



the **Flathead** **Post**

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 32

NUMBER 9

MAY 2008



JOHNSTON AND SIDERIUS FAMILIES TO RECEIVE CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION



On January 13th, The Daily InterLake ran front page headlines that read, "Saving land for the future" and "People will enjoy this open space for a long time." The news stories honored the foresight and generosity of the Johnston and Siderius families to protect over 1300 acres of productive agricultural and forest land, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and long stretches of undeveloped shoreline along the Flathead River.

Flathead Audubon has chosen to award Dr. Glenn and Hazel Johnston, Tom and Terry Siderius, Chuck Siderius and Dan Siderius with Conservation Awards to show our appreciation for their conservation legacy. In 2007, the Johnstons donated a conservation ease-



Wetlands tucked into a riparian forest on Dr. Glenn and Hazel Johnstons' property that was placed under conservation

ment to permanently protect 682 acres with the Flathead Land Trust; and the Siderius families worked with the local office of the Montana Land Reliance to permanently protect 670 acres from development.

The Johnston family ranch is the largest single-ownership easement ever executed in the Flathead Valley bottom. Their property is located on the west side of Columbia Falls Stage Road, just north of the junction with Highway 35 and McWennegar Slough (also protected by a conservation easement on private land). The ranch's expansive, high bluff is typically covered with a quilt of crop fields that overlook the most easterly channel in a braided section of the Flathead River.

(Recognition, continued on page 6...)

SUMMER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, May 12, 2008: Flathead Audubon Potluck, Silent Auction and General Meeting. 5 PM, Bethlehem Lutheran Church (603 South Main St, Kalispell) Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of MT Audubon will present an interesting program on Hawks. (details on page 3)

Monday, May 5, 2008: Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave EN, Kalispell (Jane Lopp & Associates Building) All are welcome.

Friday - Sunday, June 6-8, 2008: Montana Audubon Bird Festival. Rocky Mountain College, Billings (see article, page 11)

Friday - Sunday, June 6-8, 2008: Flathead Audubon Warbler Weekend (details on page 9)

Saturday, September 13, 2008: Raptor Day in Memory of Rod Ash. Details in Sept. 08 newsletter

Saturday, September 27, 2008: Owen Sowerwine/Prudential Global Volunteer Work Day

All Flathead Audubon Spring/Summer Field Trips are listed on pages 7 & 8!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Article & photo by Jeannie Marcure

THE SOUNDS OF SUMMER

In an effort to improve my birding skills, I've recently been trying to learn to identify birds by their calls. For someone lacking musical training or talent, this is a daunting task, so it makes sense that I'd have a special fondness for any bird that makes this job easier by calling out its name. One of my local favorites that has this obliging habit is the Killdeer and the repeated 'Kill-deah' call often helps me spot this busy little shorebird. Upon some investigation I learned that the call is actually the origin of the bird's name.

At 10 inches, the Killdeer is about the same size as a Robin. This medium-sized shorebird has a short neck, moderately long legs and a long tail and wings. The back is brown and the throat and neck are white. The under parts are white with two black chest bands. There is a white band on the forehead with a black stripe above it and a white eye stripe behind each eye. In flight an orange rump and upper tail may be seen. Like other plovers, the Killdeer has three forward facing toes and a partially developed hind toe.



Here in the Flathead, the Killdeer is common and can often be seen far from water. It is a voracious consumer of all kinds of insects and most of the feeding is done by sight while walking. Near water they are often seen along the shore edge, probing the shallow mud for insects and small invertebrates. Watch for the characteristic bobbing as it walks along probing for food. Killdeer are also commonly seen in agricultural areas and on the lawns and parks of suburban and urban areas.

Killdeer nests are made on an open scrape, often in gravel, with little or no surrounding vegetation and very little lining material. Here in the Flathead I've found Killdeer nests in pastures, along lake shores and near the driveway to my neighbor's house. The three or four tan and brown spotted eggs blend perfectly into the surrounding habitat, making the nest almost invisible. In fact you may not realize that you are near a nest until one of the adults appears in front of you dragging an apparently broken wing. The Killdeer will struggle along in front of you as if it can barely walk, let alone fly. One or both wings may drag pathetically, but if you attempt to rescue the bird it will manage to stay just a step or two ahead of you as it leads you farther and farther

from the nest. When the bird feels that you are far enough away to no longer be a threat to the nest, the wing will miraculously heal and the bird will fly away. Another interesting behavior is sometimes observed in pastures where the threat to nests is not humans but horses or cows. In this instance the Killdeer will fluff up and display its tail over its head to appear larger and then make runs at the animals in an attempt to drive them away from the nest.

Most newly hatched birds are altricial (blind, naked and helpless upon hatching) and rely entirely on their parents for food until they fledge. Killdeer babies, however, like many other shorebirds, are precocial and hatch covered with downy feathers and their eyes open. As soon as these downy feathers dry, they start scurrying around looking for food. This amazing behavior is made possible by the fact that the eggs of precocial birds such as the Killdeer are much larger. For example, although the adult Robin and Killdeer are nearly the same size, the Killdeer's egg is twice as large. This means that there is more food for the em-

bryo and that it can remain in the shell longer. Robins typically incubate in about fourteen days while Killdeer incubation takes around twenty-eight days. This means that a newly hatched Killdeer chick is actually two weeks ahead of a newly hatched Robin chick in development. In appearance, the chick looks much like a miniature version of the parents except that it only has only one dark band on the chest rather than the distinguishing two bands of the adults. Since they can't fly, newly hatched Killdeer chicks still need their parents for protection and guidance and typically remain with them for close to a month until they fledge.

www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide says the Killdeer is one of the most successful shorebirds because of its tolerance of people and human-modified habitats. This close association with people, however, does make them vulnerable to poisoning from pesticides and collisions with cars and buildings.

This summer I hope you'll take time from your busy schedule to stop and listen for the Killdeer's distinctive call. I think it will quickly become one of your favorite sounds of summer!



Steven Meszaros

May 2008 Program IDENTIFICATION AND NATURAL HISTORY OF MONTANA'S DIURNAL RAPTORS



Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon, is guest speaker at our annual meeting on May 12. Steve will discuss the identification and natural history of all 15 relatively common and widespread diurnal raptor species in Montana, especially species most easily observed in Montana, including eagles and "buteo" hawks (such as Red-tailed Hawks). Steve's illustrated talk will depict many plumage variations of more common species, plus helpful behavioral clues as appropriate.

Steve has 28 years of professional experience in wildlife conservation and nonprofit administration. He began his career as a Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Arizona. He later worked as an Endangered Species Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque, NM. In 1987, after nine years of government service, Steve left to create *HawkWatch International (HWI)*, a nonprofit organization dedicated to monitoring and conserving hawks, eagles and other birds of prey. After 12 years with HWI, Steve returned to his birth state of Pennsylvania to become Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Pennsylvania.

In 2004 Steve moved to Bozeman, Montana, to serve as Executive Director of the Predator Conservation Alliance. Steve has authored more than 25 scientific papers on raptor biology and conservation status, endangered species management, and coyote ecology. He has given hundreds of presentations on raptor identification, movement patterns and conservation needs to a variety of audiences across the United States. He earned an MS in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University in 1979, and a BS in Psycho-Biology in 1973. He makes his home in Bozeman with wife, Lisa, and their 14-year old son, Merlin.

We welcome Steve to Flathead Audubon's May general meeting and potluck at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 603 South Main Street. Also at the meeting, the Johnston and Siderius families will be presented with Flathead Audubon's Conservation Achievement Recognition (see article on page 1).

We've saved the best for last! Following tradition, Flathead Audubon's last meeting of the season will be a potluck dinner with silent auction, followed by a short business meeting and then a great bird program. The location is Bethlehem Lutheran Church downstairs Community Room. Doors open at 5 PM with silent auction items displayed for your

bids. There is a large well-lit parking lot behind the church and FVCC's Green Team will be at the parking lot for our last recycling collection of the season.

Our Silent Auction fundraiser was a huge success last year. We made a request for attendees to bring something to put in the auction and we had to bring in extra tables to hold all of the goodies! This year, we hope to have even more items that you just can't do without! Bring your donations at 5 PM and become part of a great tradition. Popular items from years past have been bird houses and feeders, home baked goods, wildlife-related books (new or used), outdoor gear of all kinds, garden plants, hanging baskets of flowers, CDs, and many, many others.



So start now to gather any items you would like someone else to enjoy for a while and bring them to the meeting. And be sure to bring a little extra cash, so you can cart away your new treasures!

The Potluck Dinner begins at 6 PM. If you enjoy good food, this is the Place To Be! Bring a dish to share. After dinner, we will have a short business meeting to elect officers for next season, present the Siderius and Johnston families with the Conservation Achievement Recognition and make announcements. Then the Famous (or Infamous) Duck-Tape Duck will make its annual migration to a new home and keeper - that could be YOU! Word has it that this year's keepers played fast and loose with The Duck.



Finally, we will enjoy Steve Hoffman's great presentation (see above). Because of the Silent Auction, there will not be a sales table at the meeting, but our new FAS Canvas Bags will be available for sale. So come out and enjoy the food and fun!

Now that I have 2 "new" knees, I would like to find morning birdwatchers with whom I can walk locally (Kalispell) from time to time. I would also like to ride (and share gas expenses) with anyone who is driving out to natural areas. Please call me (756-7405) if you are able to "team up" with me.

Lois Drobish, FAS Member



BOARD BRAINS
AT WORK

LEO KEANE
Board Member
Program Chair
Past President

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM
INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS
AND OFFICERS

List from Hanalei Bay, Island of Kauai, Hawaii, March 21, 2008

Northern cardinal, western meadowlark, cattle egret, red-eyed vireo...

Red-eyed vireo? Truthfully, he was not listed in our little Golden Guide to the Birds of Hawaii, but the song was familiar as my own backyard. Like a typical vireo, I never did get the sighting, but the song was instantly obvious. All the others, of course, have been introduced to Hawaii and are, surprisingly, almost as common as in their native range on the mainland—notwithstanding the cattle egret, which is native neither here nor there, but thrives today anywhere in the world there are cattle to pester. Pervasive as pigeons, incongruous as marble statuary, cattle egrets virtually litter the countryside enroute to our vacation destination, Hanalei Bay, Kauai.

I slowly awaken the first morning on Kauai in our lovely beach house. The sunrise whistles of cardinals outside our cottage window transport me to the summer bedroom of my youth in the northern suburbs. A gentle shower, soft as waking from a dream, enhances the illusion. Adding to my enjoyable reverie, a bubbling meadowlark joins the morning songfest and I'm in a June camp under cottonwoods somewhere on the Missouri. This is the first time in my life I've been off the North American continent. We're a degree or two south of the Tropic of Cancer, halfway to Australia, and strangely, I feel right at home. Until stepping onto the lanai. Rubbing my eyes, I see we are most definitely not in Montana anymore, Dorothy. The Pacific Ocean is a vast, blue horizon, embroidered by the white crescent of Hanalei Bay. Breaking waves form a phalanx advancing on the shore and, at our distance, appear very much like elegant stitchery—only very loud, each wave like a sonic boom as the foaming crests implode onto themselves and then rumble up the beach.

The view with binoculars is dramatic. One mile eastward on the crescent of the Bay the Princeville Break rolls ashore. The swells that form this Break originate, we've been told, far to the north in the Gulf of Alaska, and surge unimpeded to the reefs of Hawaii. Winter storms, most likely occurring weeks ago, give birth to the big waves just now fattening up on the Princeville. And when the surf's up, surfers from all over the world come to catch the winter waves on the famous Princeville Break.

We give our birding 8 x 40's an early morning workout, safely and advantageously from our lanai, focusing on the breakers. The waves appear to lift from the blue horizon, gaining momentum and stature like racehorses as they swell over the Break. Surfers seem to blossom on each new crest, and ride as swift as arrows across the sleek, green face of every wave. We can spot the pros, those who know their way around a wave ride "the pipeline", keeping just ahead of, or, exquisitely, right inside of, the crashing tube—the magnificent "blue room." Surfing looks to me like the sport of gods.

Which makes our hike up the uninhabited Napali Coast on the rugged Kalalau Trail in search of illusive Hawaiian endemics, or breathtaking shots of breaching humpbacks far out on the shimmering horizon, by comparison, the sport of geeks. But here we are, later that morning; enjoying a familiar activity, in an exotic and awe-inspiring location. Thankfully we've at least distanced ourselves from the ne'r-do-wells back in town, the cardinals, the meadowlarks, so oddly out of place in this land of palm trees and coconuts. But, just a minute, what's this? Bubbling from the forest floor like pure spring water, a bird song as crystal clean and ethereal as my first wood thrush.

Those impatient colleagues of mine have, of course, forged onward up the trail, unabashed enthusiasts for the next great vista around the bend. And as usual, I'm lingering slowly behind with higher hopes of a more intimate discovery; perhaps a life-lister, but more genuinely and gratefully, perhaps a sighting of one of the increasingly endangered Island endemics, our native Hawaiian birds that are vanishing from this Earth as quickly and quietly as morning dew. Suddenly now, I think I've got one. A song so beautiful and so pure it must surely be something rare. If I can just catch a fleeting glimpse, through this impenetrable...

Ah, there he is! Fully expecting the usual bird watchers anxiety, the keen straining of eyeballs through bewilderingly leafy canopies and copses, I'm taken aback when my subject hops out on a nearby log, altogether too close for binocular viewing. Conveniently, he belts out the second stanza of his elegant song. Oh boy, this one's in the bag; a life-lister for sure, ... *(continued on page 13...)*

Slate of Nominees for FAS Board Positions 2008

from Linda de Kort and Mary Nelesen

The nominations committee is delighted to present a rich slate of nominees. The election of officers and board members will take place at the Annual Meeting following the Potluck on May 12th. The offices up for election this year (an even-numbered year) are Secretary and Treasurer. President and Vice President will be up for election next year (an odd-numbered year). According to the Flathead Audubon Society Bylaws, the board consists of these officers and not less than six elected directors. Traditionally, we have nominated and elected 2-4 directors each year. This year we will elect 4 directors, each with a three-year term. We are grateful that several board members and officers have agreed to continue on the board; we are also pleased to introduce new nominees to this slate.

Gail Sullivan has been our trusty secretary for eight years. She keeps the board on track by recording and reporting actions taken at each board meeting. She helped launch our very successful website and continues to contribute to the contents of the website. She recently retired from the Tally Lake Ranger District and whenever she and husband Brian can steal away, you will find them paddling their kayaks on sea or foam. In the winter months you can find them on their skinny skis cruising along forest trails. Thanks, Gail, for accepting the nomination for Secretary for another two year term.

Bruce Tannehill has served as Treasurer of FAS for eight years as well. Bruce has established sound financial procedures, oversees our investments, helps prepare the budget and ensures that we stick with it. He distributes a monthly treasurer's report and writes up a financial statement for the newsletter and annual report. Bruce and wife Gail Cleveland lead very popular field trips for Flathead Audubon and contribute articles and Science Tidbits to *The Pileated Post*. Bruce is an esteemed retired physics teacher from Whitefish High School. He and Gail travel the planet exploring hidden corners, field guides and binoculars in hand. Thanks, Bruce, for accepting the nomination for Treasurer for another two-year term.

Paula Smith has served as a Director on the Flathead Audubon board for only three years but what an impact she has made. She was nominated initially because her cookies were such a hit at general meetings, but it didn't take long for her other talents to be revealed. We have seen a significant increase in the attendance at our general meetings and field trips because of Paula's very effective publicity procedures, which she developed and executes almost single-handedly. She also stepped up to the plate when a chair for the website was needed; the continued usefulness and friendliness of the FAS website is attributed to her leadership and vigilance. Paula and husband Bob live in Bigfork. In addition to being a consummate cookie baker, Paula is also a master gardener, avid hiker, and birder and sailor. Thanks, Paula, for accepting the nomination for board director for another three-year term.

Melissa Sladek has worked closely with FAS through her work as Interpretive Ranger at Lone Pine State Park. The overwhelming success of the Rod Ash Raptor Day Festival last summer was Melissa's doing. Melissa has worked in Environmental Education at Travelers' Rest State Park in Lolo, with the National Park Service and the Flathead National Forest. Melissa was also involved with communications with the public when she was employed by Citizens for a Better Flathead in Kalispell. Her knowledge, commitment and energy are apparent from the moment you meet her. We are very grateful that Melissa has accepted the nomination for board director for a three-year term.

Richard Kuhl has been a strong proponent for protecting the environment all of his life. He was a ranger in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness for many years and recently retired as a math tutor at Flathead High School. He and wife Marylane Pannell have raised their two children in the Flathead and have explored many wild places. Richard has been very active in the Montana Wilderness Association, and was a candidate for the Montana Legislature in two close races. He has been chair of the Flathead Coalition, an organization which continues to work to safeguard the clear waters of the North Fork of the Flathead. Dick was also selected twice as Conservationist of the Year by the Montana Wildlife Federation. Thank you, Richard, for accepting the nomination for board director for a three-year term.

Bill Schustrom is another name that is well known in the conservation community. Bill has lectured many times on the social and natural history of Glacier National Park. Bill is also an esteemed retired science teacher from Whitefish High School and continues to work as a naturalist with the Park Service. Bill has three grown children and four grandchildren whom he visits frequently; he will be glad to tell you about all of them! When not in his beloved Glacier National Park, Bill can be found at his home in West Valley enjoying the bird life, or more likely, at a sports venue where the Montana Grizzlies are playing. Thank you, Bill, for accepting the nomination for a three year term on the FAS board.



PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS



The end of the ski season always brings on a bit of a dark mood in your President. With the best skiing ever this year, and with over 10 feet of snow still on the mountain, the ending is extra hard to bear. The few weeks following the ski season are quite transitional; too early for hiking, mountain biking, floating the rivers, or playing golf at Whitefish Lake, and too late for lift-served skiing. Somehow hiking up the mountain on snowshoes with skis and boots in a pack and skiing one run down a groomer with sticky snow last Sunday just wasn't comparable to the great runs of this season.

Not only are recreational activities currently limited, but there aren't vibrant signs of spring all around. Flowers are not yet blooming and our lake is still icebound. However this season has one strong redeeming virtue: **THE BIRDS ARE RETURNING!** A couple of board members and an extraordinary young birder (Josh Covill) saw 82 species on a long tour of the South portion of our area. We hear and see new birds almost daily at our feeder. This raises our mood.

For Flathead Audubon this will be the last Newsletter until September and we have only one more general meeting until September, the May Potluck. This has been an eventful year for FAS. Our membership dropped a bit and, at the same time we have decided to nearly double our annual budget. Does that sound sensible? Perhaps not, until you know why the doubling happened.

The cause is our commitment to education which was described in a previous *Pileated Post*. Next year FAS will spend \$12,500 for our educational coordinator and this sum will be matched by a contribution from The Sustainability Fund managed by Lex Blood. This amount will allow us to continue to advance the education work begun during the last year. We will need significant new fundraising to support these activities, but I'm sure we can do it. We need the ideas and support of our membership in order to accomplish the task. Let the board know of any ideas you have.

Mike Fanning, President

(Conservation Recognition, continued from p.1...)

The Johnston property has an ancient stand of ponderosa pines, and mature riparian habitat including large cottonwoods and conifers, interspersed with moist pockets of sedges, tall grasses and cattails. The property includes islands and more than a mile of river frontage.



River bottom-braided stretch on Johnstons' property

This ranch has been in the Johnston family since the 1880s when Glenn's grandfather Leroy pieced it all together. Glenn and Hazel's son Mark and his family were included in the decision to donate their development rights and keep the land for farming, wildlife, recreation, and education. Some day Glenn and Hazel's granddaughter will be talking about her grandparent's incredible legacy.

Down river from the Johnstons, below the Old Steel Bridge, and across from the 442-acre Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, is a large area of prime agricultural land owned and farmed by members of the Siderius family. Much of the land was acquired by Tom and Chuck's father back in the 1940s. Similar to the Johnston's easement, the Siderius easements allow their land to remain working farmland. Development rights on these properties were purchased through a partnership of conservation organizations and agencies, including the Montana Land Reliance, Trust for Public Lands, US Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and the Bonneville Power Administration. The addition of these new easement

properties forms a contiguous block of working lands and habitat on both sides of that section of the Flathead River—lush forests, sloughs and riparian areas so important for wildlife...and of course all kinds of birds!

In addition to protecting their land, these landowners are involved in restoring native vegetation and controlling weeds. Through the US Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Glenn and Hazel Johnston, Tom Siderius and Dan Siderius have received funding and advice to improve the natural condition of their land. The project on the Johnstons' ranch focuses on tree planting and noxious weed control in the riparian area.

The project with the Sideriuses is in a partnership with Flathead Lakers and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. On Tom's property, the partners are protecting water quality of a spring and slough by helping pay for fences to keep cattle out of those areas, developing a watering facility, and re-vegetating with trees in the riparian areas. On Dan's property the partners are paying to re-establish riparian vegetation along the Flathead River.

With the coming of spring, it is a pleasure to honor these families for their stewardship and conservation of important habitat along the Flathead River.

By Marcy Mahr





FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY 2008 SUMMER FIELD TRIPS



THE PUBLIC IS INVITED ON ALL FIELD TRIPS AND ALL TRIPS ARE FREE OF CHARGE
CHECK FLATHEADAUDUBON.ORG THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER FOR FIELD TRIPS WHICH MAY BE ADDED

TUESDAYS IN MAY AND JUNE: THE WILD MILE NATURE WALKS (May 6-13-20-27, June 3-10-17-24)

Join Neal Brown of Flathead Audubon and Anne Morley of Montana Native Plant Society, for a morning of bird and wildflower identification along Bigfork's Wild Mile of the Swan River. It is an easy amble along the Swan River Nature Trail. Meet in front of Bigfork Playhouse at 10 AM. Bring water, binoculars, hand lens and field guides. Walks are from 10AM to 12PM.



SATURDAY, MAY 10: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AT THE NATIONAL BISON RANGE.

The main event is the opening of the splendid Red Sleep Mountain Drive for the season. This is a great place to see Yellow Warblers, Mountain Bluebirds, Western Meadowlarks and Bald Eagles. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with bird and wildlife photography walks, book signings, bird talks, trivia contests and free posters. Kate Davis of Raptors of the Rockies will be present with live birds. All events start at the Visitor Center. Contact Pat Jamieson at 644-2211, Ext. 207 for information and field trip signup.

SATURDAY, MAY 17: SPRING LOON CENSUS DAY. Montana Loon Society and the Montana Common Loon Working Group need volunteers to help look for and count loons on lakes of northwest Montana. To volunteer and for information, contact one of the following: for areas north of Kalispell, call Laura Holmquist at 758-3501; for areas west of Kalispell, call Gael Bissell at 751-4580; for southern Flathead Lake and Mission Valley, call Brett Gullett at 883-2888, Ext. 7292; for Libby area, call Glen Gill at 295-7495; for Swan Valley, call Jane Ingebretson at 837-5081; for Eureka area, call Christi Ferruzzi at 882-4451; for Glacier National Park, call Billie Thomas at 888-5827.



Rebecca King

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY 19 & 20: GLACIER INSTITUTE VOLUNTEER WORK WEEKEND.

Help Glacier Institute get ready for its 25th year of educational activities. Volunteers will clean, paint, do light carpentry and outdoor work at both the Field Camp in the Park and at Big Creek Outdoor Education Center. To volunteer, call Glacier Institute at 755-1211 or register@glacierinstitute.org.



FRIDAY, MAY 23: NATIONAL BISON RANGE 100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION! The Big Birthday Bash – speakers and special guests, recognition ceremony for Student Art Contest, US Postage Stamp cancellations, visit by Honker the Blue Goose mascot, trivia contests, free posters, book signings. Free entry to all scenic drives. It's an ideal way to spend a lovely day in May. For information, call Pat Jamieson at 406-644-2211, Ext. 207.



SATURDAY, MAY 31: BIRDING IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. This trip will focus on identifying neotropical migrants by sight and by ear. We will walk along McDonald Creek listening and looking for birds and stop at the Fish Creek campground to search for Harlequin Ducks and scan the cottonwoods for vireos and warblers. We may head up the inside North Fork Road or drive along Camas Road in search of Black-backed Woodpeckers, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Northern Hawk Owls. Limited to 20 participants; sign up for the trip with Steve Gniadek at 888-7833.

Meet at the Alberta Visitor Center in West Glacier at 6 AM and return by noon. Glacier National Park entrance fee or Park pass is required.

SUNDAY, JUNE 1: TOUR OF THE MISSION VALLEY. At the National Bison Range, we will drive Red Sleep Mountain Drive to look for warblers, vireos and sparrows. We may find Rock Wrens, Short-eared Owls or a swift Prairie Falcon. We will also scan Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge for waterfowl and other denizens of the marshes. Meet at Park n' Ride at the intersection of Hwy 93 and 82 near Somers at 6 AM. For information, call Leslie Kehoe evenings at 837-4467. Entrance fee to National Bison Range is \$4 per vehicle.



Vaughan Ashby

SATURDAY, JUNE 14: A WALK THROUGH OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA (OSNA).

At this outstanding undisturbed natural area on the Flathead River, over 80 species of birds can be found, including Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Vaux's Swift, and Black-headed Grosbeaks, a variety of warblers and ducks, Great Blue Herons and Spotted Sandpipers. This special riparian area is managed by Flathead Audubon. Meet at Montessori School at 7 AM to car pool to OSNA and bird until 10 AM. Call Karen Nichols at 756-5763 for more information or to sign up.



birds@sanibel.free.fr



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY 2008 SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

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SATURDAY, JUNE 21: A MORNING OF BEGINNING BIRDING FOR ALL AGES AT LAWRENCE PARK. This morning of birding will be spent at Lawrence Park at the north end of Main Street, one of the birding hotspots in Kalispell. We may see Wood Ducks, Lazuli Buntings, Black-chinned Hummingbirds and Black-headed Grosbeaks; we will focus on the basics of bird watching, show you how use your binoculars effectively and teach you to identify common birds from field marks, calls and other clues. The walking will be easy. Meet at the pavilion in Lawrence Park at 8 AM. Call Bob Lopp at 257-6886 for more information.



Outdooralabama.com



fs.fed.us

SATURDAY, JUNE 28: BIRDING THE INSIDE NORTH FORK ROAD IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. One of the birdiest spots in GNP, the Inside North Fork Road has everything from lush riparian areas to dense forest; a fabulous variety of birds may be seen, from Olive-sided Flycatchers to Black-backed Woodpeckers to Spruce Grouse. We will take several short hikes. Meet at the Post Office in West Glacier at 7 AM. For information or to sign up for the trip, call Bruce Tannehill and Gail Cleveland at 862-4548. A Glacier National Park entrance fee or a Park Pass is required.

SATURDAY, JUNE 28: A MORNING WITH LOONS. This tour will take us to lakes where Common Loons have nested, possibly Bootjack, Tally, Blanchard, Rogers and Lower Stillwater Lakes. We should be able to see loon families with chicks. The Loon Ranger will lead this 3-hour trip. Meet at Fish, Wildlife & Parks on Meridian Road in Kalispell at 8 AM, returning by noon. Plan on going in the Fish, Wildlife & Parks van, or bring a high clearance, all-wheel-drive vehicle if you wish to drive. Call 751-4580 to sign up for the trip.



Fws.fed.us

SATURDAY, JULY 13: A WANDER THROUGH LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Lost Trail is located in the beautiful Pleasant Valley and is a wonderful place to see grassland and riparian birds. Wilson's Snipe, Brewer's Blackbirds and Vesper Sparrows sit on fence posts next to the road and songs of warblers and flycatchers come from thickets beside the road. Dahl Lake, a large shallow lake on the Refuge has breeding populations of Black Terns, Ruddy Ducks, Red-necked, Pied-billed, Horned and Eared Grebes and Sandhill Cranes. We may see Golden and Bald Eagles soaring on the wind as both species breed here. Meet at Fish, Wildlife & Parks on Meridian Road at 6 AM for an exciting day of birding. Contact John Hughes at 261-2506 to sign up for the trip or for more information.



SATURDAY, JULY 19: MONTANA LOON DAY. Montana Loon Society and the Montana Common Loon Working Group need volunteers to help look for and count loons on lakes of northwest Montana. A day spent watching loons can add valuable data to the ongoing study of these wonderful birds. To volunteer, see contacts for each area under the May 17th Loon Census Day listing.

SUNDAY, JULY 20: FLOAT THE FLATHEAD RIVER WITH THE CASEYS. Join Dan and Susannah Casey for a canoe trip from the 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, lifejacket for each person, lunch and raingear. Meet at 9 AM at Kalispell K-Mart parking lot. RSVP to Dan or Susannah at 857-3143.



SATURDAY, JULY 26: WALK THROUGH OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA (OSNA), PART II. This walk through OSNA will focus on basic bird identification; we will look for specific field marks and listen to songs of common birds to help identify each bird. It will be a lovely summer morning stroll to a very special riparian area along the Flathead River. Meet at Montessori School parking area at 8 AM, returning by noon. Call Bob Lopp at 257-6886 for information.



SUNDAY, AUGUST 10: MIGRANT SHOREBIRDS IN THE FLATHEAD VALLEY. This is a unique opportunity to see shorebirds as they begin their migration southward from the Arctic. We may see up to 15 species of shorebirds including dowitchers, phalaropes, yellowlegs and sandpipers. This trip will go to various locations around the Valley and depends on where the migrants may be found. Meet at Tidyman's parking lot at 9 AM. RSVP to Dan Casey at 857-3143.



Bshu.edu



Lee Karney, USFWS

WARBLER WEEKEND IS THE FIRST WEEKEND IN JUNE!



Join FAS and Dan and Susannah Casey the weekend of June 6 - 8 at Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary weekend of birding and relaxing. The group campsite has been reserved for Flathead Audubon. Throughout the weekend, we will be focusing on warbler identification, birding by ear and digi-

scoping. This is an ideal time of the year to find neotropical migrants, including all of the warbler species found in NW Montana. Bring canoes and kayaks, and there is a volleyball court and area for horseshoes, plus numerous hiking trails close to the campground. Cost is \$12 per camper per night. Contact Dan and Susannah at 857-3143 to sign up.



YOUR MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK!



Bird watching and ID, bird workshops, field trips, talks by nationally recognized ornithologists, interacting with young birders from across the country. These are the dreams come true of passionate young birder and Flathead Audubon member, Josh Covill. Flathead Audubon's Board of Directors has awarded Josh a scholarship covering approximately half of the \$800 tuition to the fifth annual Young Birders' Conference in Minot, North Dakota, this summer. Josh is one of our most promising and enthusiastic student members. We are pleased to support his trip and hope he returns with an even bigger trove of information than he already has!



OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA - INVITING AND ALIVE

Monitoring forms are coming in regularly, providing us with good info on bird & plant species, water levels, maintenance needs, etc. Anyone can help: just download and print the form from the FAS website, www.flatheadaudubon.org, enjoy a walk thru OSNA, noting on the form whatever you see, and mail it to the address on the form. Re-member, if you are a paid up member of Flathead Audubon, you do NOT need a State Lands Recreational License to visit OSNA. Enjoy the summer, visit OSNA often, and mark September 27th on your calendar for the Annual OSNA Volunteer Work/Fun Day. Brent Mitchell, OSNA co-chair



FAS Cotton Canvas Bags

We are pleased to announce that two more area businesses will be selling our sturdy cotton canvas bags with our logo, the Pileated Woodpecker, through the month of May. Western Building Center (WBC) is no stranger to the many FAS members who purchased sunflower seeds last winter from this local business. WBC will display our bags in their Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls locations. Withey's Health Foods, located at 1231 S. Main Street, Kalispell, has also generously agreed to help sell our bags. If you have not had an opportunity to shop at Withey's newly remodeled store, please take the time to do so. And while there, be sure to thank Joe Withey for his support.

Bags sell for \$10 and all proceeds will benefit FAS environmental programs.



RAPTOR DAY—DON'T MISS IT!



The 2nd annual Raptor Day in memory of Rod Ash will be September 13th at Lone Pine State Park. There will be bird walks, workshops, educational booths and many more fun family activities. Come and enjoy a day of fun, education and new experiences sponsored by Flathead Audubon Society and Lone Pine State Park! Full details in your September *Pileated Post*!



*HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY TO ALL MOTHERS
and
THANK YOU FOR TEACHING US TO FLY STRAIGHT!
(and to my own mother, Welcome to Your New Home!)*



Support Local Agriculture at Valley Farmers' Markets

When it comes to taste and nutrition, nothing beats fresh produce. And, the freshest produce comes from our local growers. Also by buying your bedding plants, fruits and vegetables at the local Farmers' Markets, you support local farm families and the role of agriculture in our local economy. A diversity of cottage industries provides locally-made arts, crafts, food, and other items at these markets. These venues offer a wonderful chance to network with friends and neighbors, and build community connections.

Another option is to subscribe to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shareholder co-op. As of this writing, there were still subscriptions available for these weekly (May-October) local produce partnerships, with pick-up points in Kalispell, Bigfork and Whitefish. All three CSA farmers are also among the many producers selling directly at the Farmers' Markets.

Bigfork Farmers' Market

8020 Hwy 35 at the Flathead V-8 Car Museum,
north of Sliters Ace Lumber & Building Supply
May 20th through September
Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10:00am-2:00pm
Bruce Solberg: 837-5888



Kalispell Farmers' Market

Kalispell Center Mall at Center St. & 5th Ave. West
April 19th to October 18th
Saturdays, 9:00am-12:30pm
Beverly Medved: 752-3350



Polson Farmers' Market

Masonic Temple
May 9th through mid-October
Fridays, 9:00am-1:00pm
Gladyce Drebes: 675-2855

Whitefish Farmers' Market

Pin & Cue (Bowling Alley) Parking Lot
May 1st through September
Thursdays, 4:00-6:30pm
Joanna Barnes: 862-3451

Whitefish Downtown Farmers' Market

Central Ave. in front of the O'Shaughnessy Cultural Arts Center
May 27th to September 30th
Tuesdays, 5:00pm-7:30pm
Nancy Svenningsen: 862-2043 or 871-9744

CSA Providers:

Swallow Crest Farm: Bigfork/Lakeside
Julian Cunningham: 756-0462

Raven Ridge Farm: Kalispell/Whitefish
Val Edwards: 261-3606

Terrapin Farm: Whitefish
Judy Owsowitz: 862-6263



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. When hanging your hummingbird feeders make sure they are at least 10 feet up and 4 feet out on a branch. 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?
This pamphlet and others are available at MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks in Kalispell



Montana Audubon and the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Chapter host the 2008 Montana Bird Festival at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, June 6-8. The festival will celebrate the tremendous variety of birds found in the area's stream and river bottoms, mountain forests, prairies, and

MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL

wetlands. Field trips include visits to the Pryor Mountains, Pompey's Pillar, Yellowstone River, Audubon's Conservation Education Center, and more. Workshops, such as Beginning Birding, will also be offered. Check Montana Audubon's website for updates on speakers and trips.



Westby Weekend Birding Tour, May 24-28

In conjunction with the 2008 Bird Festival, Montana Audubon offers a birding tour to Westby, migrant warbler capital of Montana, in northeastern Montana. The tour, led by John Shipley and assisted by Steve Hoffman, runs May 24-28, coinciding with peak migration of warblers and shorebirds. To register, call John Shipley at (406) 465-8247 or email at www.KingfisherBirdTours.com.



Jeannie Marcure



6th ANNUAL POTHOLE & PRAIRIE BIRDING FESTIVAL

sponsored by *Birding Drives Dakota*.

June 4-8, 2008, Carrington, North Dakota

Join nationally known birding experts **Bill Thompson III**, and **Julie Zickefoose** of *Bird Watcher's Digest* to explore the prairie pothole region of central North Dakota for the Baird's Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Piping Plover, Ferruginous Hawk, Clark's Grebe, Red-necked Grebe and many more! For complete, detailed festival agenda, go to www.birdingdrives.com/.



John Carlson photo



Attention All Bird Watchers – We Need Your Help!



If you spot common loons this spring, summer, or fall, check them for colored leg band combinations. Observing them for a short time could yield valuable research information. Each leg will have a band; sometimes two on each. Some bands have stripes or dots. Record the color combinations that you see on the right leg and left leg. Record which leg the bands are on and which color band is closest to the body and which is closest to the foot.

A research study coordinated through University of Montana and FWP is in progress studying long-term population trends, migration, and recruitment patterns of adult and juvenile loons in northwest Montana. About 100 loons have been banded to date. Some key questions of the study are: Is our loon population increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Can our population expand? How do loons migrate from wintering areas to Montana? Where exactly do they overwinter? Do young raised in Montana come back to breed here? Much more needs to be learned to ensure the loons' continued success in Montana. In addition, please report:

1. Any breeding activity (observations of pairs and/or young from May to August)
2. Migration concentration areas. Help identify important loon migration staging areas or stopovers during April/May and September/October periods. Reports of loons in groups greater than 4 individuals are helpful. Report observations to Gael Bissell at MT

Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, 406-751-4580 or via email at gbissell@mt.gov.

Family Forestry Expo ... coming soon

The Family Forestry Expo is quickly approaching ... Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11. Each year, Flathead Audubon hosts an exhibit to introduce the general public to the wonder and joy of birds and birding ... mostly just sharing your birding experiences. This will be just before our annual potluck and is a great time to invite folks to join us in

enjoying our feathered friends. Flathead Audubon members are invited to help out. It requires just a couple of hours on either day, then you can enjoy the rest of the Expo. If you would like to help, please contact Sonja Hartmann at 387-4150. Flathead Audubon and the birds thank you!



EMPLOYMENT or ENJOYMENT?

Flathead CORE website, www.flatheadcore.org, has information on job opportunities, including summer internships at Ravenwood, Glacier National Park (with the Citizen Science Loon Project), Montana Conservation Corps Youth Crew Leaders, Glacier Institute Summer Staff, the Waste Not Project, and a permanent Research Education Coordinator position with the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center at Glacier National Park.





Kalispell Toyota Dealership Supports FAS Bag Project

The new ownership of Kalispell Toyota is proud to participate in FAS's efforts to reduce the use of plastic and paper bags. They have generously agreed to purchase several dozen of our cotton canvas tote bags to be given to their customers and employees.

The Kalispell Toyota dealership is pleased to be a part of FAS efforts to improve our environmental community and excited about the Toyota alliance, *Together Green*, with National Audubon.

AUDUBON AND TOYOTA ANNOUNCE FIVE-YEAR ALLIANCE TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION

National Audubon Society and Toyota in March launched a nationwide program called *TogetherGreen*. A \$20 million Toyota grant, the largest Audubon has received in its 103-year history, will fund *TogetherGreen* for five years, enabling Audubon to expand the scope and reach of its internationally-known conservation programs. *TogetherGreen* will have three components:

- **Innovation Grants** to fund dozens of on-the-ground projects each year that engage diverse communities to help achieve measurable land, water and/or energy conservation results.
- **Conservation Fellowships** to train and foster up to 200 promising environmental leaders to serve as role models and organizers for involving new and diverse audiences in effective conservation action.
- **Volunteer Days** at Audubon Centers and other locations nationwide that provide hands-on opportunities to address environmental problems and take part in restoration activities.

Toyota also plans to engage its 36,000 U.S. employees and invite its business partners to join with others, including local Audubon chapters, to develop cooperative conservation projects.

TogetherGreen.org, scheduled to debut soon, will help visitors discover many individual conservation actions to help them independently "green" their lives and provide opportunities to challenge friends to take conservation actions of their own. Visitors will be able to follow the evolving conservation efforts and achievements of *TogetherGreen* projects.



PUT YOUR FAVORITE BIRDS ON THE MAP!

Would you like to enter your bird sightings in the 2010 printing of P.D. Skaar's "MT Bird Distribution, 7th Edition"? You have 2 summers to collect your observations and submit them online. It's so easy, even a techno-phobe like I am can do it! This is one cool site, **loaded** with information. Here's how to enter your bird sightings:

Start at www.mtaudubon.org.

Go to: **Birds & Science.**

Then: **Montana Bird Distribution Online.**

Then: **Montana Bird Distribution Database.** (You will get Natural Heritage Tracker.)

Filter by: **Animals—birds.**

Then: **All Birds.**

Fill out the user profile, submit, and you will be able to access the site within 30 seconds. Try the map layers; they are really good; you can get aerial photos, too. When ready to plug in your sightings, click: **Add Observations**, BINGO! Use the check boxes, it's easy.

Brent Mitchell, computer dummy



SCIENCE TIDBIT

Song Birds and the Forest

Often we are unaware of the gifts we receive from the natural world. An article in the March/April 2008 issue of **BIRDING** magazine describes a study done by Kailen A. Mooney on how growth of ponderosa pine in Colorado is affected by excluding songbirds from the habitat. If you watch Chickadees and Nuthatches foraging through trees, it is obvious that they are finding something to eat. Birds reduce the abundance of aphids by 85 percent with a total reduction of 66 percent of all insects feeding off the tree foliage. The effect is that trees without the help of birds have 34 percent less wood growth. It would be interesting to determine the dollar/year value of the wood that can be attributed to one pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches. Dollar/year = (price of wood/bf)*(average inc. of bf/acre)*(.34)*(average territory of Nuthatch in acres)*(percent of effect caused by Nuthatches)

Primary article by Kailen A. Mooney in **ECOLOGY** 88:2005-2014; "formula" by Bruce Tannehill



TWO MONTANA BIRDS ON THE 2007 WATCHLIST

WatchList 2007, the newest and most scientifically sound list of America's birds at greatest risk, was released in November 2007 by National Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy. The bird species on this list are often rare and limited in range; consequently, they face a more imminent threat of extinction. Forty of these imperiled species spend at least part of the year in Montana. Two of those birds are profiled here:



Interior Least Tern. The Least Tern has suffered both habitat and population losses throughout its range in North America, primarily due to recreational impacts and development of its preferred nesting habitat. The Interior Least Tern is listed as an endangered subspecies by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, due to declines throughout the Mississippi River drainage. Riverine nesting populations are susceptible to nest flooding, and have lost habitat to dams and development. In some areas reservoirs have created suitable beach-nesting habitat. Least Terns in Montana are restricted to the east and northeast along the Missouri River, the lower reaches of the Yellowstone River, islands in Fort Peck Reservoir, and in the Medicine Lake-Plentywood area. In most years the highest numbers of terns nesting (as many as >100) are found on the Missouri River below Fort Peck, with lesser numbers (~25) on the Yellowstone River below Miles City.

Willow Flycatcher. In other portions of the arid West the (Southwestern) Willow Flycatcher has been listed as an endangered species, due primarily to habitat loss and parasitism by cowbirds. Montana populations have not decreased to the same extent, but are susceptible to the same effects of habitat degradation and cowbirds in landscapes dominated by livestock production. ABC and Montana Audubon are working with private ranches, land trusts, state and federal agencies and local watershed groups to restore riparian shrublands and through fencing, planting and grazing agreements.



Dan Casey

For the complete WatchList and details on how to help, visit www.audubon.org. To learn more about Montana Audubon's work protecting these and other species, visit www.mtaudubon.org.

(Hawaii, continued from page 4...) and just maybe a genuine, Hawaiian rarity.



botany.hawaii.edu

At a range of about eight feet the ID is pretty straightforward, but not exactly the field characteristics I imagined for an exotic species. In fact this fellow seems oddly familiar, something of a cross between a rufous-sided towhee and a magpie—shall we say, a towhee on steroids, or, maybe, a downsized magpie—and yet, the song, amplified nicely from only a few feet away, is unmistakably thrush-like.

A quick thumbing through my Golden Guide and our hero fairly leaps off the page: White-rumped shama, family Turdidae, a thrush. "Introduced from Japan to the Hawaiian Islands of Maui and Kauai and now quite common; widely regarded as the most beautiful song of all Hawaiian birds."

Well, that's two out of three: I got my life-lister. I experienced his extraordinary song (and even guessed thrush—or magpie, or towhee). But that day, and all the rest, the illusive Hawaiian endemic species eluded me. In fact, my evening-time perusal of our field guide would read more like statistics than life histories: "Crested honeycreeper, last confirmed sighting 1983 in the vicinity of Mount Waialeale." "Kauai akialoa, may still be a breeding pair in the Alakai Swamp Wilderness." For many native Hawaiian birds, their life histories are obituaries.

But the Islands, nevertheless, are paradise. We can only dream of the ecological perfection, the unblemished beauty, Captain Cook and his band of scalawags would have beheld when they stumbled ashore in 1778, right here on the Napali Coast. Yet for me, even with the full magnitude of modern day imperfections, Kauai is all the paradise I'll ever need, and I will happily return in a heartbeat. Actually I have to. There's a red-eyed vireo with my name on it, and I know exactly where to find him.



Have a Happy Summer, Everyone! Your next Pileated Post will arrive in early September.

From your Editors - - Linda and Kay





MAY 2008



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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. The meeting starts at 7:00PM and includes a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. For membership information or address change, please call Mike Fanning at 862-8070. To receive this newsletter electronically, email your request to: lindawin@centurytel.net. **Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: piledatedpost@flatheadaudubon.org**

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