



the Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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GLACIER NATIONAL PARK TO CONDUCT FOREST OWL SURVEYS

The mountainous, rugged wilderness of Glacier National Park supports about 261 species of birds including 11 species of owls from rare winter visitors like snowy owls to common year-round residents such as great horned owls. Despite the diversity of owl species present in Glacier and the interest many people have in these compelling raptors, very little is known about owls in the park. According to Glacier National Park wildlife biologist Steve Gniadek, "Our knowledge of owls in Glacier consists entirely of incidental observations, spotty historical records and a pilot survey of selected road corridors conducted in 1992. Because of this general lack of park-wide information, the status and distribution of owls in Glacier is uncertain."

This year, Gniadek successfully obtained funding through an innovative cost-share agreement between the National Park Service, Cannon Corporation and the Owl Research Institute to conduct forest owl surveys in Glacier. President and founder of the Charlo, MT based Owl Research Institute, Denver Holt, will be directing the survey effort. According to Holt, "The idea is to survey specific areas of the park and try to determine the distribution and relative habitat associations of the forest owls." Owls that researchers hope to find include; great horned owl, western screech owl, northern pigmy owl, hawk owl, barred owl, great gray owl, long-eared owl, flammulated owl, northern saw-whet and boreal owl.

Owl surveys will begin in early February by teams of researchers and run until the end of April, the period when adult owls are searching for mates and nesting. Holt's teams will not use playback tapes to illicit hoots from owls (as other survey efforts have done) since these recorded calls have the potential to disrupt the normal breeding and foraging activities of some owls. Instead, field researchers will conduct "passive"

surveys- meaning they will simply listen for hooting owls at night along specified survey routes. The work should prove demanding as researchers attempt to cover as much of the park as possible (in the dark, when owls are most vocal) via skis, snowshoes and the occasional vehicle.

To make matters even more challenging, a calling owl does not automatically confirm the presence of a breeding pair. "Just hearing them doesn't mean everything is OK," said Holt. "In fact, there is some evidence that unpaired males hoot more than paired males. Only by locating and visiting the nest can we determine whether the owls have been successful at finding a mate and producing young." While the park hopes to locate owl nests in order to better understand and manage the habitat used by these species, researchers have no plans to monitor the productivity of the nests or handle any of the owls. "We simply want to know what owls we have here in Glacier and where they are," said Gniadek.

Although none of the owls occurring in Montana are included on the federal endangered species list, great gray, flammulated and boreal owls have been given special management consideration by the Forest Service and the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Because of their dependence on mature forests for nest cavities and prey, these forest owls may be adversely affected by activities such as logging, fire suppression and development that destroy and fragment their essential habitat. In the mid-1990s, federal land managers in the northern Rockies responded to the spotted owl controversy in the Pacific Northwest by identifying old-growth dependent wildlife species in danger of decline from forest management practices.

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CHICKADEE CHATTER

The leaves on the big cottonwood tree that stands near the river are nearly gone. They have fallen to the ground only in the last week and the ground beneath is a brilliant yellow. The saffron colored leaves are falling still, one by one as I watch. Fall is such a wonderful time of the year, something wonderful occurs in every season of the year, but fall holds a special place in my heart. I can never look at fall as being a time of ending. The world around us is so vibrant and still very alive.

A walk in the woods is very special this time of the year, even this late in October and into early November. The trails have a thick blanket of the fallen needles of the Western Larch. The covering of needles allows one to walk very quietly, making for a very peaceful wander. You can hear the birds far up in the trees more clearly, the high pitched calls of kinglets and the clear unmistakable chatter of chickadees. If you are fortunate you will look up just in time to see a Red-tailed hawk take flight from the branches of a leafless birch tree. You can catch glimpses of the magnificent bird as it wings through trees full of color.

If you are early enough in the morning there will still be frost clinging to everything. The grasses alongside the trail will sparkle in the early morning light as they move slight breeze. The green leaf-eared mosses will have a frosty white outline of tiny ice crystals. The huckleberry bushes with their bright red leaves also sparkle with their own translucent coating of frozen water. Frost can transform the ordinary into the extraordinary and you may notice things you might not have looked at closely before. Take some time to explore that extraordinary landscape if you have a chance to, it is something memories are made of.

You may, also, be fortunate enough to have fog on a frosty morning. Then your wander becomes a thing of mystery. Tendrils of fog make their way into the trees and float above the streams. They make the trail ahead misty and enigmatic. You might hear wings on the water long before you see the pair of mallards that have been startled by your footsteps. Sounds seem to carry further in a foggy wood, and the little sounds of the world around come into sharper focus. Simply listening becomes an activity of fascination.

A rustling in the forest might reveal a white-tailed deer doe and this years fawn. The

young one is still smaller than its mama and they wander away together in search of breakfast.

The harsh call of a raven will surely be heard; sometimes many calls and a momentary view of black wings shining in the sunlight above the trees might be seen. You might see a flock of Clark's Nutcrackers winging their way through the trees in search of pinecones. You can't miss either of these two birds; they tend to be loud and gregarious. A walk through the fall woods wouldn't seem complete without them though.

As you walk down the needle festooned path you might see a ruffed grouse picking at seeds and insects on the ground in front of you. This bird is worth taking a few moments of the day to observe. Their feathers have a beautiful pattern to them and it is always entertaining to watch them foraging.

A walk in the woods in the fall is a thing to be savored and it is always a thing of wonderful memories. It is very often more peaceful than at any other time of the year. It is easier to appreciate the woods around us, the lush growth of the summer is tamed and the revelry of bird song is subdued. These are the memories of fall wonders I have been privileged to experience. Hope you have time to have some fall wanders of your own.

BY LESLIE KEHOE



NOVEMBER MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2000
Fish, Wildlife & parks building
490 W. Meridian Road, Kalispell
Business Meeting begins at 5:30PM
General Meeting begins at 7:30PM

PROGRAM: THE BEAR FACTS If you want to learn more about black bears and see good close-up photographs of bears in their natural habitat, plan to attend the November meeting of Flathead Audubon.

Rick Mace, research biologist with the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks and bear specialist, will give a presentation about Montana's black bears.

Having recently completed a well-known 10-year grizzly bear survey, Rick has now launched a comparable study on the natural history of Montana's black bears. His program will present some little known facts about these mysterious creatures as well as the "nuts and bolts" information about how he follows the bears through their forest and mountain homes and studies and records their secretive life stories.



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

In addition to the Canada lynx, pine marten, wolverine and fisher, Forest Service biologists also expressed concern for the boreal, great gray and flammulated owls.

Since Glacier's biologists lack the baseline information needed to describe the distribution and status of forest owls inside the Park, Gniadek and Holt hope this winter's surveys can fill in some of those gaps. It is everyone's hope that greater understanding of the biological needs of these species will ensure that they and their habitats are protected long into the future.

If you'd like to know more about Glacier's owls, Denver Holt teaches a field course for the Glacier Institute every April. For more information, contact the Institute at (406) 755-1211.

BY MEG HAHR

RECYCLE REMINDER

Flathead Audubon has an account with Valley Recycling, 1410 Hwy 2 West, in Kalispell. When you take your recyclables to Valley Recycling FAS will benefit, just tell them to put the money you would receive into FAS's account. The items which pay are aluminum, computer paper, newsprint, magazines only, and mixed cardboard. They also accept #1 and #2 plastics, tin and steel cans.

Cardboard includes unwaxed boxes, paper board, cereal, cracker boxes and beer cartons. The newspaper includes the glossy inserts. Magazines include catalogs, paperback books, and phone books. Office paper is white computer paper, xeroxed paper, NO carbon or lined paper. Steel or tin cans **MUST BE RINSED**. #1 plastics are soda bottles and other drink bottles. #2 plastics are milk containers. The bottom of the container will have the #1 or #2 in the recycle symbol. Remove lids and rinse. No colored #2 plastic. No lids. No plastic bags.

It takes time and involves creativity to reduce waste. I also recommend complaining wherever you see excess packaging that isn't necessary- Costco is the worst, but even the Post Office has stamps in plastic now. And complain when you don't see recycle containers available for use in public places, like schools, the Post Office and fast food outfits. Always have your own cup for hot and cold drinks when you are offered disposable products.



CAN YOU HELP?

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REQUEST

The education committee is trying to get together a supply of interesting props that could be used for community presentations. We would like to keep this in a centralized place so that when our chapter is called upon, we will have something inspiring and creative handy. If you have props that could be used in this fashion please contact Linda Winnie or bring them to any of the Audubon meetings. Some suggestions are: mounted birds, skulls, feathers, nests (please don't collect them, of course, unless they are permanently abandoned or broken off; many birds revisit and rebuild last years nests), old bird calendars and posters, bird silhouettes or models, bird costumes (possibly from a wild Mardi Gras of yore!!) **THANK YOU FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

BOOKCASES NEEDED FOR THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON LIBRARY

Did you know that Flathead Audubon has a nice collection of nature books and magazines? These materials have been donated to us over the years by a variety of people who wanted to make them available to bird lovers and students of natural history.

Right now the collection is in bits and pieces, being stored here and there around the

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I have heard Helen Chenoweth say that environmentalists are a well-funded and powerful group. Half of that is true. We would love to be well-funded, but since we are recognized as powerful, I challenge us to use our voices and set examples for others to follow. Malcolm Thompson practices what I preach. On our last field trip on Autumn Creek Trail, we stopped for some coffee. Neal and I hung our heads as we were served coffee in styrofoam go cups, and Malcolm produced his own mug to be filled. Malcolm doesn't say much but his actions are loud and his impact on the land is light.

Remember also that Recycling uses energy and is a band-aid to the bigger problem of over-consumption. The goal is to use less, reuse what you have, give away and share such things as newspaper, books, magazines.

Thank you for your effort and your support of Flathead Audubon.

BY PATTIE BROWN, QUALITY OF LIFE CHAIR



FROM THE TREASURER HOW DO YOU SAVE A RAIN FOREST?

We awake to sound of Howler Monkeys. It is about 5:00 AM in the Costa Rican rain forest. In a little while the female howlers will bring their babies to feed on the wild fig trees 30 feet from our deck. Later, the Toucans arrive to take their share. This is a country with 22 species of Wren, 65 species of Tanager. We roll out of our mosquito netting and prepare to go birding.

This September my wife Gail, I and seven other guinea pigs were on a trip sponsored by The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of the trip was to help two conservation organizations, ANCON in Panama and ANAI in Costa Rica who are looking for ways to develop ecotourism as a way of funding conservation projects. We were there to help them evaluate their trips before being offered to the general public.

The day we leave Panama is the first day of a strike and the roads are barricaded. We see no violence, but the roads are blocked by trees, rocks and burning tires as we sneak around the strike. It seems that the economics of producing cheaper bananas for us has left little money for development of decent roads, drinking water or housing.

There is no strike in Costa Rica, but the conditions in this, the poorest area of Costa Rica, does not look any better. After driving our vehicle over the ties of a railroad bridge to cross the border, we meet three representatives of ANAI and Jose Louis, one of the founders of ASACODE. ANAI is a national organization that is dedicated to uniting human development and biodiversity conservation. From ANAI's list of core beliefs: *"Most of the world's tropical forests are threatened with destruction during our lifetime. Most of the people living in these forest areas are mired in poverty. These two phenomena are mutually reinforcing. Approaches that do not address both aspects together are not working."*

Desperate farmers often log off the forest and plant crops that are in direct competition with native animals. ANAI works with farmers and local organizations like ASACODE, a cooperative of about 20 indigenous farmers, to produce a sustainable income without wholesale destruction of the forest. ASACODE's mission statement: *"For us who live in or near the forest, this is the most valuable resource we have. Our mission is to demonstrate that with the right kind of management the forest can support not only ourselves, but all future generations as well."*

We take a 40-minute walk through the rain forest to a lodge built by ASACODE and used for education of local farmers and American College students. The walk leaves us drenched in our own sweat but it has left us with visions of Keel-Billed Toucans and the sounds of Trogons as memories. At the lodge our bedrooms and eating area are on a raised deck with open-air views in every direction. It is here and on walks that we come to understand Jose Louis' almost frantic devotion to learning how to make a living without destroying the forest. His home is part of the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. This 3,000 square kilometer region that ranges from 12,533 ft to sea level has 2% of the world's plants and animals. But the region also has 35,000 people desperately poor people. Jose Louis is frantic to find a way for these desperate people to earn some of the comforts of the modern world and still preserve an ecosystem. Demonstrating that an intact rain forest can bring in tourist dollars is one of many ideas ANAI and ASACODE are working on. Considering that 2% of the world's biodiversity is at stake, let us hope they succeed. Further Reading www.asacode.com and for more information on ANAI email anaicr@sol.racsa.co.cr
BY BRUCE TANNEHILL, FLATHEAD AUDUBON TREASURER

FLATHEAD AUDUBON TO MAKE BYLAW CHANGES



The Board of Directors of FAS would like to make changes to the bylaws that govern the organization. The bylaws are changed by a vote of the general membership and if you wish to participate in the vote it will take place at the General Meeting on Nov. 13, 2000 at 7:30PM at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Building, prior to the program. The proposed changes to the bylaws are as follows: Section 2. a) Up to four High School Student At-large Representatives from the chapter territory may be elected to the Board of Directors of Flathead Audubon. One vote will be granted to the High School Student At-large Representatives. They shall serve one-year terms. One representative shall be selected by the others as a voting member of the board of directors. The remaining three shall serve as alternates. The alternate representatives shall be available to serve in place of the appointed voting board member as circumstances may require. Section 2. b) One FVCC Student At-large Representative may be elected to the Board of Directors of Flathead Audubon. One vote will be granted to the FVCC Student At-large Representative who shall serve a one-year term. An FVCC student may also be elected to serve as an alternate to the FVCC Student At-large Representative. The alternate shall be available to serve in place of the FVCC Student At-Large Representative as circumstances may require.



CAN YOU HELP? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

valley by Flathead Audubon board members. The hope has been that eventually a home will be found for this Flathead Audubon Library – a place where all the bits and pieces can be put together on bookshelves and be made available as a nature education resource.

Now, the collection has found at least a temporary home. Dan Casey has graciously offered to store the Flathead Audubon Library in his new American Bird Conservancy office in downtown Kalispell until a permanent home is located for the collection.

But before the collection can be moved into Dan's office, Flathead Audubon must provide the bookshelves in which to store it.

CAN YOU HELP? Do you have a bookcase that you can donate for Dan's office to help hold the Flathead Audubon Library? Or can you donate some money to help buy a bookcase? Once we have even a couple of bookcases, we can start bringing the collection together.

Dan reports that he also needs some other things to finish furnishing his office. His top needs are a map case, a 4-drawer file cabinet, a meeting table and 4-6 chairs, and a floor lamp.

Please let Dan know if you have a bookcase for the Flathead Audubon Library, or can help him out with any of the other items. Let him know, too, if you need help transporting your donations. Some of our hardy Flathead Audubon board members will pick up your donated items and move them to Dan's office at your convenience. You may contact Dan at 756-2681 days or 857-3143 evenings. **By Linda Winnie**



WHAT YOU CAN DO AND MANY THANKS!

Our annual seed drive is almost complete. We thank all of you who have supported our excellent programs with your purchases. You are the backbone of our work. For those of you who couldn't purchase seed for one reason or another, please consider what the James and V.J. Heckathorns of Whitefish did by making a donation to the Flathead Chapter in place of buying seed. Thank you Heckathorns! The only way we can continue to support books for schools, scholarships, research, support of the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, assistance to refuges and all the other wonderful programs is for you to buy birdseed and/or consider a donation. Thanks for your help! **By June Ash**



WHAT BIRDS HAVE YOU SEEN?

Well, summer is gone, headed south like a flock of purposeful, hungry warblers. As your summer events turn into summer memories, this is a reminder to ask you to submit sightings of the wonderful birds you were lucky enough to see this year. If you spent time out wandering among willows or perusing among ponderosas and caught a glimpse or an especially good gander at some birds... and recorded your sightings, now would be a perfect time to submit them to the Montana Bird Distribution (MBD) database.

The data that you submit will be used to create the new edition of MBD. This publication maps the distribution of each bird species that occurs in Montana by latilong. Latilong?, you say? A latilong is a block of land bounded by latitude and longitude lines at one degree intervals.

Montana is covered by 47 latilongs. In order to create an up-to-date record of bird distribution in the state, the book is updated every five years. The next scheduled date for publication is the fall of 2001, so it's important for you to get your sightings in for this year and next! Any birder with average skills is qualified to be an observer... so please consider submitting your sightings. There is some specific information that we will need from you. This information is explained on an MBD bird observation form.

There are three ways to get these forms: there is one in the back of the 5th edition of MBD (available for \$8 through the MT Audubon office (includes s&h)); forms are posted on our website for you to print (www.mtaudubon.org); or we can send you a form in the mail.

A special emphasis is put on gathering data during the breeding season, as this information can be especially important for bird conservation.

It is helpful to know where birds are breeding and, as well, where they are not. They may have disappeared from certain areas of the state and/or expanded to others. MBD helps to identify some of these distribution changes and can potentially indicate some critical land-use changes.

As MBD is a summary of thousands of individual bird observations, for common species, we ask that you submit only one record for a given species in a given quarter-latilong. The value of MBD depends on the efforts of hundreds of birdwatchers - so your sightings are important! Please consider submitting them to our office. Some areas of the state are more well covered (most of western MT) than others (most of eastern MT). We are looking for individuals who are interested in 'adopting' an area for observation, especially areas in eastern Montana. If you are interested in helping out with this important project or need more information, please contact Susan Lenard at our state office ((406)443-3949 or by email: slenard@mcn.net).

BY SUSAN LENARD

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BIRDING HOTLINE: 756-5595

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. The regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. and includes a featured guest who will present a conservation or nature program. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. Subscriptions for non-members are \$10.00 per year.

Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month. Newsletter e-mail ljkehoe@digisys.net

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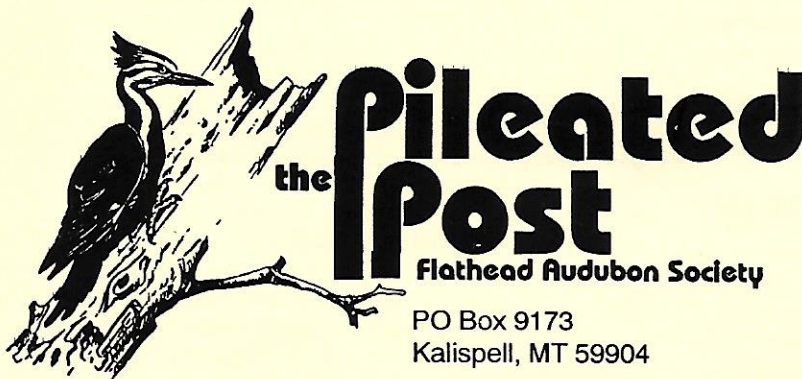
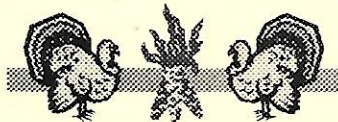
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