



the Flatheaded Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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BIRDS BEYOND BORDERS

The Birds Beyond Borders program has been a highlight for many Montana classrooms this year. There are 34 Montana classrooms from grades 1 through 8 communicating with 36 classes in the town of Puerto Escondido in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. In Montana, there are a total of 710 students, in Oaxaca there are 897. The Montana classes have sent two packets of letters and artwork to their Mexican counterparts and are anxiously awaiting the second response from Mexico. We hope to be able to send one more packet of letters before the end of the school year. The teachers and students take great pride in the letters and art work that they send and they are all learning a great deal about the migratory birds that they share. They are learning about the Mexican culture, as well, and gaining insight about the differences between the economic circumstances of the schools in Puerto Escondido and the Montana schools. The language sometimes is a barrier, as the Oaxaca classes do not have English/Spanish dictionaries, or field guides in Spanish for bird identification.

This year there was only one lucky teacher, from Missoula, who was able to travel to Mexico for the Birds Beyond Borders. Funding is always an issue for this trip! Mary Maier recently returned from her third visit to Puerto Escondido for the Birds Beyond Borders program and she did a superb job representing all of our Montana schools by herself! She returned with wonderful stories about what the Birds Beyond Borders program has done, for one school in particular. The school, Escuela Primaria Melchor Ocampo has adopted Birds Beyond Borders as a vehicle for enhancing knowledge and awareness of birds and of conservation in all of their classes. The students of Melchor Ocampo have painted three murals on their school building related to bird life cycles, resident birds and the ecosystem of a local lagoon

which is the home to many birds species. In addition, the school holds a "tournament" in which the students contribute artwork and messages reflecting the need for conservation. The students are rewarded with prizes for the best artwork and the best writing about birds and the protection of birds. All of these activities offer a useful balance of perspective to students who see much of the bird habitats being destroyed for construction.

In Montana, Audubon volunteers contribute their time and their expertise to the Birds Beyond Borders Program by providing information within the classroom setting and leading field trips for birdwatching. Their participation in these field trips offers the students an exciting and unique opportunity to learn about birds first hand from people who are truly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject.

Any Montana teachers interested in having their classes participate in the Birds Beyond Borders program may contact: Susana Cieplak, Birds Beyond Borders Program Coordinator at 406 363-0545 x522; cieplak-s@hsd3.org or Robert Petty, Montana Audubon, Education Coordinator at 406 777 - 0780; rpetty@montana.com. If you are interested in sponsoring a classroom in the Birds Beyond Borders program, please contact Robert Petty, Montana Audubon. By Susana Cieplak

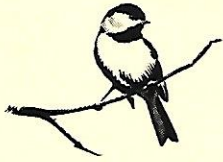
MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 14, 2001 THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER will be held at Lone Pine State Park Visitor's Center at 6:00PM. Elections will be held during the meeting and Dr. Loonacy will inform and entertain us.

FIELD TRIPS

Please find the summer field guide to Flathead Audubon Society events inside this newsletter. Come and join us this summer!





CHICKADEE CHATTER

Spring in its' splendor has come at last. It has been such a long cold winter and it is simply glorious to have warmer days and rain and bird song. I can hardly wait for morning to come most days this time of the year, the birds start singing around 5:30AM and I lay in bed and listen to their enthusiastic welcome of the day about to start. I can listen only so long and then I have to get up and see what the new day has in store. Every day in the springtime is remarkable. I wonder what new thing will come my way today. Perhaps this will be the day the hummingbirds will come back and I will hear the familiar buzz of tiny wings. Or will the patch of brilliant Yellow Glacier Lilies behind the house open their graceful blossoms and nod in the breeze to delight the eye. The Mourning Cloak butterflies will soon unfold their wings and flutter about looking for something sweet to eat, will it be today? I look forward to seeing a thousand tiny insects bobbing in the air and glistening golden in the late evening light as the sun goes down. It hasn't happened yet but is it sure to happen soon.

The beautiful song of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet has been wafting down from the treetops this past week. I forget, from year to year, how truly lovely that song is. The Tree Swallows have discovered the nest box at the peak of the roof and are fighting over nesting rights, their chitter, chatter is nice to hear. I love to watch swallows fly, they are so graceful and agile. I can watch them for long moments and I marvel as their sleek little bodies dive and soar in a most amazing display of aerial acrobatics. The robins are building a nest in the tree that the magpies used last year. They wander about the yard beaks full of last years grasses or looking for the worms that have finally pushed their way to the surface of the soil. It is their song that I most often hear so early in the morning. I cannot imagine a morning without that bright, joyful song this time of the year.

A few days ago I took a walk with a friend along the Swan River near Bigfork, there were still a few small patches of snow here and there under the trees but everywhere there were signs of warmer days. Little green things were poking their noses out of the ground, the pristine white petals of the first Western Trillium, a few Yellow Glacier Lily blossoms were open and Early Buttercups made bright yellow spots of color on the sides of the path. All kinds of minute green leaves were coming out, giving us hints of things to come. The beautiful

burgundy stems of Rocky Mountain Maple will soon be leafing out, even the Western Larch had diminutive brilliant green bundles of needles peeking out of their protective coverings. It is quite an interesting sight looking up into the bare branches of the noble larch and seeing tiny spots of bright green vivid against the blue of sky.

There were some interesting ducks to be seen along the River. A pair of Wood Ducks were floating along the shore, the male in his incredible spring finery and the female more drab in color but still distinctive. It is such a pleasure to see these ducks today, the Wood Duck was once thought to be threatened with extinction due to over-hunting and habitat loss but has staged a remarkable comeback thanks to protection and the use of nesting boxes. I am so happy to be able to see these beautiful birds swimming along and attending to the business of nature.

A female Hooded Merganser swam into view, it actually took us awhile to identify her as her striking male counterpart was not to be found. Soon though they were together and several others swam into view. The courtship displays of these beautiful ducks are fascinating to watch; the males show off their white crest and arch their necks at impossible angles.

An Osprey flew over and around the bend in the path in a tall snag across the River two bright white heads could be seen. A splendid pair of Bald Eagles could be seen sitting side by side. They sat so still only the heads moving. In the distance we could hear the burble of Winter Wrens; they were illusive but their song came to us and made us smile. A flock of chickadees flew into a bush at the side of the path, Black-caps and a single Chestnut-backed Chickadee, chattering loudly. The afternoon was full of life and spring and sunshine and clouds and birds and squirrels, what more could one ask for.

The trail along side the Swan River near Bigfork is quite wonderful, it is an easy two mile walk that follows the rushing water of the Wild Mile in the first half and then the peaceful deep green water behind the dam in the second half. You can see otters and turtles and an amazing variety of birds and native plants abound.

I hope that you have a chance to walk along the Swan River sometime this summer. I hope, too, you have some wonderful days of discovery this spring and summer. Don't forget to take some time to listen to the birds and watch green things grow. See you in September.

Leslie Kehoe





"DOCTOR LOONACY" TO APPEAR AT MAY MEETING!

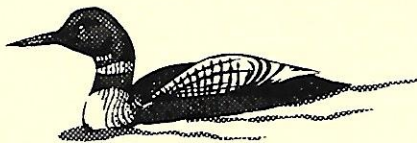
The May meeting of FAS will be held at Lone Pine State Park Visitor's Center. This will be our annual potluck dinner so please bring your favorite potluck dish and your own dinner service. Dinner will start around 6:00PM and the Program will start at 7:00PM. Board and Officer elections will be held during a short meeting before the Program begins.

The teepee that was so generously donated by Edee Carlson will be raffled off sometime during the evening. You will have a chance to purchase another ticket or two before the lucky winner is chosen.

The Program features educator and entertainer Denny Olson of Bigfork who promises to cram an amazing amount of information about loons into one of the most entertaining programs you've ever seen.

Olson's programs forge an unlikely union between science, humor and drama and he has established a national reputation as an innovative performer and educator. Olson's alter-ego, "Dr. Loonacy," can interpret loon behavior and loon music almost as if he were "intimate" with loons! His red eyes are not from fatigue alone!!

We hope to see you there!



REPORT FROM THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

We are very happy to present the nominations to our membership. The following individuals have accepted nominations for the following positions: Linda Winnie: President (two year term); Sonja Hartmann: Vice President (two year term); Jane Adams: Director (three year term); Dan Casey: Director (three year term).

For 30 plus years, our Presidential nominee, Linda Winnie taught history and philosophy of science at the college level. She was a "part-time" birder for many years. When she retired 6 years ago, she was able to spend a lot more time birding, and to become active in Audubon. For 4 years she was Publicity Chair for Flathead Audubon; served on the Board for 2 years, and has most recently been Vice-President

for 2 years. Linda and her husband John have 4 children, ranging in age from 41 to 19. Linda says: "Since 1986 we have been part-time Montanans -- teaching at the University of Indiana during the school year and then moving our kids and dog to our cabin on Rogers Lake in the summers. When we retired in 1995, our Rogers Lake cabin became our permanent home. We are avid sailors. Each summer we spend several months exploring the west coast of British Columbia in our 38' sailboat, watching birds and whales. When we are not on the salt water sailing, we can often be found standing in local lakes and streams fishing. We are also avid loon watchers. While sailing we search for Red-throated and Pacific Loons. Here at home we work actively with the Montana Loon Society to preserve Montana's small population of Common Loons." The Audubon membership was recently treated to a video produced by Linda and John and starring Ruth, a loon that was rescued by the Rogers Lake community.

Sonja Hartmann, our Vice-Presidential nominee, has been an Audubon member for 7-8 years. She has been employed in many areas of conservation research and education in the Flathead: she served as director of the Big Creek Outdoor Education Center with the Glacier Institute for 3.5 years; she has been a field researcher with the Grizzly DNA project; most recently she has worked on the Glacier National Park vegetation mapping project with the Nature Conservancy. She has served on the Flathead Audubon board for three years and has been Education Chair for the last year. She is often sited in the company of Steve Prather. They live in West Glacier and have embarked on an ambitious earth friendly home building project. They also enjoy travelling and being outdoors, on foot, by skis or by boat.

Jane Adams has been an Audubon member off on, in various states, for about 12 years. Birds brought Jane to Montana in 1993 when she came here to work for Dan Casey censusing forest birds. She did her masters research on the effects of pesticides on grassland birds, and has worked censusing birds in North Dakota, Colorado, and Arkansas. She has also worked as a naturalist, as a high school science teacher in the peace corps, and as a wildlife biologist for the Montana Department of State lands. For the past two years she has worked with the Montana Old Growth Project. She is married to budding birder Andy Hyde. They have a 16 month old daughter, Molly Skye Adams-Hyde, who loves feeding "ducts" at woodland park.

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FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



UNBELIZEABLE!!

From the journal of a snowbird in Belize

Upon returning from six weeks in Belize this winter, I can only agree with the Lonely Planet guide when it states "A tiny English speaking tropical country with a democratic government and a highly unlikely mixture of peoples and cultures – that's Belize." The guide goes on to describe Belize as "friendly, laid-back, beautiful, proud, poor and hopeful for the future."

The people and the landscape of this small country (about the size of Massachusetts) are incredibly diverse. Although English is the official language of Belize, you may hear Creole, Spanish, various dialects of Mayan, Garifuna, Chinese, Lebanese Arabic or Mennonite German as you travel the country. Heading inland, the landscape changes from beaches, marshes, and mangroves to coastal savanna with its pines and palmettos. There is the Northern and Southern Hardwood Forests, also described as "lush broadleaf tropical forest". The Maya Mountains in central Belize extend from northeast to southwest and include the Mountain Pine Ridge region, known for its pine forests. The farther south you go, the wetter it gets. For water enthusiasts, inland lagoons and beautiful rivers abound. Not to mention the first area of Belize to be discovered by tourists, the Cayes (pronounced keys), or offshore islands with their palms, white sands, and protected barrier reef. It is truly "unbelizeable"!

What is even harder to believe is that, unlike its neighbors in Central America, Belize has about 65 percent of its original forests intact. As a country, it has had a chance to learn from the mistakes of its neighbors, which have allowed unplanned industrial development, incorrect disposal of waste and inadequate protection of rare and endangered plants and animals. Through the efforts of many conservation groups and concerned citizens, Belize is working towards protecting its diverse landscape for the future. Many Belizeans have made the connection between tourist dollars and an intact ecosystem.

As one of those tourists, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that one of the conservation groups spearheading management of protected areas is the Belize Audubon Society. Formed in 1969 as a foreign chapter of the Florida Audubon Society, it became a completely independent organization in 1973. Starting in 1984, a major focus of BAS has been the management of several protected areas established under the National Parks System Act of 1981. Today, Belize Audubon manages six protected areas under an agreement with the Government of Belize. Fortunately, we were able to visit two of these: Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, and Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary.

Cockscomb Basin, established in 1984 as a refuge for the endangered jaguar, is today 102,000 acres. Before it became a preserve, Mayan peoples lived in the basin and made their living logging and using slash-and-burn agriculture to grow food. Today, Cockscomb is a great example of how both people and habitat can win. Upon being relocated to the town of Maya Center, the entrance to Cockscomb, the Mayan people have now become the fee collectors, taxi drivers, forest guides, preserve managers and staff. Women sell their beautiful crafts to travelers. They speak highly of the major change that their lives have taken since moving out of the preserve.

Cockscomb was the first natural area we visited in Belize. It is located in central inland Belize in the Maya Mountains. We spent four days camping here. This sanctuary was extremely well taken care of, with wide, well maintained trails and buildings. The jungle was alive with sounds, often ones we could not identify. We could have just sat in our campground and added many birds a day to our "never seen before" list, but there was too much to explore. Army ants, we learned, are a birder's best friend. For where there are army ants, there are birds. Birds such as the Blue-Crowned Motmot, the Gray-headed Tanager, and the Great Kiskadee follow the raiding ants as they travel through the underbrush in search of insects. Those creatures lucky enough to escape the ants by flying away, are often not as lucky at escaping the waiting crowd of birds. Other exciting birds we spotted here were White-Collared Manakins, White Hawks, Olive-throated Parakeets, Pauriques (related to Nighthawks), and Vermilion Flycatchers.

For those willing to brave the dark in search of a possible glimpse of a jaguar, tapir, tarantula or snake, taking a night hike was an option. We did head out with our headlamps, and were rewarded with the sight of a coral snake and a tarantula. We were not lucky enough to spot the illusive jaguar or tapir, but did see tracks of both. We also saw red brocket deer and howler monkeys during the day on a hike to a waterfall with a good pool for swimming, and a bluff with a view of the whole basin. It was hard to pull ourselves away from this special spot.

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FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: UNBELIZEABLE!! CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

One of the last places we visited in Belize was the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. This was a big change of scenery from Cockscomb Basin. Located inland 33 miles north of Belize City, it consists of a network of inland lagoons, swamps and waterways. These wet areas are surrounded by savannah and lowland pine ridge. Established in 1984, its main reason for being is the protection of resident and migratory birds. During the dry season, thousands of birds converge here to take advantage of the limited water supply. To us North Americans, it looked to us like a Belizean Everglades, supporting Snowy Egrets, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills and Snail Kites. Many birds spotted here may have been headed back to Montana themselves, being our migrating birds. These included Belted Kingfishers, Great Blue Herons, Killdeer, and American Coots.

Our only disappointment was that we did not see any Jabiru Storks here. These prehistoric looking creatures are the largest American bird, measuring nearly five feet tall, with a wingspan of about eight feet. They prefer the pine savannas and lagoons, eating primarily snakes. Our visit to Crooked Tree late in January was timed a bit early for the huge numbers of storks and other birds. Dry season really reaches its peak during April and May. We did end up seeing a Jabiru Stork north of Crooked Tree during an all day boat trip on the Lamanai River. My favorite new bird spotted here was the Northern Jacana. This gallinule-like shorebird was a common sight in the wet meadows and ponds around the village of Crooked Tree. In flight, it has the most brilliantly yellow flight feathers that are such a surprise each time you see them. This is a wonderful place to canoe and boat – if the wind is not howling!

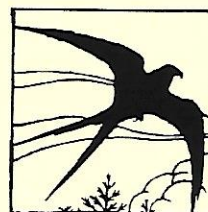
Traveling in Belize was a birders heaven. You did not have to be in remote areas to see such treats as toucans, montezuma oropendola, or red-legged honeycreepers, which we saw in the small village of Sittee river along the coast. But these two special Audubon Sanctuaries were highlights in our trip due to the pristine habitats and unique wildlife. Thank you Belize Audubon! We would recommend Belize to others, and hope you get in touch if you want to hear more of our travels. We can definitely point you to some adventures of your own!

BY SONJA HARTMAN

REPORT FROM THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Our other nominee for Board Director is Dan Casey. It seems as though Dan must have been born an Audubon member. He is considered the Bird Man of the Flathead, according to a recent article in the Daily Interlake. Many of us first came to identify birds under his tutelage, whether on Audubon field trips, Christmas bird counts or FVCC classes. He worked for several years with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and is presently the regional director for American Bird Conservancy. He and his wife Susannah have been very involved in the local chapter of Audubon; they are also involved in attending every sports and academic event of their active and bright daughters, Lauren and Hannah.

The membership will vote at the annual meeting on this slate of nominees. We will be voting for one President, one Vice President and two Board Directors. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting at Lone Pine. Respectfully submitted, Linda de Kort, Nominations Chair



THANKS TO RECYCLERS!

Valley Recycling collected \$82 in donations for Flathead Audubon this last year. These donations come from people who take their recyclables to Valley Recycling and ask that their payment be given to Flathead Audubon.

The donation from a single load of recycling usually can be counted in nickles and dimes. But it all adds up. This year's total of \$82 is enough to fund Audubon Adventures for two classrooms, or provide a partial nature education scholarship for a local student.

Please keep taking your recyclables to Valley Recycling, on Highway 2 just west of Kalispell. And don't forget to say, "Give the proceeds to Flathead Audubon."



EDUCATION PROJECT UPDATE AND THANKS TO PROJECT SUPPORTERS

Flathead Audubon's new education project is now moving full steam ahead. Twenty-six local teachers and fifteen volunteer naturalists attended the Teacher Workshop March 31 and April 1 to learn about techniques and materials that can be used to teach bird units in the classroom.

Bob Petty, Education Coordinator for Montana Audubon, was the workshop teacher. Bob's presentations were entertaining and witty and packed with information. He generated an excitement in the teachers about birds and birding, and showed them fun ways to convey that excitement to their students.

The teachers and naturalists were treated to a 2-hour fieldtrip at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, led by Neal Brown and Ben Long. The teachers are continuing their bird education by participating in FAS birding fieldtrips.

Teachers and naturalists are teaming up to begin using what they have learned to teach elementary and middle school students about birds and their habitat, bird behavior and migration, how to use binoculars, and how to identify our local birds in the field. Some teachers and naturalists have already begun taking their students on birding field trips, and many more will be heading into the field in May.

The Education Committee wishes to thank those who have contributed time, materials and other support for this project. These include Bob Petty, Dan Casey, the Montessori School of Kalispell, Montana Coffee Traders, the Glacier Institute, the Region 1 Office of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Paul Menssen and Photo Video Plus, The Bird Feeder, David Armer, Marcy Bishop, Elmer Sprunger, Tom Ulrich, Jan Wassink, and Amy Gribb.

Thanks also to the volunteer naturalists for contributing their valuable time and talents to help local students learn about birds. The naturalists are Kathie Ackerley, Gael Bissell, Neal Brown, Pattie Brown, Sam Culotta, Linda de Kort, Jim Fiddler, Sonja Hartman, Ellen Horowitz, Kurt Johnson, Ben Long, Robin Magaddino, Karen Nichols, Jay Shepherd, Bruce Tannehill, and Linda Winnie.

The primary funding for this project was provided by an Environmental Education Grant awarded by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

BY LINDA WINNIE

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE FAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Flathead Audubon Society has donated 8 chairs to the Region One Office of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for their meeting room. The meeting room and its chairs are used by a variety of the Flathead's outdoors and conservation groups for their meetings and other functions. Flathead Audubon has held its monthly meeting in the Region One meeting room for more than five years. Along with the chairs, we conveyed our thanks to MFWP for making this facility available to us.

The Flathead Audubon Birding Hotline has been discontinued because it receives so little use. We will turn our efforts to re-establishing a Flathead Audubon web page.

Flathead Audubon will again participate in the Flathead Forestry Expo. The Expo is May 12th and 13th. Our station will focus on the natural history and needs of cavity nesters.

The Conservation Committee has submitted comments on behalf of Flathead Audubon on two recent Forest Service proposals: Extension of a Road near Round Meadow, and Fuels Reduction Project in the Big Mountain area. That Committee has also submitted comments on DNRC's proposed "Special Uses Management Plan." The Refuges Committee has submitted comments in the scoping process for a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the new Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. Anyone wishing to see copies of these comments should contact the Chair of the relevant committee.



Flathead Audubon has donated \$50 to the Flathead Conservation Roundtable to help fund the Roundtable's Communications Workshop, to be held May 3 and 4. Sonja Hartman, the FAS representative to the Roundtable, will attend the workshop.

A 14-foot teepee has been donated to Flathead Audubon by Edee Carlson of Loose Moose Folk Art Carvings. The teepee will be raffled to generate the funds needed for this year's payment on the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area license, and to help provide funds for new fencing and signs on the Natural Area.

BY LINDA WINNIE



Flathead Audubon Society

2001 Summer Field Trips & Other Events



The public is invited to all trips!

Standard equipment for ALL trips includes comfortable SHOES, BINOCULARS, 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.

MAY & JUNE. BIGFORK WILD MILE CORRIDOR WILDFLOWER & BIRD WALKS. Each Tuesday of May and June, 10 AM to Noon (May 2-9-16-23-30 & June 6-13-20-27). Join Anne Morley (Montana Native Plant Society) and Neal Brown (Flathead Audubon Society) for a gentle morning of wildflower and bird identification along the Old Swan River Road. Meet in front of Showtime! restaurant in downtown Bigfork. Contact: Neal Brown at 837-5018.

SATURDAY, MAY 12. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AT THE BISON RANGE. The birds brought spring back, and here's your chance to enjoy it by celebrating International Migratory Bird Day at the National Bison Range. A variety of bird activities are planned, including an advanced birding hike and a beginning bird walk (space is limited, so pre-registration is required). There will also be a variety of other activities, including a talk about bluebird habitat and houses, information on backyard bird feeding, special bird video showings, giveaways, contests, coloring pages, and a book sale. The National Bison Range is also planning to open the 19-mile Red Sleep Mountain Drive in time for this celebration (fees are charged for the drive). The Range will open at 7:00 a.m. Please call the National Bison Range at (406) 644-2211, extension 207 to register for activities.

~~SUNDAY~~

SATURDAY, MAY 13. LOST TRAIL WILDLIFE REFUGE TRIP. Join us for a trip to the new National Wildlife Refuge in the Pleasant Valley near Marion. This is a very exciting time to visit this wonderful place. The fields and marshes and woodlands are alive with bird song not to mention birds. The habitat is very diverse, and we will have a chance to see everything from shore birds to ducks to warblers to raptors. We will meet at 7AM at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Building in Kalispell. Please call Leslie Kehoe at (406) 837-4467 to sign up.

SATURDAY, MAY 19. SPRING LOON DAY. Help area biologists get a better handle on numbers of nesting and non-nesting loons during this pre-cursor to the "Montana Loon Day" (when we count chicks in July). Call Jane Engbretson 837-5081 if you can help search area lakes.



SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 19-20. GLACIER INSTITUTE WORK WEEKEND. Join the staff at the Glacier Institute's annual Work Party! Volunteers of all skills and abilities are needed to help get the Big Creek Outdoor Education Center and the Glacier Park Field Camp ready for the busy summer season. Please call the Glacier Institute at (406) 755-1211 to sign up, or for more information.

~~SUNDAY~~

SATURDAY, MAY 20. HARLEQUIN DUCKS AND AMERICAN DIPPERS. See first hand the amazing adaptations of Harlequin Ducks, one of Montana's rarest birds. We will watch them courting in the rapids alongside the American Dipper, a hearty year-round resident. Easy, all morning trip with short, level walks. Glacier National Park entrance fee or pass required. The number of participants is limited to minimize disturbance to these shy ducks. Please call John Ashley at 892-3825 to register and for the meeting time and place.

SUNDAY, MAY 27. A WALK THROUGH WARBLER HEAVEN. Join pre-eminent naturalist Lou Bruno on a wander through Glacier National Park's McDonald Valley. Lou will lead us to his favorite birding spots to see and hear the delightful songs of warblers and other neo-tropical migrants. This is a great chance to learn bird songs with an expert! We will also learn some of the wildflowers along Lake McDonald and the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Meet at the Nite Owl Parking Lot in Columbia Falls at 8:00 AM. Please call Leslie Kehoe at (406) 837-4467 for more information.

FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY, JUNE 1-3. MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL IN CHOTEAU. Don't forget about this year's big birding festival! If you already forgot, call Montana Audubon at (406) 443-3949.



SATURDAY, JUNE 16. "PEAKS TO PRAIRIE: BIRDING GLACIER'S EAST SIDE." This is a Glacier Institute Class. The grasslands and glacial pothole wetlands on the east side of Glacier Park and the Blackfoot Indian Reservation are teeming with nesting shorebirds and waterfowl. Join Lou Bruno to search for and learn about the life histories of such rare migratory visitors as the American White Pelican, American Avocet, and the Black Tern during their brief visits to northern Montana. The fee for this Glacier Institute class is \$50. Call (406) 755-1211 to sign up.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17. OWEN SOWERWINE CANOE TRIP. Join Susannah & Dan Casey for a half-day exploration of an island park in the Flathead River near Kalispell. Canoe to the island (easy flat-water paddling) and bushwhack through the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Features breeding birds and a close-up look at the diversity of endangered cottonwood communities. Bring canoe and life jackets (one jacket for each person). Please call Susannah and Dan Casey at (406) 857-3143 to sign up for this trip.

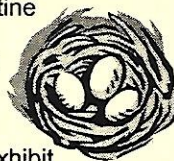
SATURDAY, JUNE 23. DANNY ON TRAIL BIRD-WATCHING HIKE. This is a leisurely 2-3 hour hike UP the mountain (we'll ride the chair lift back down). Participants need to be in good hiking condition. This is a good chance to learn some of the forest bird songs, including Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler and MacGillivray's Warbler. Please call Bruce & Gail Tannehill at (406) 862-4548 for meeting time and place.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10. WARBLER WALK & SWAN RIVER REFUGE. Join Neal and Pattie Brown for a walk in the woods to find and identify some of the neo-tropical migrants that fly here to Montana (warblers, thrushes, vireos, and tanagers, just to name a few). We will work on identifying birds by song. This will be a guided birding trip into the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the Swan Lake Campground (north of Swan Lake townsite) at 8:30 AM. Please call Neal & Pattie Brown at (406) 837-5018 for directions or more information.

SUNDAY, JULY 1. OWEN SOWERWINE BIRD WANDER. Join us for a 2-3 hour exploration in the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Karen Nichols and Ben Long will lead us into this bird haven along the Flathead River. We will see and hear many of our summer migrants including Warblers and Vireos, Red-naped Sapsuckers and some Ducks. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Montessori School on Willow Glen Drive. Wear long pants and shoes that can get wet. Call Karen or Ben at (406) 756-5763 for more information.

SATURDAY, JULY 21. MONTANA LOON DAY. Help area biologists determine how many new loon chicks were successfully produced this summer in Montana. Call Jane Engbretson 837-5081 if you can help search area lakes.

SUNDAY, JULY 22. FLATHEAD RIVER FLOAT. Join Susannah & Dan Casey for a canoe trip from Presentine Bar Fishing Access to Leisure Island in Kalispell. This beginner level float is an easy six hours on the river (no whitewater) through a variety of riparian habitats. Bring canoe, lifejackets (one jacket for each person), lunch, and raingear. Meet at 9 AM at the Kalispell K-Mart parking lot. Please RSVP to Susannah or Dan at (406) 857-3143.



JULY 23 & 24. "BIRDS OF PREY." A Glacier Institute Class. The many powerful raptors of Glacier's skies exhibit tremendous skill and precision. Join Dave Shea on this investigation of the biology and conservation of Glacier's hawks, eagles, owls, and falcons. Come prepared for an evening of discovery and adventure, and a day on the east side of the park. The fee for this Glacier Institute class is \$125. Call (406) 755-1211 to sign up.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4. PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE PULL AT NINEPIPE. Come join Flathead and Mission Mountain Audubon in our 11th annual joyous effort to control the wetland invasive weed, Purple Loosestrife. This field trip requires shoes that can get wet, gloves, lunch, and water. Times: 8:00 AM for a birding tour of the Ninepipe wetland complex, 10:00 AM for the Purple Loosestrife pull, noon for gourmet desserts! Meet at Ninepipes Lodge (six miles south of Ronan on U.S. Highway 93). Contact Neal or Pattie Brown at (406) 837-5018 for more information.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18. MIGRANT SHOREBIRDS. This trip will highlight the shorebirds of the Flathead Valley, and will offer you a chance to see dowagers, phalaropes, yellowlegs and sandpipers -- up to 15 species may be seen! Dan Casey will lead this trip to various locations around the Valley. Meet at the west end of the Tidyman's parking lot at 9:00 AM. Please RSVP with Dan at (406) 857-3143.

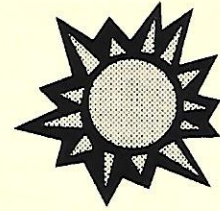




GETTING READY FOR SUMMER??

If you live outside of the main cities in Flathead Co. and if you live in a forested environment, you need to do two things:

- #1) Clean and put away the bird feeders for the season. As a responsible Auduboner, you do not want to attract bears to your yard.
- #2) Create a defensible space around your home. No, not with barricades and machine gun emplacements, but with the help of Forest Service or DNRC's fire savvy personnel.



If you live "IN" the woods, it is very important to make your home "attractive" to firefighters. WHY? If it's not "attractive" (defensible) from their viewpoint, they will pass you by when making critical decisions about which homes to try to save during a wildlands fire. Volunteer Fire Depts and regular wildlands fire crews are gearing up for a probable tough fire season in the Flathead.

What makes your place defensible during a forest fire? Getting safe access by road is a big item. Ask yourself these questions: Is there more than one road in and out? Is the road wide enough for you to pass a semi truck sized fire engine on it's way in, or are there multiple turnouts along the road wide enough to pass a BIG water-tanker? Could a fire truck turn around and get out to avoid being trapped by flames? Since most of us don't drive semi's to our home (the exception being our members who haul logs for a living), we probably can't answer that question without help (more on that later).

After access, what will look "attractive" to a firefighter? Ah, yes...your house and buildings, hopefully. How your house is constructed and where it sits in relation to the forest will be big considerations. Metal roof or wood shakes? Wood, metal, or composite siding? Spaces under decks: open or enclosed? Volatile shrubs up against the house? Tree limbs overhanging the roof? Your beautifully landscaped yard can be a fire deterrent or it can be a "gasoline-like" accelerant, which is it?

Generally, a defensible space is dependent on how much slope is around the house: greater slope equals greater space needed for defense, especially downslope of the structure. Next, firefighters look at how close the vegetation is to the house. On nearly flat ground (0%-10% slope) you need a minimum of 30 feet to adjacent trees; that's tree canopies, not tree trunks; and those need to be pruned up to 15 feet to reduce the chance of limbs being ignited by a ground fire with 3-5 foot flames. Between trees, there should be 10-15 feet between their canopies. As slope increases, this distance also increases, because it markedly increases the effect of preheating the up slope vegetation.

Living "firewise" in the forest does NOT mean you have to clearcut the area for 200 yards in all directions, but you do need to look at it the way a firefighter does.

Do you have water available to fight fire? a pond, stock tank, or hot tub? Many small fire engines only carry 150 gallons of water.



"Firewise—Landscaping for Woodland Homes" is a small pamphlet available from DNRC. In it, you will learn that many native plants are fire "resistant" such as: aspen & birch; larch & ponderosa pine; serviceberry & willow; kinnikinnik & snowberry; arnica & lupine; strawberry & blue wild rye grass.

The Forest Service and DNRC will probably be giving "Defensible Space-Home Inspections" this year. Don't miss out on the wealth of information that these people will share with you. The time to plan and prepare for fire is NOW, not when you smell the smoke. Our native wildlife and neotropical birds have adapted to fires and it would be best, if we did some adapting, too.

For more information, call: DNRC at 751-2240 or the Flathead Nat'l Forest at 758-5200. If you need a logging contractor to help, call me to get some names of reputable professionals.

By Brent Mitchell, Conservation Chair, 756-8130



FROM TURTLE SOUP TO BIRD LANGUAGE

Sometime back in the early 70's, two ten year old boys thought they wanted to make turtle soup, so off they went to catch a turtle. They succeeded in catching such a huge snapping turtle on a fishing line, it was all they could do between them to get it back to one of their houses. Of course, they were late getting home and that boy's mom immediately whisked him away in the car leaving the other standing on the street corner with a heavy turtle that was still alive but with a fish hook in its mouth. So there he stood for quite some time, since he didn't really have any other options. For many reasons, turtle soup had come to seem like not such a great idea. Finally a guy in his early 20's drove up in a jeep and started questioning the ten year old about his turtle on the 'leash' and ended up giving the turtle and the boy a very welcome ride home. This was the beginning of a friendship that continues to this day. The guy driving the jeep was Tom Brown, Jr. and the ten year old was Jon Young.

After this chance meeting, Tom mentored Jon for the next 8 years in the same way Tom had previously been taught. At the age of 8, Tom Brown, Jr. had met an 82 year old Apache scout who intensely mentored him for the next 10 years in all aspects of living, surviving, and appreciating the natural world. Since his unique upbringing, Tom has assisted numerous Government agencies in tracking hundreds of missing people and fugitives. Through his school, he has shared his teachings with thousands of people around the world. He has written 16 books and is the subject of an upcoming movie.

Similarly, Jon Young has founded the non-profit Wilderness Awareness School based in Duvall, Washington. Of the many aspects of the natural world, Jon has focused on bird language, tracking, and mentoring young people, and regularly teaches week-long courses on each of these subjects. Recently he has been involved with the North American programming of CyberTracker, a new field data collection tool which uses a palm pilot connected to a GPS. CyberTracker was recently featured on ABC's 'Nightline' and was designed as a way to link the expert ecological knowledge of the illiterate Kalahari Bushmen with the scientific community. Jon will soon be the first person to publish an in-depth book on the fascinating subject of bird language. Native people living close to the land in all parts of the world understood bird language and relied upon it as an essential part of their survival.

While most of us will not use bird language in a life or death situation, it can bring a whole new level of appreciation for birds and for yet another role they play in nature. Having traveled as far as the East Coast to attend Jon's courses, I am excited that people of the Flathead will have a convenient opportunity to attend his 'Language of the Birds' weekend workshop, August 3-5 in the Bigfork area. To register or receive more information, visit www.NatureOutlet.com or call 425-788-1301.

Jim Fiddler



Birding in The Gambia, 2-16 November 2001

Jointly Sponsored by Five Valleys Chapter and Montana Audubon

The Gambia is virtually unknown to most North American birders. Yet, this fascinating country supports 550 species of birds in an area smaller than the state of Connecticut and is the safest and easiest place to observe a high diversity of bird species in West Africa. Join University of Montana ornithologist Jeff Marks and local expert Solomon Jallow on an exciting expedition to The Gambia this coming November. We will see more than 300 species of birds, including 35 species of diurnal raptors, 5 species of owls, and a myriad of turacos, kingfishers, bee-eaters, rollers, hornbills, pigeons, swallows, sunbirds, shrikes, waxbills, weavers, and wood-hoopoes!

NO BETTER OPPORTUNITY EXISTS TO SEE WEST AFRICAN BIRDS THAN THIS TRIP, AND THE PRICE CANNOT BE BEAT!

Contact Jeff Marks for details at 721-7511, 243-6389, or <jmarks@selway.umt.edu>, and view the trip itinerary and cost schedule at <http://www.mtaudubon.org/>.



A PRESIDENTIAL FAREWELL

The temple bell stops
But the sound keeps coming out of the flowers.
Basho

Have you ever noticed that the weather maps tend to be limited to the borders set by human beings? We get the weather of Montana or Idaho or the U.S. as if there is no weather in our neighboring Canada or over Mongolia or the South Pacific. We know we live on one globe with one weather system; homogeneous in nature, each pressure system affecting the next. The isolated weather maps defy logic. It is important to think outside of the box.

Avian migration is also a global event. As the birds migrate north or south they require habitat that meets their needs of food, shelter and Suitable nesting sites. It is everyone's responsibility to insure that intact ecosystems persist everywhere, not just here in the Flathead, but around the globe.

So this spring as you sip your morning beverage and venture out to listen to the cacophony of song and watch the flurry of mating dances, greet your avian cousins in Spanish or Portuguese, try adding a southern drawl, a bit of Guarani, because the birds have no borders.

If you have not taken notice of the nominations announcement, I will no longer fill the roll of Flathead Audubon President. Our Vice President Linda Winnie will now move into the president's position.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Officers, the members of the Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and all the other volunteers for their unending support for Flathead Audubon. They have given freely of their time and energy. Not only have goals been met, but we have had a good time also. Humor is never far from the surface at our meetings and outings.

Thank you one and all for tolerating my flaws and appreciating my gifts.

Neal Brown, Lame duck President,
Flathead Audubon Society

**BIRDATHONBIRDATHON
BIRDATHONBIRDATHON
BIRDATHONBIRDATHON**

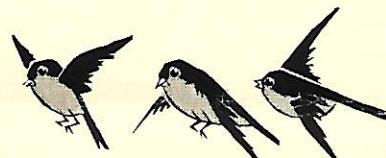
Spring has arrived and with spring come spring showers, flowers and BIRDATHON! BIRDATHON like our bird seed sale generates donations earmarked for our General Fund.

The General Fund is for our operating expenses such as postal and newsletter costs as well as scholarships, grants and educational programs like Audubon Adventures and our Community Naturalist program.

This year the Flathead Phlamingos team has expanded from a team comprised of the officers of Flathead Audubon to a team comprised of the officers and the Board of Directors. We will be gathering pledges though out the month of May. (As an example if a person pledged .10 cents per bird species and the Flathead Phlamingos list 110 species, that pledge would equal \$11 dollars.) This year our BIRDATHON will take place over the 24 hour period of June 1st.

Last year we raised over \$700, this year we hope to double that amount. If you would like to make a pledge or would like to participate as a birder, please contact Neal Brown at 837-5018 for further information.

BIRDATHONBIRDATHONBIRDATHONBIRDATHON
ONBIRDATHONBIRDATHONBIRDATHONBIRDATHON
THONBIRDATHON



BEWARE OF BEARS

Bears and bird-feeding just don't mix well and the Board of Directors of FAS would like to remind you to take your feeders down from May 1 until November 1. Black bears and grizzly bears are always looking for easy food, and they are very good at finding it. A good rule of thumb is if we or our animals eat it, bears will eat it too.

Birds don't need the food in the summer and bears love it. So take down your feeders for the summer months if you live in bear country. Clean up the area around the feeders. Once fed a bear will return time after time and year after year, bears remember where they have found food. Remember it is far easier to prevent problems from starting than to change a bear's behavior afterward. If you have questions you can call Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at 752-5501. Please help protect our bears, remember a fed bear is a dead bear...it bears repeating.

**Excerpts from MT FWP pamphlet on
Bear Attractants: Why is this Bear in my Yard?
and is available at MT FWP.**



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Dorothy Poulsen, P.O. Box 595, Helena MT 59624

443-3949
443-3949

MONTANA AUDUBON

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



the Pileated Post

Flathead Audubon Society

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Enjoy full National Audubon Society benefits and AUDUBON magazine, as well as PILEATED POST newsletter.

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Send this application and your check to:

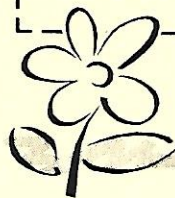
National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

For Newsletter Only Send \$10 ☐

to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership
380 Tally Lake Rd.,
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