

New Year's Resolution:
Read *Pileated Post* cover to cover!



CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION FOR NORTHWEST MONTANA LAKES VOLUNTEER MONITORING NETWORK AND JOSH GUBITS



The Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network grew out of two monitoring programs that were previously underway at the Flathead Basin Commission and the Whitefish Lake Institute. The Flathead Basin Commission, in cooperation with the University of Montana Flathead Lake Biological Station, coordinated the Volunteer Lakes Monitoring Program from 1992-2010. This program trained, equipped and supported local volunteers who collected data and reported on over three dozen lakes in the Flathead Basin. In 2007, the Whitefish Lake Institute, in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, established another program to provide local residents an opportunity to collect baseline data that would help determine lake trends and implement early aquatic invasive species detection and prevention in Northwest Montana. In 2010, these programs combined under the direction of Whitefish Lake Institute. This program currently has more than sixty volunteers who monitor a total of fifty locations on forty-one lakes in Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Missoula counties. The lakes in the network represent diversity in public use, accessibility and morphology. Previously, no scientific data had been collected on many of these lakes.

The Volunteer Monitoring Network Program recruits and trains volunteers to monitor water quality, identify and report aquatic invasive species and promote watershed stewardship in Northwest Montana. Volunteers are generally the first responders to a water quality issue or an invasive species sighting. Through the work of the volunteers in the program,



lake data is collected and an annual report is prepared detailing the health and status of these lakes. Volunteer monitoring is a critical component for the early detection of invasive species in the Flathead Basin. Volunteer monitors contribute nearly 1000 hours annually. The program is headed by Josh Gubits, an environmental scientist for Whitefish Lake Institute.

After Josh received his environmental studies degree from the University of Montana, he worked for The Audubon Society to develop education and outreach programs in Santa Fe. Before joining Whitefish Lake Institute, he worked for the Watershed Education Network as the Field Programs Coordinator. Josh spent the last four years teaching more than 10,000 teachers, students and volunteers about water quality, through the collection of chemical, biological and physical data on stream sites across Western Montana. He has been involved in training, coordinating and working with volunteers in several capacities, including water quality monitoring, database management, education, and curriculum development. Josh is a certified Montana Master Naturalist, and in 2009 was the recipient of the Montana Water Teacher of the Year award presented by the Montana Environmental Education Association. Josh and the team at The Institute continue to partner with project FREEFLOW at Whitefish High School in an effort to collect water quality data on local water bodies. Josh and the team also teach outdoor science programs to elementary school students at the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve Interpretive Trail.

By Jill Fanning

JANUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

DON'T FORGET THE KALISPELL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 29! MEET AT THE MONTANA CLUB AT 7 AM! QUESTIONS? CALL DAN CASEY, 756-2681 or 857-3143 or 270-5941

Monday, January 13, 2014: Flathead Audubon General Meeting. Gateway Community Center, United Way Conference Room. Chris Peterson presents program on Glacier Park. See page 3!

Monday, January 6, 2014: FAS Board of Directors Meeting. 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN. All welcome.

Complete list of Winter Activities and Field Trips on Page 6!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Kathy Ross

SWAINSON'S THRUSH – A SONG ABOVE OTHERS

Mid-spring is filled with anticipation for the enchanting, heavenward spiraling song of the male Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) returning each year to our mountain world to breed. This secretive, not often seen, medium-sized Thrush (6"-8" long, 12" wingspan), entertains our sense of hearing during the summer months with its distinctive flute-like song. It cares not if other species enjoy its melodious song, but does hope it will find another of its species somewhere amidst the thick forest canopy it claims as home during the summer months.

Swainson's Thrushes nest in northern and western coniferous forests, preferably in dense thickets along streams. Here the female builds a cup-shaped nest of twigs, mosses and mud where for 10 to 13 days she will care for 3-4 eggs. After the hatching, both parents care for the young until they leave the nest at 10-12 days. Fledged young and adults will spend the rest of their summer in the northern forests of the U.S. and Canada, foraging the understory litter or catching insects on the fly. Their diet includes caterpillars, spruce budworm moths, and worms, plus an assortment of small berries and other fruit, which are a necessary food source later in the summer during a long migration south. Even though the haunting breeding song may not be heard during their trip south, their illusive presence is still made known by two very distinct, single-note calls, a 'whit' and a 'peep.'

Being very much a shy forest bird, the Swainson's Thrush is rarely found far from a closed canopy of evergreen or deciduous woodlands. In these settings they can easily be mistaken for two of the other mountain-breeding spotted thrush, Hermit Thrush and

Veery, which are similar in appearance and song. The Swainson's is a little more slender-bodied, longer-winged thrush and has large buffy eye-rings extending to the front of the eye, which give it the appearance of wearing "spectacles." Along with vocal differences, these "spectacles" are a useful field mark for identification.

Besides similar thrush species, research has



Greg Lavaty

revealed four subspecies of Swainson's Thrush. The two most discussed are the Russet-backed, found mostly breeding in the Pacific coastal areas, and the more widely distributed eastern/northern continental birds called Olive-backed Swainson's Thrush, more commonly known to breed east of the Cascades/Sierra Nevada. These two genetically distinct subspecies vary slightly in appearance--Russet-backed with medium-brown upperparts and Olive-backed with a dull olive-gray back. Both populations have pale underparts with spotted chests and always seem to wear their "spectacles."

The following discussion from recent research by Kristen Ruegg and colleagues, noted in the Wikipedia article on Swainson's, suggests how these subspecies might have evolved and how these changes might be affecting current impacts on this Nearctic-Neotropical migrant.

"The genetic differences between the subspecies, and the circuitous migratory route of the continental birds, strongly suggest that these species underwent a rapid range expansion following the end of the last ice age, with populations originally summering in the southeast of North America expanding their ranges northwards and westwards as the ice retreated. Details of the molecular genetic analysis support the hypothesis of rapid expansion of both coastal and continental populations. Current migratory routes of the continental birds, especially the western populations, are not optimal in ecological terms, and presumably represent an inherited, historical route pattern that has not yet adapted to the birds' modern population locations."

These results notwithstanding, genetic testing suggests that "Swainson's Thrush is the most ancient North American species of its genus; it is not closely related to other *Catharus*, and the outward similarities with the other North American species are due to [convergent evolution](#)." (Winker & Pruett, 2006)

Our Swainson's travel thousands of miles a year from far northern breeding grounds to forested habitats of Mexico and Central and South America. Traveling up to 200 miles at a time, mostly at night and often along with other migrating songbirds, they tend to fly low and may encounter many obstacles along the way. *(continued on page 4)*





January Program

BIRDING IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

Adventures in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park

Flathead Audubon's first meeting of 2014 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act with photographs by Chris Peterson. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act of 1964 in September of that year. The Act created the legal definition of wilderness and a national system to preserve it:

"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

During the summer of 2013, Chris hiked 130 miles in the "Bob," plus more trails in Glacier National Park. Now we armchair travelers have the opportunity

to enjoy new photographs of birds and wilderness places that Chris has seen since we visited with him last March. Photographer for the *Hungry Horse News* and publisher of the online journal *Glacier Park Magazine*, Chris has been photographing the backcountry for 16 years. He will also offer practical advice for hiking and biking in the back country.

Please join us at 7 PM on Monday, January 13, for further Adventures (with Chris) in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park! We meet in the United Way Conference Room at the Gateway Community Center on US Highway 2 West in Kalispell. The Conference Room is accessed from the parking lot on the west side of the Center. Just look for the lighted Flathead Audubon banner!

THANK YOU!

to all who have sent a year-end donation to Flathead Audubon

Your generosity in support of the FAS Conservation Education Program will be matched by the FAS Board challenge donations, so will go an even longer way towards allowing us to continue providing free nature education to the students and adults of the Flathead Valley.

There is still time if you have not yet sent a year-end donation to help with this effort. Please send your contribution, along with your name and address, to:

Bruce Tannehill
Treasurer, Flathead Audubon Society
239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937

Be sure to tell Bruce if you do **not** wish to have your gift acknowledged publically.

West Valley Naturalists' January program is scheduled for the **SECOND** Thursday (January 9) this month because of the winter school holiday. Ken Swanstrom, West Valley resident and independent logger, will talk about Forestry in the West Valley area. Meet at 7 PM at the school library, 2290 Farm to Market Road. All are welcome. For more information please contact Scott Wheeler, 755-0003.

A bird may burn off up to 15% of its body weight to stay warm on a cold winter night.



Thank You!

to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon from October 18 through December 18, 2013

Merlin

Carol Burgoa and James Gonsman
In memory of Viki Clark Hoveland

Kestrel

Duane Klarich
In honor of Stephen Regele
Richmond and Sarah Thomason

Supporting Member + donation

Milt and B.J. Carlson
Ms. Karen N. Chickering
Jennifer Graham
Joaquinia Heinrich
In memory of Muriel Callaghan
Suzanne Daniell Hildner
Lance Logan
P. T. McClelland
Mr. Charles A. McCarty
Mary Nelesen
Marcia & Bob O'Neil
Bill Schustrom
Randy Schwickert & Donna Taylor
Dawn Walker
Raylene Wall



CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

From

Kay Mitchell for the Flathead Audubon Board



Highlights from December 2013 Board Meeting:

- ◆ Voted to accept new policy on sexual harassment.
 - ◆ Heard reports regarding grants received and applied for.
 - ◆ Approved a \$500 grant to Jeff Marks for final preparation of *Birds of Montana*.
 - ◆ Voted to donate \$300 to United Way campaign in lieu of room rent for 2013-14 year.
 - ◆ Learned that Flathead Audubon has 438 members, with 152 also joining as local chapter members.
- Full minutes of every Flathead Audubon Board meeting are printed on Flathead Audubon's website, www.flatheadaudubon.org, after they are officially accepted at the following month's meeting. Click on "About Us," then "Board Meeting Minute Archives." Take a look!

Highlights of MT Audubon December 7, 2013 Board Meeting

(Prepared by Steve Hoffman)

- ◆ Ron Farmer, retired CEO of First Security Bank and former Treasurer of the Sacajawea Audubon chapter in Bozeman, was unanimously elected to the MT Audubon Board.
- ◆ Finance Committee reported that a substantial budget deficit seemed likely this fiscal year due to the passing of a major donor and likely decreases anticipated in giving levels from other major donors and a private foundation; several fiscal policy amendments and new fiscal policies were approved.
- ◆ Development Committee asked each chapter rep to take a license plate poster to their monthly meeting to promote the MT Audubon license plate (to help provide additional revenue for MT Audubon); they also encouraged Board members to consider "planned gifts" to MT Audubon to help build MT Audubon's endowments and take advantage of the federal tax deduction and Montana's generous 40% state tax credit.
- ◆ The Board approved various additional new and amended policies, and also approved a Restoration Master Plan for the Audubon Center.
- ◆ Abby Weimer, MT Audubon's new Office Manager, and Amy Seaman, MT Audubon's new Bird Conservation Associate, introduced themselves to the Board, summarized their respective backgrounds, and expressed their great excitement to be working for MT Audubon.
- ◆ Location for the 2015 Bird Festival was discussed; Choteau was a preferred option if facilities in Choteau can accommodate us, and if Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon Society (Great Falls) is enthused about helping to plan and support the festival.

Swainson's Thrush, continued from page 2...

Sibley notes, "In Indiana, Swainson's Thrushes are the most common migrants killed in collisions with windows and buildings."

Although Swainson's Thrush has the conservation status of Least Concern, many areas note a decline in their numbers from habitat loss as well as an increase in human-made obstacles across their migration routes. Those inherited route patterns take some populations across the entire continental U.S. and then south to Central and South America. Statistics notwithstanding, our NW Montana forests seem filled with their song and calls during spring and summer.

Recent research out of universities in Ohio and Pennsylvania suggests that during this long migration they "take numerous daytime 'power naps', lasting only a few seconds." By sleeping with only one eye closed, it seems they can rest half their brain, keeping the other half alert for danger.

Again, I am awestruck by the feats of our long distance traveling songbirds, and, more than ever, I will appreciate and thrill to the haunting song of the male Swainson's Thrush when it flits through the forest outside my back door after what is to me an epic journey.

REFERENCES



Chipper Woods Bird Observatory allaboutbirds.org
<http://palumbi.stanford.edu/PeoplePages/kristen.html> ebird.org
whatbird.com birdnote.org
beakingoff.wordpress.com Sibley guides
 Wikipedia



SUMMARY OF FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY'S STRATEGIC SURVEY OF MEMBERS

From Gael Bissell

Background

In February 2013, the FAS Board agreed to send out a strategic planning questionnaire to about 400 Flathead Audubon Society (FAS) members as well as others who are familiar with FAS, via an on-line tool called Survey Monkey. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to have our members or other partners help the board decide the future direction of FAS over the next 5 years. The board put a brief article about the survey in the April Pileated Post newsletter, included the survey link on our FAS website, and emailed a reminder to about 100 members who receive the FAS newsletter by email. We reminded folks to complete the questionnaire at the April 12 FAS public meeting and gave hard copies of the questionnaire to those who attended the May Potluck Meeting in Whitefish.

Results

We received 48 surveys through Survey Monkey and 11 hard copy surveys from the May potluck, for a total of 59 returned surveys. The 59 surveys represent about 15% of the total membership; however, the 59 represent about ½ of the active members and friends of FAS who attend regular meetings or board meetings. About 95% of the respondents were FAS members and 28% were also members of National Audubon.

Strategic Questions

Three questions asked respondents to rate numerous ideas or categories on a **scale of 1-4 (e.g., low to high)**. We averaged all responses and ranked them from high to low.

Q2. Please rate your experience with the following Flathead Audubon sponsored activities over the last 2 years.

Moderately To Highly Rated

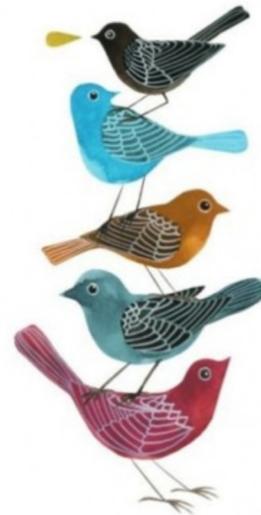
1. Pileated Post (3.38)
2. Monthly Program (2.85)
3. Birding Field Trips (2.54)
4. FAS website (1.98)
5. May Potluck Meeting and OSNA work day (1.93)

Moderately Rated Activities

6. Annual Bird Festival (1.74)
7. OSNA visit day (1.73)
8. Fund-raising solicitation (1.65)
9. Purchased materials at FAS meeting (1.57)
10. Jewel Basin Hawk Watch (1.37)
11. Monthly Board meeting (1.27)
12. Beauty of Birds (1.17)

Lowest Rated activities (number of responses low)

13. School/Student Project with Ashley Mason (0.93)
14. Family Forestry Expo (0.62)
15. Rod Ash Memorial Raptor Day event (0.54)



Q3. Flathead Audubon members undertake many activities to promote our mission. Of the following activities that we do or could undertake, tell us how high a priority you think that activity should be for our Chapter during the next 5 years.

Highly Rated Activities

1. Monthly Program (3.19)
2. Conserve Habitat (3.16)
3. Maintain 1-2 field trips/month (3.05)
4. Maintain Access to OSNA (3.05)
5. Provide K-12 Education Program (3.02)

Moderately Rated Priorities

6. Direct more conservation/education to underserved (2.85)
7. Support Hawk Watch (2.72)
8. Increase Advocacy on local issues (2.72)
9. Collect more data for IBAs (2.63)



Lower Rated Priorities

10. Assist federal wildlife refuges/WPAs (2.49)
11. Support Local Citizen Science (2.44)
12. Increase statewide/national advocacy (2.40)
13. Provide technical services for private landowners (2.32)
14. Increase # and diversity of field trips (2.31)
15. Provide bird banding opportunities for youth and adults (2.22)
16. Hold large annual fundraising event (2.13)
17. Develop Educational Center (1.78)



Q4. Each year Flathead Audubon raises about \$21,000 to support our K-12 Conservation/Education program that is provided at no cost to area schools. Significant funding from one of our supporting foundations has recently been eliminated. Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements that propose funding options.

Agree to Strongly Agree

1. Annual appeal (2.57)
2. Business solicitations (2.54)
3. Custom bird calendar (2.38)
4. Endowment (2.29)
5. Raffles/sales at meetings (2.11)

Somewhat Agree

6. Grants/foundations (1.93)
7. Charge for Beauty of Birds (1.91)
8. Private landowner requests (1.80)
9. Charge admission to large event (1.74)
10. Reduce \$ to K-12 to match income (1.71)
11. Large Annual Auction (1.70)

Do Not Agree

12. Eliminate K-12 program (1.25)



Q5. If you read the Pileated Post, how do you primarily receive or get access to our newsletter?

1. By email (72%)
2. Printed copy in mail (19%)
3. Printed copy from others (5%)
4. Electronic copy from friends (5%)
5. I do not read Pileated Post (2%)
6. From FAS website (2%)



nationalgeographic 2010

Q6. Flathead Audubon annual membership dues are \$20/individual and family and entitle members to 9 issues of the Pileated Post (Sept-May). The dues cover primarily printing and distribution expenses. Would you be willing to pay higher annual dues to help fund other Flathead Audubon priorities? If so, how much of an annual dues increase would you be comfortable paying?

1. Increase by \$5/yr (41%)
2. Increase by \$10/yr (26%)
3. Increase by \$25/yr (15%)
4. Increase by \$15/yr (9%)
5. Increase by \$20/yr (4%)
6. No, I would not want to pay any more in dues (7%)



birds.com

Conclusions

The board has reviewed the results and we have begun to incorporate some of these results into future planning, particularly fund-raising activities and educational program awareness. We greatly appreciate everyone's input! We are also pleased that there is so much support for our newsletter, field trips, Owen Sowerwine, and our Education Program.

BIRDS and WIND COLLIDE

I wanted you to be aware of my opinion piece that was published in *Politico* on Monday that the editors entitled, "[Don't Throw Bald Eagles Under the Bus](#)," as well as Tuesday's *New York Times* story, "[A Struggle to Balance Wind Energy with Wildlife](#)." It's a fair and thoughtful look at the Department of the Interior's failure to accept a deal that would have protected eagles while supporting renewable energy deployment. Our focus is squarely on the regulators--not on the wind companies or other conservation partners. Here are the key points as you continue to field questions from constituents and allies:

- ◆ Audubon supports strong federal protection for the Bald Eagle, America's national symbol, and the majestic Golden Eagle under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- ◆ Audubon strongly supports properly-sited wind power as a renewable energy source that helps reduce the threat posed to birds and people by climate change: <http://policy.audubon.org/wind-power-overview-0>
- ◆ We took a pragmatic, results-oriented approach to reach an agreement with the wind industry that would have protected eagles and supported renewable energy deployment. We did the hard work of finding a real solution.
- ◆ But DOI issued a bad rule that won't prevent the killing of eagles even while it creates potential roadblocks for renewables deployment. We don't think that's acceptable, and we're putting all options on the table to oppose the rule: <http://bit.ly/19fcpgf>

I know you are all active on the local level advocating for meaningful changes to wind development projects to minimize impacts to birds and habitat. And now it is time to take it to the federal level. We are asking our members, supporters and advocates to send a message to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell [online through Audubon's Action Center](#) or by mail to Secretary Sally Jewell, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington DC 20240. Thanks for all you do--for birds and for the world we share.

David Yarnold
President & CEO
National Audubon Society



First Prosecution of Wind Company for Killing Birds

November 22, 2013

The Department of Justice (DOJ) announced a settlement on the prosecution of Duke Energy's wind developments in Wyoming in connection with the deaths of 14 Golden Eagles and 149 other protected birds, amounting to \$1 million in fines and mitigation actions. This is the first prosecution of a wind company in connection with bird mortality.

"This is a welcome action by DOJ and one that we have long anticipated," said Dr. George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy (ABC),

a longtime advocate for stronger federal management of the wind industry. "Wind energy is not 'green' if it is killing hundreds of thousands of birds. We are pro-wind and pro-alternative energy, but [development needs to be Bird Smart](#). The unfortunate reality is that the flagrant violations of the law seen in this case are widespread." See <http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/131122.html> for more information.



SPOTTED OWL HABITAT AT RISK

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, plus a coalition of forest and wildlife conservation groups have called on the Obama administration to implement measures in the final Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan to protect post-fire forest habitats and structures used by the threatened owls and their prey. The November 21 letter notes that "action is needed as a result of legislative proposals, such as HR 1526, that would expedite post-disturbance logging and because of projects currently being considered by federal agencies." HR 1526 was passed by the House and similar legislation, S. 1479, has been introduced in the U.S. Senate.

"Plans to boost post-fire logging in Spotted

Owl habitat ignore best-available science and would cause harm to old-growth forests," said Steve Holmer, senior policy advisor with American Bird Conservancy. "Government scientists have concluded that in order to recover the rapidly declining Northern Spotted Owl population, protection is needed for forest structures created by fires, such as large standing dead trees that are used by the owls to nest in," he said.

[An October 31 letter to Congress](#), endorsed by 250 scientists says, "legislation to expedite post-disturbance logging is inconsistent with the current state of scientific knowledge, and would seriously undermine the ecological integrity of forest ecosystems on federal lands."

CABIN FEVER?



HERE'S YOUR FAS OUTDOOR WINTER GUIDE!

JANUARY FIELD TRIPS

Mission Valley Birding Trip, Sunday, January 12, 2014

Flathead Audubon starts the New Year by inviting you on our annual **Mission Valley** field trip to look for hawks, waterfowl and other winter residents. Please Sign Up Early! We encourage car-pooling and will limit space to 6-7 vehicles. Meet Leslie Kehoe and Bob Lee at Somers Park-N-Ride at 8 AM to bird along Flathead Lake, through Polson and south in the Mission Valley. If folks from the Polson or Mission Valley area would like to join us, meet at the Polson McDonald's, but please call for the meeting time. Bring lunch, warm clothes, optics, and New Year's cheer! We'll return in late afternoon. To sign up, call Leslie or Bob at 406-837-4467 after 5 PM. All ages and birding abilities are welcome!

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

In February, a field trip is planned in the **Flathead Valley or Ninepipes area**. Watch for details in the February *Pileated Post* or check the Flathead Audubon website www.FlatheadAudubon.org.

Also, in mid-February, there will be a field trip in the Bigfork and surrounding area for **The Great Backyard Bird Count**. The world is now our backyard, so although we do count at our feeders, we will also explore other local areas for winter avian residents. Details in the February *Pileated Post* and on our website.

If snow conditions cooperate, we will again arrange a ski/snowshoe trip to **Jewel Basin Ski area or Swan Refuge**. To get on the list for one of these more spontaneous field trips, email Kathy Ross at mtkat@montanaport.net.
From Gael Bissell and Kathy Ross, Field Trip Co-Chairs



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK WINTER SNOWSHOE WALKS

Saturday & Sunday, January 11 to March 22, 2014 at 10:30 AM & 2:00 PM

Explore Glacier National Park on a two-hour ranger-led snowshoe walk and take an intimate look at the park in winter. Search for signs of wildlife, discover the plants and animals of the park, and enjoy the solitude of winter during this unique experience. Not recommended for children under age 6. Meet at Apgar Visitor Center. Participants may use their own snowshoes or rent snowshoes for a nominal fee at the Visitor Center. Snowshoe rentals are also available in neighboring communities.

If you have questions regarding this offering, please call 406-888-7800 or visit [Snowshoe Walks](#).

Winter Trails Day

January 11, 2014, 9 AM - ? Blacktail Mountain Cross Country Ski Trail (Free of charge)

This is a great opportunity to get your family outdoors! There will be free snowshoe use, and winter trail interpretation provided by the Forest Service and Flathead Audubon Society. Bring snacks and water. Contact Teresa at Flathead National Forest [406-758-5218](tel:406-758-5218) twenum@fs.fed.us for more information.

**The Great Backyard Bird Count February 14-17, 2014**

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. GBBC checklists can be accepted from anywhere in the world! Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event.

It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see for the GBBC photo contest.

Why count birds?

Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. Scientists use the GBBC information, along with observations from other citizen-science

projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations and to investigate far-reaching questions, like these:

- How will the weather influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other "irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.



**FOR YOUR CALENDAR: Wings Across the Big Sky
June 6-8, 2014, Bozeman, Montana**



The time has arrived! ... to begin planning and spreading the word that **Montana Audubon's Wings Across the Big Sky Festival, co-hosted by Sacajawea Audubon Society**, is June 6-8 in Bozeman. We anticipate a fantastic turnout, but as always, not without your help and enthusiasm. Invite your out-of-state friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit the Gallatin Valley and surrounding areas where you can participate in abundant festival activities.

Included in this year's activities are close to 20 field trips scheduled each of two days. These include trips into Gallatin and Madison Valleys, grasslands, wetlands, forest and field, some local flair, with the excitement of seeing a varied array of species.

We are also looking forward to festival artwork by Andrew Guttenberg, a local Bozemanite. He will be featuring a male Calliope Hummingbird in the bright sun at the top of a foothills thicket, with the Bridger Mountains in the background.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Best Western GranTree Inn at 1325 North Seventh in Bozeman. Sacajawea Audubon has been working

with us and the GranTree team on event logistics and service, and we are very pleased to know this venue is going to supply us with excellent opportunities to host an expanded display area, concurrent Saturday afternoon presentations, a fun Friday night festival kickoff event hosted by Sacajawea Audubon, our keynote speaker, and a Saturday evening banquet dinner.

We are particularly pleased to announce that John Marzluff, Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington, will be our keynote speaker on Saturday afternoon. His research on the social behavior and ecology of crows and ravens highlights the exceptional intelligence of this avian family known to recognize human faces. John is the author of more than 100 scientific papers, and his book written with Tony Angell, *In the Company of Crows and Ravens*, blends biology, conservation, and anthropology to suggest that human and crow cultures have co-evolved.

For more information contact Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson at cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

FLATHEAD AUDUBON CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Some Activities from November

- * Set up program for Kalispell Public Library; contacted Whitefish Public Library for dates for programs.
- * Checked out Owls of Montana Trunk and Snowy Owl Trunk; used by 60 students.
- * Launched Audubon Families Program with first event—family nature hike in Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.
- * Provided curriculum assistance to teachers and area educators, including homeschool association.
- * Represented FAS at MT Environmental Education Association meeting.
- * Helped teachers at West Valley School write article on their native plant garden.



One thing about snow - it makes your yard look as good as your neighbor's.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER
OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.



Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904-9173

JANUARY 2014



Non-Profit Org.
Postage Paid
Permit No. 115
Kalispell, MT
59904-9173

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. Meetings start at 7:00PM and include 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: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Ashley Mason: AudubonAshley@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

Table with 4 columns: Position, Name, Email, Phone Number. Includes President Bob Lopp, Vice-President Kay Mitchell, Secretary Marylane Pannell, Treasurer Bruce Tannehill, and Past-President Paula Smith.

DIRECTORS

Table with 4 columns: Term, Name, Email, Phone Number. Lists directors from 2013-2016 to 2013-2014.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Table with 4 columns: Committee, Name, Phone Number, Website. Lists chairs for Christmas Bird Count, Conservation, Education, Field Trips, Finance, Hospitality, Membership, Owen Sowerwine, Nominations, Program, Publicity, Sales, and Refuges.



MONTANA AUDUBON
P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
443-3949
www.MTAudubon.org
Executive Director: Steve Hoffman
shoffman@mtaudubon.org
Board President: Fred Weisbecker
443-4229



FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership
Individual or Family

- Basic Membership \$20
Supporting Membership \$35
Additional Donation of \$
to Education Fund
Owen Sowerwine Fund
Wherever needed

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ - _____

Email _____

How do you wish to receive the Pileated Post?
Electronic copy/email [] Paper copy/U.S. mail []

Mail this form with your check to:
Flathead Audubon Society Membership
20 Hanson Doyle Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937