



Lisa Flowers—New Conservation Educator

Flathead Audubon is pleased to announce that Lisa Blood Flowers has been contracted to be our Conservation Educator starting January 1, 2016.

Lisa was born in Richmond, Virginia, and moved to Golden, Colorado at the age of five where her father attended the Colorado School of Mines. She and her family moved to the Flathead Valley, where she attended Flathead High School and Flathead Valley Community College. Her education includes earning a bachelor's degree in botany, masters in science teaching, and certification as a Montana science – biology, earth science, general science – educator.

In 2007, Lisa earned her Ph.D. in Forestry & Conservation at the University of Montana, Missoula, while working as the Director of Conservation Education for the Boone and Crockett Club on their Rocky Mountain Front ranch west of Dupuyer. For over 20 years her work has focused on teaching K-12 science, conservation and wildlife education primarily in the outdoors. She also served as coordinator for several regional and collaborative outreach entities: the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium, the Roundtable of Crown of the Continent, and the Front Range Conservation Education Consortium. She has served as a volunteer on many boards, working groups and councils such as the Old Trail Museum, Choteau Performing Arts League, MFWP Region 4



Citizen Advisory Council, Montana Environment, Montana Environmental Education Association, and the Private Lands Public Wildlife Council.

Lisa has received many awards for her work from groups such as Montana Wildlife Federation (1998), Montana Environmental Education Association (1999), USDA Forest Service Northern Region (1999), Montana Project WET—Water Education for Teachers (2004), and Montana Audubon's Environmental Educator of the Year (2009).

Lisa is now living in the Flathead Valley, guest teaching in the Kalispell and Whitefish School Districts, and working as Flathead Audubon's Conservation Educator. When she isn't working in the education and conservation fields, she can be

found in the outside enjoying what she loves - hiking, biking, birding, boating, skiing, horseback riding, hunting, gardening with a glint in her eyes and a smile from ear to ear because she is so fortunate to be able to do these activities with family and friends year round in Montana and beyond!

As you can see, Lisa is highly qualified for this new partnership with Flathead Audubon, and brings with her a lifetime of creative efforts in exactly this kind of work. We are extremely excited, and looking forward to years of improving and growing our Conservation Education efforts under her leadership.

By Denny Olson, FAS Education Committee Chair



JANUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, January 11, 2016. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

Monday, January 4, 2016. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Sunday, January 3, 2016. Kalispell Christmas Bird Count, contact Pete Fisher at 406-250-9624.

Saturday, January 30, 2016. Winter Animal Tracking at Owen Sowerwine. See page 6.

Saturdays & Sundays, January 9 thru March 20, 2016. Explore Glacier National Park on Snowshoes. See page 6.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Peregrine Falcon: Speeding from the Brink

By Denny Olson

My first experience with a Peregrine Falcon was on a 35-day canoe trip through Arctic tundra. I was on the lip of a tall cliff, armed with a telephoto lens, and a Peregrine was repeatedly passing my vantage point at eye-level, with deep wing beats and incredible speed. I remember being well into my second roll of film before realizing that I was the reason for the fly-bys – that there was probably a nest just below me. I exited, a bit embarrassed at my density. Later, the developed film, shot at a high shutter speed, still showed nothing but blur. They are fast.

Falco peregrinus, slightly smaller than a crow, with very pointed wings and a dead-giveaway dark “moustache”, comes in three North American sub-species, all of which can show up around the Flathead at different times of the year. *Falco peregrinus anatum*, our resident nester, has a medium-gray back and rustier breast than the others; *F. p. tundrius*, the arctic nester, is lighter in color and larger (Bergmann’s rule: larger size at higher latitudes); and *F. p. pealei*, on the Pacific coast, is darker than the others to the point that the moustache looks like the lower part of a black football helmet (Gloger’s rule: darker coloration in areas of higher relative humidity).

The name “peregrine” means “wanderer”. Arctic-nesting Peregrines migrate some 15,000 miles annually. But, just to throw a curve to those who generalize, some on the Pacific Coast and in the Aleutian Islands hunt near their nest site year-round.

Peregrine charisma, of course, comes from their “need for speed”. When cruising or migrating, they move at a modest 35 to 40 miles per hour. When pursuing aerial prey on the horizontal (small to medium birds are their staple), they can crank it up to 70 mph. But the after-burners don’t really kick in until they hunt from more than a half-mile high, and “stoop” on unsuspecting prey. In a moderate dive of a mere 150 mph, they assume a diamond shape, but when they tuck their wings tightly and elongate themselves – assuming they have nearly a mile to drop – they accelerate to terminal velocity in the 200 mph range. “Fastest self-propelled

creature on Planet Earth” is not a bad claim to fame.

With these aerobatic capabilities, peregrines use a variety of final approaches, from blasting into the bird and knocking it senseless, to harassing it until it almost can’t fly from sheer exhaustion. Most of the time, they level out at ridiculous speed straight behind the prey, close distance, grab it with talons and sever neck vertebrae with their beak – so quickly it can only be seen in slow motion video.

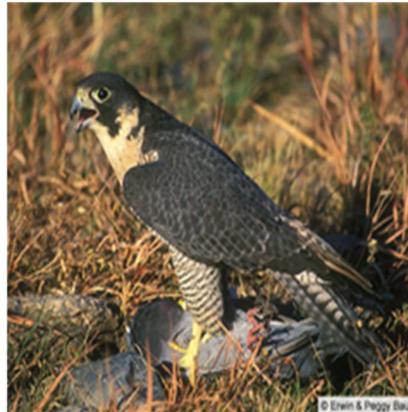
Peregrines have eyes that are permanently focused for near vision in the center of their retina – the foveal area. Their best distance vision is actually located around the center fovea, so when they spot prey a mile away, they have to tilt their heads up, down, or to the side.

When diving, that tilt of the head would drop their speed, and ability to close distance, considerably. So, they actually dive toward distant prey in a gradually tightening spiral, keeping their distance vision on the movements of prey. That way, their heads can remain in the straight-ahead posture, increasing the speed of the stoop. Even though their path to the prey is longer, they get there sooner!

Peregrines are one of the most widely distributed creatures on Earth. Aside from the Amazon basin and the Sahara, they are almost everywhere. One would think that eclectic tastes in habitat and food choices were a recipe for abundance. Not so. Peregrines, in the early seventies and eighties, became the poster child for the endangered species act. Even though their populations were reduced by 75%, they

were probably never technically “endangered” because of their widespread range. The real importance of the Peregrine story is how agricultural practices in Kazakhstan or Iowa can affect worldwide populations. DDT sprayed in the Argentine Pampas can cause thin eggshell syndrome in Arctic tundra birds. Bioaccumulation of persistent chemicals in a food chain can magnify toxins by quadrillions. And, *everything* is, always was, and always will be, connected to everything else.

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January Program

WILDLIFE RESEARCH IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Wildlife biologist Lisa Bate will discuss recent and ongoing wildlife research projects in Glacier National Park at our January 11 meeting. She will place a special emphasis on birds and bats.

Lisa oversees the wildlife and compliance monitoring program along the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park during its reconstruction phase. This focuses mainly on preventing detrimental effects on the grizzly bear. She also manag-



Lisa Bate (on left) with other bat researchers.

es several research, inventory and monitoring projects in the park, with special emphasis on bats, Harlequin Ducks and Black Swifts. Prior to her employment in Glacier National Park, Lisa worked as a private research wildlife biologist, focusing mainly on birds, cavity-nesting species and their habitat.

We look forward to seeing you at the first meeting of the New Year at 7 PM on Monday, January 11. We meet in the United Way Conference Room at the Gateway Community Center, off US Highway 2 West in Kalispell.



“Three levels” of Audubon

By David Cronenwett

Development Specialist with Montana Audubon

When I tell people I work for Montana Audubon, I often get a response like, “That’s great, I’m a member of the Audubon Society.” I then ask if they are also a member of *Montana Audubon*, and they come back with a quizzical, “Isn’t that the same thing?” There is sometimes confusion when the word “Audubon” is used in an organization’s name so with this in mind, I’d like to take a moment to explain the “three levels” of Audubon.

In 1976, the local National Audubon chapters in Montana came together to establish an independent organization that could deal directly with important conservation issues across the state. Perhaps this was done because of Montana’s physical remoteness and cultural distance from the National Audubon office in New York City. At the time, chapter leaders were especially interested in affecting policy change by lobbying the Montana Legislature. Thus, Montana Audubon, an independent entity from both National Audubon and its local chapters, was born.

While each “Audubon” shares nearly identical mission statements, they play different roles on the broader conservation stage. National Audubon frequently deals with issues on a continental, even global scale such as climate change and long-distance flyways. They also carry the heavy political clout one

would expect from a big, century-old organization.

Local chapters of National Audubon, such as **Flathead Audubon Society**, tend to engage in very-localized conservation projects as well as education and outreach efforts. Montana Audubon’s niche in the “Audubon family” is somewhere in the middle; through our conservation policy, bird science and education programs, we seek to protect the wildlife and landscape qualities that we all cherish about our magnificent state.

In short, National Audubon, Montana Audubon and local chapters of National Audubon are *independent nonprofit organizations*. That said, we often work cooperatively, share data, information and occasionally even financial resources. Montana Audubon for example, in addition to other fundraising, receives a small percentage of membership dues from the chapters on a voluntary basis. It works in the other direction as well, with Montana Audubon contributing expertise and staff time to chapter-level projects.

Though a bit confusing, all three “levels” of Audubon fill important niches in working toward the goal of bird and habitat conservation. If you have further questions about the work of Montana Audubon, please feel free to contact David Cronenwett at david@mtaudubon.org.

Join Flathead Audubon Directly

As described on page 3, in addition to National Audubon and Montana Audubon, there is the Flathead Audubon Society which produces this newsletter. In 2003 we began offering an option to join Flathead Audubon directly. The purpose of this membership was, and is, to help fund our newsletter, conservation programs, and especially our education program. Flathead Audubon is the only chapter in Mon-

tana which has a half time conservation educator under contract. This costs \$26,000 per year which is nearly 2/3 of our budget. To fund this we apply for several grants, sell calendars, receive donations, and use your local dues. Please continue your local membership to fund this important activity.

By Mike Fanning

From the Board

By Director Jim Rychwalski

One of my passions in life is to travel. Recently we took a trip to the Idaho panhandle and Lake Pend Oreille in late October staying in Hope. It is the largest lake in Idaho and the 38th largest lake by area in the United States at 1,150 feet (350 m) deep in some regions, making it the fifth deepest in the United States. When I choose a destination I always try to plan it being close to National Parks or National Wildlife Refuges with plans to visit. In this case it was the Kootenai National Refuge in Bonners Ferry 20 miles south of the Canadian border. The 2774 acre refuge provides habitat for more than 220 species of birds, 45 species of mammals, and 22 species of fish. Although our list of sightings was limited due to the time of year there were large flocks of Canadian Geese, American Wigeon, American Coots, Mallards, and golden eye along with Bald Eagles and Clark's Grebes on the lake along with several birds in the refuge too numerous to list in this article. In the refuge one of the five hiking trails leads to Myrtle Creek Falls where the Black Swift is reported to reside.

Aside from taking in the scenery and wildlife I find that I always walk away with some interesting new information that continues to peak my interest in the great outdoors. In this case it was some facts about avian migration and Sandhill Cranes.

Ducks vary in their flying abilities. Mallards will fly 400 miles without stopping if necessary while pintails can fly well over 2000 miles nonstop. Waterfowl often fly very high when migrating over long distances. Pilots have reported seeing flocks of Mallards at

21,000 feet. Ducks have been clocked at over 60 mph; however, their average flight speed during migration is about 35 mph. Sandhill Cranes of which there are five subspecies according to most authorities fly at 30-50 mph, travel approximately 350 miles a day with some traveling over 10,000 miles annually at altitudes of 3,000 – 5,000 feet. Young cranes are called colts, adult females mares and adult males are roans.

Two other interesting facts on the area. I was not aware that there are a small group of woodland caribou found in the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho and northern Washington. Also the Kootenai tribe of Idaho operates a Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot hatchery in Bonners Ferry. Sturgeon are an amazing fish possibly having persisted over 250 million years. The Kootenai River population is small with a few individuals known to exceed 350 pounds and 10 feet in length. While they may live as long as humans, females require about 30 years to mature. The sturgeon was federally listed as endangered in 1994. Another fish hatchery we visited was run by Fish and Wildlife in Clarks Fork where they propagate king salmon, Kookanee salmon and Gerrard Kamloops which is a genetically superior strain of redband rainbow trout.

With over 550 national refuges, 58 national parks along with state parks and being so enamored with the mysteries of the natural world and my ongoing desire to understand the intricacies of nature my only frustration with all this is that my bucket list continues to grow.

Attention Photographers!

Are you a photographer who would like to help conservation through your photography? Flathead Audubon is always looking for great photography to use in newsletters, on the website, through social media, in calendars, etc to help spread its conservation message. With all of our talented members out there, we thought, why not ask our local photographers shooting

local birds, wildlife, and landscapes? If you're interested in getting out our wonderful conservation message, visit <http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/photography> and sign up for our periodic email photo call.



wings across the big sky

June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

Time to begin making those summer plans! **Montana Audubon's Wings Across the Big Sky Festival**, co-hosted by **Five Valleys Audubon Society**, will be held June 3-5 in Missoula. We invite you to spread the news and enthusiasm so we can all enjoy a fantastic turnout. Invite your out-of-state and nearby friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit Missoula and surrounding areas to 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 the Rattlesnake Recreation area, Pattee Canyon, Lee Metcalf NWR, and Lolo Creek, among others, with the anticipation of seeing a varied array of species and habitats.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Holiday Inn Downtown at the Park, 200 S Pattee Street, Missoula, MT.

The keynote speaker Friday night will be Erick Greene, professor in the Division of Biological Sciences and in the Wildlife Biology Program at the University of Montana. Kate Davis, author, photographer, artist, and "den-mother" to falconry birds, will be headlining the Saturday afternoon presentations.

Registration will begin in March. For more information contact Montana Audubon's Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson: cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

THANKS TO DICK AND PAM WALKER

Many thanks to Dick and Pam Walker for their contribution of beautiful bird photos for use on the Flathead Audubon website. Check out the amazing snowy owl photo in the background banner on the home page (<http://www.flatheadaudubon.org>).

Bird Smart Glass Products Now Available to Prevent Window Collisions

From Press Release by the American Bird Conservancy

Collisions with glass windows kill hundreds of millions of birds each year in the United States, but thanks to American Bird Conservancy's new Bird-Smart Glass Program, a list of 18 tested, proven products is now available to help homeowners



Wood Thrush is a common victim of collisions with glass windows. Photo by Greg Lavaty

and architects identify simple but effective solutions to stop birds from hitting windows. This list can be viewed on the ABC website at <http://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/>.

Peer-reviewed scientific research has found that between 365 million and 988 million birds die every year in the United States after colliding with buildings. Glass that reflects landscapes and the sky is especially dangerous for birds because they

can't distinguish the reflection from the real world. Virtually every bird species in North America is affected by glass collisions. But migratory birds and yard birds are among the most common species affected. This includes species that are declining across their ranges, such as Wood Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, Painted Bunting, Anna's Hummingbird and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Products featured in ABC's Bird-Smart Glass Program—including patterned glass, window films and tapes, and external screens—fit every style, budget, and climate. In order to be verified as Bird-Smart, they must have documented evidence proving their effectiveness, either through controlled tests or field studies. Although no material can be guaranteed to eliminate all collisions, ABC has identified the best available products for private homes as well as commercial buildings.

Bird of the Month continued from page 2.

Those humbling gifts of awareness can be credited to the spectacular Peregrine falcon. We woke up, at least temporarily. DDT, Dieldrin and Aldrin were banned in the U.S. Six thousand hand-raised and transplanted birds have led to 10,000 nesting pairs in North America today – some now being media dar-

lings nesting in the urban wilds of skyscrapers. They were fully delisted in 1999. I was honored to be an opening acts as one of my theatrical alter egos in the International Celebration of the delisting. But my fondest memories about peregrines have come from watching them, slack-jawed, drop from the sky like a bullet, and remembering the lessons they taught us.

WINTER/SPRING FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!

All Flathead Audubon field trips are free and open to the public and are geared for all ages and levels of field experience. They are led by area biologists, retired professionals, and some of the best birders in the region. For all Field Trips, dress for the weather, bring binoculars or spotting scope if you have them, wear sturdy footwear, and drive and pull off the road safely. All drivers must have their own vehicle insurance. For more information, contact Kathy Ross, 837-3738, or Gael Bissell, 261-2255, or the individual field trip leader listed below. Also, a free brochure, "Birding Hotspots of the Flathead" is available at the Flathead Audubon general meetings and on www.FlatheadAudubon.org.



KALISPELL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. Sunday, January 3, 2016. Participate in the 17th Annual Kalispell Christmas Bird Count. Centered at Reserve and Highway 93. The 15 mile diameter count circle includes Evergreen, much of the Flathead River corridor including the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area, Happy Valley, Herron Park, and the Kuhn's Wildlife Area. Contact Pete Fisher at fisherpete88@yahoo.com or 406-250-9624.

EXPLORE GLACIER NATIONAL PARK ON SNOWSHOES. Saturdays & Sundays, January 9 thru March 20, 2016. Enjoy 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. Trips leave at 10:30 AM & 2:00 PM. Participants may use their own snowshoes or rent snowshoes for a nominal fee at the Visitor Center. Snowshoe rentals are also available elsewhere in the Flathead Valley. If you have questions regarding this offering, please call on weekdays 406-888-7931, weekends, 406-888-7940.

WINTER ANIMAL TRACKING AT OWEN SOWERWINE. Saturday, January 30, 2016. Meet 9:00 AM. Join us for a day of exploring and identifying the tracks, scat, and sign our local wildlife leave for us to decipher! We'll start with an approximately one-hour classroom session at Snappy's Sports to discuss the basics of tracking. Then we'll head to Owen Sowerwine Natural Area to spot, identify, study behaviors and have fun figuring out what wildlife is up to in winter! Please come prepared with a carpenter's tape, cameras, binoculars, lunch, water, and proper clothing. If you have snowshoes bring them, we have several pairs; pack-boots will work also. Co-sponsored by Montana Wilderness Association, Snappy's Sports, and Montana and Flathead Audubon. Our instructor has over 20 years teaching tracking and has researched lynx, wolverine, fisher, and marten among other species. Children over 10 years with adult supervision welcome. Meet at 9 AM at Snappy's, 1400 Hwy 2 E, Kalispell. **Registration is required.** Register at <http://www.wildmontana.org/walks> or call Brian Baxter at 406-291-2154.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IN BIGFORK, SWAN RIVER AND SURROUNDING AREA. Sunday, February 14, 2016. 10 AM-1:30 PM. Treat your Valentines young and adult, to a morning of experiencing our local avian residents in their winter world in the Bigfork/Swan River area. We will be learning about our winter songbirds and counting at feeders, but will also explore other local areas for wintering residents, such as Trumpeter Swans and Pygmy Owls. This is an excellent outing for families with children as well as birders of all ages. Dress warmly and bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes. Meet at 10 AM at the east end of Swan River School main parking area. Contact Kathy Ross at mtkat67@gmail.com or 406-837-3837 to sign up.

A LATE WINTER WANDER IN THE MISSION VALLEY. Sunday, February 21, 2016. 8:00 AM-5:00 PM. Join us for a late winter birding day in the beautiful Mission Valley searching for raptors, various owls, snow buntings, and waterfowl on Flathead Lake and other open waters. Meet at Somers Park 'n Ride at the intersection of Hwy 93 and MT Highway 209 at 8:00 AM. Bring lunch and winter weather gear. To sign up, get more information, and/or coordinate with field trip leaders for those coming from other areas such as Polson or Missoula, contact Bob Lee at 406-270-0371 or rml3@centurytel.net.

THEY'RE BACK! EARLY SPRING WATERFOWL AND OTHER MIGRANTS - EAST FLATHEAD VALLEY. Sunday, March 20, 2016. 10:30 AM to mid-afternoon. Explore Creston and East Valley wetlands with premiere birder Craig Hohenberger. This is the peak time for migrating Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Mallards, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, and Green-winged Teal heading north to breeding grounds. We will also be able to find good numbers of Greater and Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, Canvasbacks, and Redheads as well as some of the later migrating waterfowl and songbirds. Meet at the Creston elementary school, located one block north of Highway 35 on Creston Rd. north of the Creston Fire Hall. Bring lunch and foul weather gear and do plan to carpool. Please sign up by contacting Gael Bissell at 406-261-2255 or gbissell535@gmail.com.

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CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from December 2015 Board Meeting:

- ◆ Heard that 2 grants have been received for the Conservation Education program.
- ◆ Agreed to update the signatories on Flathead Audubon financial accounts.
- ◆ Approved an addition of a Jewel Basin Hawkwatch item to the Education Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Approved offering the Conservation Educator contract for the remainder of the fiscal year to Lisa Flowers.
- ◆ Heard report from the Calendar committee that work is underway to assess whether to do a calendar next year and if so, what the theme and content would be.
- ◆ Heard report that several field trips are planned for the upcoming months.
- ◆ Approved funding (approximately \$500) to print 1000 brochures to be widely distributed describing the hazards of bailing twine to ospreys.
- ◆ Heard report that the website has been greatly modified and improved with further changes planned.
- ◆ Heard report that all general meeting programs for the rest of the year are arranged.

The Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2016

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages birds watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot 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 a 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 pro-

jects, 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?”



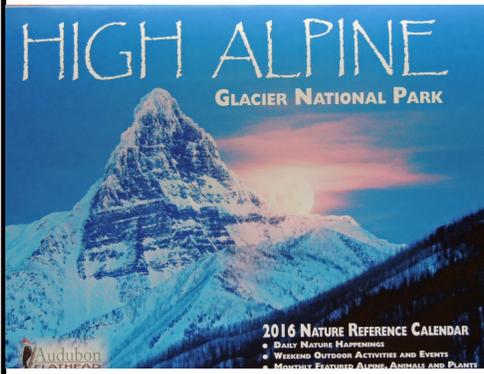
The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Field Trips continued from page 6.

SOARING OF THE SNOW GEESE AT FREEZOUT LAKE.

Saturday-Sunday, March 26-27, 2016. There is nothing quite like 100,000 Snow Geese swirling against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. The annual Flathead Audubon trip to Freezout Lake will be over the last weekend in March with Bob Lee again leading. We will meet at the K-Mart parking lot (on the corner of Highways 2 and 35 in Kalispell) on Saturday morning at 10 AM and caravan/carpool to Choteau, arriving in time for the afternoon “fly-out” of the geese. After dinner and a night in Choteau, we will head back out before daybreak to watch the “mass ascension” from the ponds of Freezout. After the morning’s birding, we, too, will head home in the early afternoon arriving in Kalispell around 5 PM on Sunday. Bob will provide a suggested schedule and route, and will be in the front of the group, but attendees may choose to follow the geese as much or as little as they, the weather and birds allow. The various Choteau accommodations fill fast so make your reservations early. The 3 most popular motels in Choteau are: Stage Stop (406-466-5900), Gunther (406-466-5444) and Big Sky (406-466-5318). Be sure to mention that you are affiliated with Flathead Audubon. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Lee at 270-0371 or rm13@centurytel.net.

High Alpine—2016 Flathead Audubon Calendar



HIGH ALPINE Flathead Audubon's 2016 phenology calendar, is still available for purchase. It makes a great gift anytime! All proceeds go to support the Conservation Education Program.

HIGH ALPINE is a must for every outdoor enthusiast. It is a calendar about Glacier National Park's tough and fragile terrain. It contains beautiful photos of local animals and plants, reminders of a host of Flathead Audubon activities, a chronology of natural happenings in northwest Montana with an entry for almost every day of the year, and even suggests outdoor activities for every weekend.

HIGH ALPINE is available for purchase at Flathead Audubon meetings. It can also be picked up at many locations throughout the valley. The cost is only \$15 or \$20 with shipping and handling.

Many Birds Rely on Mistletoe

By Elizabeth Pennisi

Northern Arizona Audubon Society Newsletter Nov/Dec 2015

Humans use it hoping for a kiss. A surprising number of bird species use it as a food source and a nesting site. In fact, the name came from people who observed that it often would grow in places where birds had left their droppings. "Mistel" is the Anglo-Saxon word for "dung," and "tan" is the word for "twig." Thus the birds and this parasitic plant have a co-dependency. Birds eat the berries and their droppings then distribute the seeds.

Scientists studying this relationship have observed that forest with a high abundance of dwarf mistletoe will have more birds and a greater variety of bird species. Mistletoe will eventually kill its host plant leaving a snag that can be used by cavity nesting birds. One study documented a least three times as many cavity-nesting birds live in forest with abundant mistletoes compared to forests without.

Birds that take advantage of mistletoe include grouse, Mourning Doves, bluebirds, Evening Grosbeaks, robins, and pigeons. Naturalist and writer John Muir noted American Robins eating mistletoe in the

mountains of California in the late 1890's. Wrote Muir: "I found most of the robins cowering on the lee side of the larger branches of trees, where the snow could not fall on them, while two or three of the more venture-some were making desperate efforts to get at the mistletoe berries by clinging to the underside of the snow-covered masses, back downward, something like woodpeckers."

A dense clump of mistletoe is called a witch's broom and provides good cover for nests. Northern and Mexican Spotted Owls and other raptors prefer these as nesting sites. Nests of Cooper's Hawks, Great Gray Owls, Long-eared Owls, Northern Goshawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks have been found in mistletoe clumps. Likewise, some migratory birds nest in witches' broom—Gray Jays, Red Crossbills, House Wrens, Mourning Doves, Pygmy Nuthatches, chickadees, Western Tanagers, Chipping Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, Cassin's Finches, and Pine Siskins.

Birders would be wise to give a close look at mistletoe clumps to see what they might be hiding.



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WEST Valley Naturalists

West Valley Naturalists are thrilled that Dick Walker will be showing us selected photos from his West Valley excursions on Tuesday, January 19. Dick and Pam have been combing the woodlands and wetlands of the West Valley area for over a decade and have gathered photos of wildlife (feathered and furred) from all the seasons. The program will begin at 7 PM

in the West Valley School Library (2290 Farm to Market Road). There is no charge and all are welcome. It will be fascinating to see what gems have been hidden in the landscape that Dick has captured on film. Hopefully we will all come away with a notion of how to sharpen our own skills to observe the treasures in our own back yard.



Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through December, 2015

Merlin

- Tracy Schiess & John Ashley
- Paula Smith
- Joe Batts
- Marylane Panell
- Denny Olson
- Gael Bissell
- Kay Mitchell
- Jake Bramante



merlinfalcon.foundation

Kestrel

- Bob and Jane Lopp
- Bill Schustrom
- Jan Metzmaker
- Lewis and Lynda Young
- William Beyer



rspb.org.uk



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Supporting Member + donation

- Mary Patterson

My Own Vision

- Paul J Rana
- Linda Bauer

HOW ABOUT SWITCHING TO EPOST?

We recently emailed a sample of the Electronic Version of the Post to many who are still receiving it in paper form, urging all to switch from the paper version to the electronic – and got a great response! THANKS to all who agreed to make the switch. If you did not get a sample, it's because we don't have your email address. If you'd like a sample EPost just contact Linda Winnie at lindawin@centurytel.net. And remember your email address is safe with us. We do not share email addresses with anyone – ever.

There are lots of advantages to the EPost including 1) it's in color, 2) usually comes earlier, and 3) saves trees and money—about \$20 per member per year.

We can – and will – email a copy to each family member if you like.

SPECIAL GIFTS

I wish to help make Flathead Audubon's vision a reality. Here is my contribution to the continued success of our chapter.



- Eagle Donation, \$1000+
- Osprey Donation, \$500+
- Snowy Owl Donation, \$250+
- Merlin Donation, \$100+
- Kestrel Donation, \$50+
- My Own Vision, amount of my choice

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

- Education Programs
- Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- Scholarships and Grants
- Field Trips and Outdoor Events

I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

Please make checks payable to:

Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173

Kalispell, MT 59904

Your gift is tax deductible.

Owen Sowerwine Questionnaire Boxes

New at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area are two questionnaire boxes, one located at the kiosk inside the Treasure Lane entrance, and the other at the head of the Greenridge Lane entrance. When you visit OSNA, please take a moment to fill out the questionnaire.

Our goal is to get a better understanding of how many people are visiting OSNA and how they are using the area. Comments and suggestions will also help us do a better job of managing OSNA and help us plan for the future.

A big thank you to Rick Mace, who made the boxes and put them in place.



Rick Mace



Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society



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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. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. Both meetings are open to all.

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 - Lisa Flowers: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

Table with 4 columns: Position, Name, Email, Phone. Includes President Kay Mitchell, Vice-President Gael Bissell, Secretary Marylane Pannell, Treasurer Joe Batts, and Past-President Bob Lopp.

DIRECTORS

Table with 4 columns: Term, Name, Email, Phone. Lists directors from 2014-2017 to 2015-2016, including Jim Rychwalski, Denny Olson, Lewis Young, Paula Smith, Doug MacCarter, Jan Metzmaker, Jake Bramante, Jill Fanning, Mike Fanning, Kathy Ross, and Bob Lee.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

Table with 4 columns: Committee, Name, Email, Phone. Lists chairs for Refuges, Website, and Wetlands.



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 Board Member representing FAS Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

- Basic Membership \$20 (Pays for newsletter and operating costs)
Supporting Membership \$35 (Extra \$15 funds local projects such as Conservation Education and Owen Sowerwine Natural Area)

Additional Donation of \$ to Education Fund Owen Sowerwine Fund Wherever needed

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Phone

Email

The Pileated Post is sent to FAS members by email. If you wish to receive a paper copy by USPS, check this box.

Mail this form with your check to: Flathead Audubon Society Membership P.O. Box 9173 Kalispell, MT 59904