennis grew 29.4% to 1000 inhabitants, Twin Bridges 12.6 % to 421, Virginia City 11.3% to 158 and Sheridan 10.9% to 723. These statistics make it clear that most of Madison's population growth is occurring in the areas surrounding the towns. Development in the rural areas on the outskirts of towns is a major burden to the services of the county as they swallow up valuable wildlife habitat. Clustering as a development design is being suggested in the New Madison County Plan (yet to be approved) as a way of protecting habitat and keeping the agricultural lands open and viable.

One form of clustering involves putting houses close together on a 20 to 50 acre lot and surrounding them with the viable agricultural-open space environment that brings people to Montana in the first place. With this method, the views of the mountains are kept intact, the rancher still makes a good living, and wildlife habitat is preserved. Another form of clustering arranges all homes within small towns, where all of the services are close by, eliminating costly taxes for infrastructure outside of city limits. With this design, services are quick and available and little energy is used to achieve these ends. With the Madison County Plan, we still have the open space surrounding the small town for all to enjoy. Wherever the predicted 1000 newcomers are going to live in Madison County in the next ten years, serious planning must be done. A major positive effort towards accommodating them all sustainable is the New Madison County Plan. The situation and opportunities described for Madison County undoubtedly apply to all areas that are growing in Montana. What a shame that these measures now seem so necessary when a policy twenty years ago by our country to stabilize population would have made so many of these adjustments unnecessary and would have saved so much wildlife habitat that is now gone. Supporting such a policy now will do as much as anything else we can do to preserve habitat for future Montanans.

Debra Doerflinger is a member of Montana Audubon's Population and Habitat committee and President of Pintler Audubon. She is very involved with her local city planning board in creating the Madison County Plan.





Flathead Audubon Society

1999 SPRING FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

The public is invited to all trips – come and enjoy!

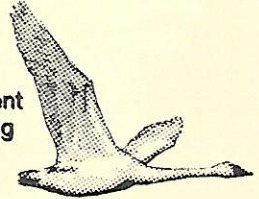
Standard equipment for ALL trips includes comfortable SHOES, BINOCULARS, SCOPES, FIELD GUIDES, FOUL WEATHER GEAR, and a SACK LUNCH or SNACK. Special requirements for some trips are noted below. When possible, car pooling for trips will be arranged at the meeting site.

Be sure to check the Audubon BIRD HOTLINE for updates (756-5595)

Saturday, April 3rd, Lower Flathead Valley Waterfowl Tour

Leader: Dan Casey (857-3143)

This spring favorite is a four-hour guided tour of wetland sites in the Sommers area, featuring a variety of resident waterfowl and spring arrivals. Meet at the Sommers Recreation Area (boat ramp) on Hwy. 93 at 8:30 a.m. Bring binoculars and a sack lunch.



Saturday, April 10th, Children's Riparian Romp (at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area)

Leader: Sonja Hartmann (387-9058)

Kids grades 4-6! Bring your parents, grandparents, or a favorite adult to this guided exploration of a riparian area along the Flathead River, just minutes from downtown Kalispell. This family event will last from 9 a.m. until noon, and all children should be accompanied by an adult. Activities will include interactive games, a short hike, and a search for critters that live in wetlands. Wear play clothes & shoes that can get dirty and/or wet. Bring along a sense of adventure and: a dry change of clothes & shoes, a day pack with drinking water, waders or rubber boots (if you have them). Attendance will be limited, so call Sonya to sign up and arrange a meeting place. Note – there are no restroom facilities at Owen Sowerwine.

Saturday, April 24th, Earth Day Celebration

Contact: Amy Colson, Citizens for a Better Flathead (756-8993)

"Planting for Our Future" is this year's theme, and Citizen's for a Better Flathead has organized a full day of events at Depot Park in Kalispell. An array of activities will include music, speakers, displays, and a parade. CFABF will also be raising funds to plant a sister tree next to the "Spring Prairie Tree," an old growth ponderosa pine north of Kalispell that is a historical landmark. Call Amy for more Earth Day information.

Friday, April 30th, International Wildlife Film Festival, winning films in Whitefish

Contact: Montana Wilderness Association (755-6304)

If you can't drive to Missoula to see all of the entries, the cream of the crop will come to you! The Montana Wilderness Association is bringing the winners from the 22nd annual festival to Whitefish as a fund-raiser.

Saturday, May 8th, International Migratory Bird Day at the National Bison Range

Contact: Ms. Pat Jamieson (644-2211)

Call ahead to pre-register for one of several birding trips to be led by Bison Range employees. Depending on how many people register, trips may include a beginning bird walk, birding along the Trisky Creek (normally closed to public use), and a car caravan bird trip over the mountain. The Red Sleep Mountain Drive is scheduled to open to the public on this date.

Saturday, May 15th, Harlequin Ducks and American Dippers

Leader: John Ashley (892-3825)

See firsthand the amazing adaptations of Harlequin Ducks, one of the rarest bird in Montana. We will watch them courting in rapids alongside the American Dipper, a hearty year-round resident. Easy, all-morning trip with short, level walks (Glacier Nat. Park entrance fee or pass required). Number of participants will be limited to minimize disturbance to these shy ducks. Call John to register and arrange a meeting time & place.

Friday, May 21st, Hummingbird Biology & Banding

Leader: Elly Jones (837-1080)

Elly, an experienced bander, will teach us about hummingbird biology and demonstrate how she captures her tiny subjects. If the weather and birds cooperate, we will have birds in hand! Call to sign up and get driving directions.



Flathead Audubon Society Directory

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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

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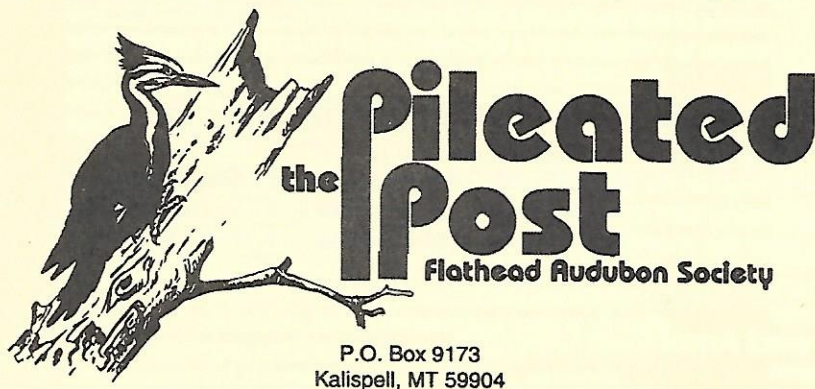
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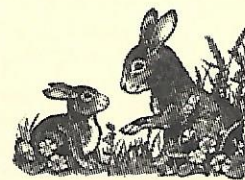
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