



# **Pileated Post**

**Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society**

**Volume 25**

**Number 1**

**September, 1999**

## **Population and Habitat: Year of Six Billion and the Cairo Agreement**

In October the World Population Reference Bureau predicts that the world's population will exceed 6 billion. This ever-increasing human population is having a direct and significant impact on birds, other wildlife and the habitats that sustain them. To raise awareness of the event of 6 billion and its effects on wildlife, many Montana Audubon chapters are choosing to focus their October meeting on population and habitat issues.

When humanity appeared on Earth, we entered a living community of such incredible variety and profusion that for millennia it has provided for every need. Today, at the dawn of a new millennium, humanity's heavy footprint is putting enormous pressure on much of the natural world.

Much of this pressure results from the extensive use - and misuse - of resources in the richer countries; but some is the result of rapid population growth and urbanization in developing countries.

Taken as a global phenomenon, the current rapid growth of human population, together with increasing consumption levels, are causing major changes in the natural resource base, resulting in a broad range of environmental impacts. They include loss of habitats for birds,

resulting in decreased numbers of migratory birds, and the loss or impending loss of bird species worldwide.

It took until 1960 for the world's population to reach 3 billion, and less than 40 years for that 3 billion to become 6 billion. It is not too hard to see the effects of population steamroller locally as well as globally.

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 179 countries reached consensus about a 20-year Programme of Action for the future. They reaffirmed that agreement in a meeting at The Hague, Netherlands, in February 1999. Some of the Programme's goals are to achieve: Universal access to quality and affordable reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health; Significant reductions in infant, child and maternal mortality; Broad based-measures to ensure gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women; Universal access to primary education; and An end to the gender gap in education.

These are programs that, if funded properly, could improve the lives of billions of people and also stabilize the population of the world during the middle of the next century.

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## Chickadee Chatter



I am sitting here listening to chirps of a hungry juvenile Osprey. He or she and the parents have been spending time on the trees and power lines above the river. The young one tends to chirp, especially when he hasn't been successful in the fish hunt for the day. The adults have a more mature raptor voice and don't talk quite as much. These must be the parents that spent time here last year with another young one. Their teaching techniques differ this year but they are perching in most of the same places. It is always good to see and hear them, even at six o'clock in the morning.

I have, also, been sitting here reflecting on the past few months of summer. I have been thinking about all the birds that have appeared in my yard this summer, some have come looking for a mate, some have come with mates in tow looking for a good place to raise their young, and some have spend a few days only to wander on. All have been a pleasure to see and observe.

A House Wren showed up one day, he found a chickadee house I had just put up and started bringing grass and twigs. He sang his beautiful song trying to entice a lady House Wren to his side. I have never seen a House Wren here before. They are enchanting little birds. Unfortunately, our would be suitor could not find any takers to that beautiful song and ten days later he had gone. I miss him.

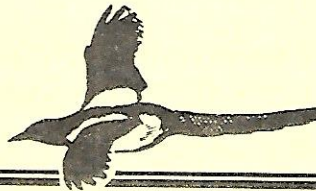
A pair of Black-billed Magpies has been a common sight here for most of my life. I have yet to find the nest but the local pair of Magpies showed up in July with their three babies. The babies had just fledged, do you have any idea how hard it is to fly when your tail isn't long enough? From what I have observed it isn't the flying part that is so hard (unless the wind is blowing) it is the landing part. I watch the magpie family everyday with great glee. The parents are very attentive and the young ones learn quickly. They have learned how to land on a branch and not fall off. They have learned that they can't land on the slanted part of a roof but the peak of the roof is a good plan, and they have learned that they can't all land on the same branch at the

same time, unless it is a thick one. I watched them do all these things and sometimes found it difficult to stand up because I was laughing so very hard.

The Magpie family is still together and chase each other all over the neighborhood, the three young ones have grown to nearly adult size. Several days ago they were joined by another group of magpies, there were seventeen magpies flying around the neighborhood. You can only imagine the noisy scene, fairly large black and white birds with long tails flying and chasing one another all over and eating every insect in sight. Incidentally, they really like Friskies seafood flavored cat food, they chased my poor cat away from his dish several times.

The hummingbirds are gone from my yard and the Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks have shown up in numbers at the feeders. The swallows are starting to line up on the telephone wires and there have been a few Canada Geese flying overhead. The summer is coming to an end. I, for one, look forward to the fall. We can have such wonderful falls here in this little paradise called the Flathead Valley. The trails are not crowded, the birds are still singing and the leaves are changing...not a bad scenario.

Leslie Kehoe



### SEPTEMBER MEETING

Monday, September 13, 1999  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Building  
490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell  
Meeting starts at 7:30PM

**PROGRAM:** The Once and Future Grizzly: Bringing the Great Bear Back to the Selway/Bitterroot Wilderness.

This is a Defenders of Wildlife program, illustrated with slides, written and presented by Ben Long. As proponents of reintroduction of the grizzly into the Bitterroots, the Defenders presentation explores all aspects of this recent proposal—the history, biology, economics, the opposition to and reasons for bringing the Great Bear back.





## POPULATION AND HABITAT.. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For birds and humans worldwide, population stabilization means a more secure future. Environmental concerns today are being addressed through conservation strategies and action to protect biodiversity and the natural resource base. While some countries have made the links between population dynamics and environmental planning, much still needs to be done at the local, national and international levels.

Adapted from National Audubon Population and Habitat and Planned Parenthood of America materials by Clayton McCracken. For more information or to become involved with Montana Audubon's Population and Habitat Campaign, contact Amy Zarrett at [azarrett@in-tch.com](mailto:azarrett@in-tch.com) or 522-7743.

## BIRD SEED SALE UPCOMING

Flathead Audubon will once again be selling sunflower seed for our feathered friends. Orders will be taken in early October, watch for the order form in the October issue of the Pileated Post.



Delivery of the sunflower seeds is scheduled for the second weekend in November, the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

This is Flathead Audubon's major fund raising event. The net proceeds from last year's sales were \$3292. This allows Flathead Audubon to continue to support activities such as nature education in area schools with Audubon Adventures and scholarships for area students to name a few.

## BEGINNING BIRDING WITH DAN CASEY AT FVCC

Dan Casey will again be teaching his beginning birding class at Flathead Valley Community College. Find out how to identify many of the 125 common bird species of the Flathead Valley by sight and sound. Three Sunday field trips are included in the \$79 fee. There will be six classroom sessions on Monday evenings from 6:30-9PM. The classroom sessions will begin on 9/13 and run through 10/25.



The three Sunday morning field trips are scheduled on 9/19, 10/10 & 10/17.

For additional information or to register, please contact the Continuing Education Center at FVCC, 756-3832.

## RAFFLE A SUCCESS AND MANY THANKS!

The wonderful print "An Evening On Flathead Lake" so generously donated to Flathead Audubon by Brett Thuma and a beautiful custom frame by The Frame of Reference in Bigfork was won at the May Potluck by Sharon DeLong of Eureka. The raffle was a great success bringing in \$860 for the Chapter. Many thanks to Brett Thuma and Derek and Christine Vandeberg of the Frame of Reference for their generous donations.

## The Many Costs of Growth

Unsustainable growth, whether it's in the form of urban sprawl or development in environmentally sensitive areas, hurts Montana's in more ways than one. Financially, the costs of new growth can add up for taxpayers. The Carrying Capacity Network (CCN), an advocacy group focusing on solutions to our carrying capacity\* challenges, did a study on the cost of growth that each new resident incurs on a community above what they contribute in taxes. For Montana, they estimated that cost at \$15,224 per resident throughout their lifetime (CCN, "Beyond Sprawl"). This figure does not begin to tally up the losses to our wildlife habitat, many of which cannot be quantified.

In 1996, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition did a cost of services study for the city of Bozeman and Gallatin County and found that for every dollar a resident pays in property taxes, they received \$1.45 in services. In Bozeman, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5...





## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**"IN TRYING TO BECOME MORE TO MORE PEOPLE, ONE RUNS THE RISK OF BECOMING LESS TO SOME" BY DAVID ARORA - *MUSHROOMS DEMYSTIFIED***

I grew up in the farm and ranch country of Northeastern Colorado. Country similar to the Yellowstone valley around Miles City, it is wheat country and cow country with irrigated crops being grown along the South Platte River.

My father helped his parents with the breaking of sod and fencing and the mechanization of those short grass prairies. As we would drive to visit family or neighbors he would describe riding his saddle horse across a fenceless terrain, an open range void of all but wildlife and herds of wild horses. The Cheyenne and Arapaho had been moved off those lands by the turn of this century, but the evidence of their habitation lay in all directions. I discovered teepee rings in our neighbor's pasture, spear points turned up in our garden, nearby mesas were topped with chert, showing evidence of stone tool making. The link to the past was everywhere and the link to the land was strong.

When I would help my Grandmother bring in the milk cows in the evening, she would teach me the names of the plants. She had a wonderful garden, and it was visited by a wide variety of birds, and she taught me their names. I liked being able to tag names on the plants and animals of our land. If we kids didn't know the name of something, we would name it ourselves. We named or renamed everything, calves, buildings, neighbors.

Nothing and no one was safe from the naming game.

In the sixth grade I had a teacher that taught the identification of birds by the silhouettes featured inside the front and rear covers of Peterson's Field Guide to Birds.

My oldest brother majored in Biology. One year he enrolled in summer school and took me with him on all his field trips. On one of those trips I saw, for the first time through binoculars, an avocet in breeding plumage. I could not believe the beauty of that bird. I became a bird watcher.

When I went to college I thought about a Biology degree, but my absolute terror of chemistry steered me to the social sciences. Cultural Anthropology became my passion, legitimizing my forays onto the plains in search of the evidence of past inhabitants. Along the way I spent a lot of time birding. I am easily distracted by the flight or call of a bird.

When I met Pattie, our first date was to go bird watching. Until that date I was, a bird "watcher". I learned right away that Pattie is a bird "listener". Again a new world opened to me, the identification of birds by song and call. Now I too can be lazy and stay in the tent and identify by ear.

Pattie and I have lived near Bigfork since 1985. We soon started to attend the Flathead Audubon Chapter meetings. Our first volunteer project was helping with the fall birdseed distribution. It was a cold, windy morning with some rain and snow falling horizontally. Jack and Ursula Whitney spearheaded that Bigfork effort and what a treat to get to know Jack and Ursula. Jack can whistle the song of a lot of birds. I have not been able to become a bird whistler, but I can do a pretty good Pileated drum, per Jack's instruction. Inspired by Jack and Ursula, Pattie and I have been active members ever since.

Now here I am, the current chapter president. Go figure.

Flathead Audubon has some on-going issues: The Owen Sowerwine Natural Area lease is still pending. We have a concern with the oldgrowth guidelines being implemented by the Montana Department of Natural Resources. The banks of the upper Swan River are eroding from the wake action of jet skis and powerboats. The issue of sprawl includes the unwise losses of the Flathead's farmlands, wetlands, and the ensuing loss of wildlife habitat. These issues and many others will continue to arise and input from the general membership will be called for and encouraged. We have a slate of Officers, Board of Directors and Chairpersons with a strong background in education. Education has been the emphasis of Flathead Audubon in the past, and I expect it will become of even more importance to the current Officers and Board of Directors.

Most of all I hope we can continue with the emphasis on birds. It remains the primary interest of our membership. And rightly so. It seems most birders have a background similar to mine: at sometime in their lives someone they respected passed along the values of conservation. And for a "birder", those values are best expressed in preserving the avian community.

By Neal Brown







## THE MANY COSTS OF GROWTH ...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

45 cent extra cost per new resident is paid by the rest of the community. Interestingly, for every dollar agricultural landowners pay in property taxes, they only receive 27 cents in services. This means that farmers and ranchers are paying much more than their share of property taxes and are consequently subsidizing growth.

Last November, Bozeman voters enacted impact fees so that new growth within the community would start to pay its real cost. Unfortunately, communities are unable to impose impact fees for schools because the state legislature changed the subdivision laws four years ago prohibiting impact fees for schools. This unfunded mandate forces communities' property taxes to subsidize new growth.

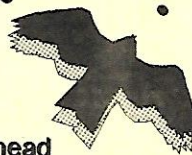
In another part of the state, the December 12, '98 edition of the Missoulian carried the article, "High Price for Growth." In this article Missoula County Commissioner Michael Kennedy states, "The myth that growth brings higher wages and reduced costs is simply that- a myth. Real disposable dollars (income) have declined in Missoula County, and the real cost of living has just exploded since the early 1970s."

Growth costs--in higher property taxes, higher land and housing costs, crowded schools, more traffic and noise, stop lights, strip malls, residential sprawl and, unfortunately, Montana's wildlife receives the biggest hit, loss of habitat.

Local residents should not have their taxes raised to pay for incoming growth and, ironically, degradation of the surrounding wildlife habitat. Whether it's impact fees or community planning, more provisions should be put into place to deal with the extra costs of growth to community infrastructure. A way to help curb unsustainable growth involves contributing to your local city/county planning boards. Get involved to help make smart decisions about growth that will impact you, your family, and the Montana landscape for years to come.

\* The carrying capacity of a given habitat, be it a small island, a continent, or an ocean, is the population size of one or more species that can be sustained indefinitely without degrading the resource base it depends on.

Ward McCartney is a committee member for Montana Audubon's Population and Habitat Campaign and a member of Flathead Audubon.



## FLATHEAD AUDUBON 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.

## Rare Bird Sightings in Montana

- Ted Nordhagen spotted a Common Crane at Westby April 24th. He saw it with 4 Sandhill Cranes.
- April 26<sup>th</sup> Milo Burcham said he had seen a loon on Lake McDonald, in Glacier NP, which he was fairly sure (95%) was a Yellow-billed Loon in basic plumage, it was.
- May 12<sup>th</sup> Chuck Carlson of Ft Peck had a female Northern Cardinal frequenting a yard in Glasgow. It evidently has been there for about 10 days to 2 weeks
- Michelle Williams of Lewistown had seen a Dickcissel June 17th. The bird was located in Roy, Montana.
- The end of June Jock Young of Missoula observed a Gray Flycatcher near Bannock, Montana. Jeff Marks collected it a few days later.
- And a Cassin's Sparrow was seen by Mike Carter and David Pashley they saw it near Cottonwood Reservoir Saturday, July 17th. Cottonwood Reservoir is just a few miles north of Wilsall on the west side of HWY 89. Wilsall is north of Livingston.

Compiled by Wayne Tree





## Flathead Audubon Society Directory

### OFFICERS

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Secretary  
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Past President

Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr., Bigfork, MT, 59911  
Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920  
Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Ave., Whitefish, MT 59937  
Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937  
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1997-2000  
1997-2000  
1998-1999  
1998-1999  
1998-1999  
1998-2000  
1998-2001

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### CHAIRS

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Lois Drobish, 324 Helena Flats Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901  
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Leslie Kehoe, 1020 Holt Dr., Bigfork, MT 59911  
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### Montana Audubon

Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624  
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727-7516

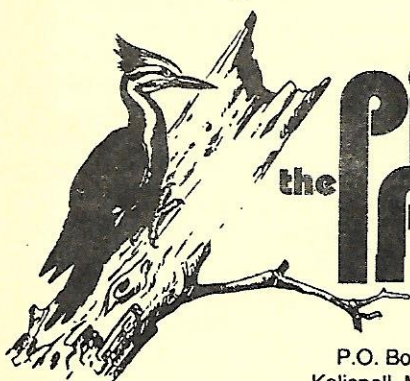
**BIRDING HOTLINE: 756-5595**

### OFFICE PRESIDENT

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](mailto:ljkehoe@digisys.net)



P.O. Box 9173  
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the  
**Pileated  
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Flathead Audubon Society



September, 1999

## National Audubon Society Membership Application



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