

# The Accipiter Express

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3      FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY - BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911      OCTOBER, 1977

10 November (Thursday): 7:30 P.M. Regular Board Meeting at Nancy Paul's home, East Shore, Bigfork.

14 November (Monday): Meetings held in Bigfork Grade School Library (located inside new building)  
7:30 P.M. - Business      8:00 P.M. - Program - consisting of a short Mountain Goat film PLUS Member Slide Show. Any and all members are asked to bring 10 of their best bird, wildlife, or scenic slides for presentation. Should be an enjoyable and great show for everyone. See you there!

12 December (Monday): Election of officers and Board of Directors

### Slate of Nominees

#### Officers:

President	Rick Trembath	Bigfork
Vice President	Elly Jones	Swan Lake
Secretary	Barbara Fenner	Kalispell
Treasurer	Nancy Paul	Bigfork

#### Board of Directors:

Marcy Bishop	Polson	1978
Wanda Jamieson	Kalispell	1978 & 1979
Elmer Sprunger	Bigfork	1978 & 1979

Program will consist of a series of bird slides depicting species that will be possible sightings on our Christmas Count Day, December 17, 1977.

FIELD TRIP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!: 5 November, Saturday: Field trip to Glacier National Park to observe Bald Eagles and other wildlife along Lower McDonald Creek. Bigfork area residents and people living south meet at Bigfork High School Parking lot to pool cars at 8:30 A.M. Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls area people will meet the others at the junction of Highway 40 and Highway 2 in Columbia Falls at 9:15 A.M. and we will all go on to the Park from there. Hope some of you can make it as it is always a great time!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: November 9 (Wednesday): 7:00 pm B.P.A. Public Response Meeting at the Outlaw Inn, Kalispell.

November 30: Swan Lake District USFS deadline for accepting comments on Mission Mountain Management Plan.

December 17 (Saturday): Christmas Bird Count Day



B.P.A. "ROLE E.I.S.": The Bonneville Power Administration will be holding a public response meeting at 7 P.M. Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Outlaw Inn, Kalispell, on their "Role E.I.S." This Environmental Impact Statement which is ~~3200~~ pages in length and took two years to prepare addresses BPA's present role in the Pacific-Northwest power supply system and examines a number of energy and administrative options that BPA could pursue in future years. Some of these options include: authority to build and operate power plants; the lead role in planning alternative sources of energy; the lead role in energy conservation efforts; or possibly BPA should be abolished, its facilities sold, and its tasks assigned to other agencies or private industry. The Flathead Audubon Society will be obtaining a copy of this impact statement for members review as we feel that this issue directly affects the Army Corps of Engineers and their lower Flathead River dam proposals. (Speaking of the Corps, it will be after the first of the year before any hearings will be conducted on damming the Lower Flathead River.)

AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: December 17 (Saturday). The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the largest birding event in the world. The 76<sup>th</sup> annual count had 1141 counts conducted with over 28,000 participants. Counts occur throughout the North American continent from Puerto Rico and Panama to Point Barrows, Alaska and hundreds of points in between. The counts provide information on bird distribution, relative abundance, range extensions and other data which are used by government wildlife agencies, in scientific studies and for the general information of birders.

Each group participating selects a count center and draws a circle 7.5 miles in radius. The count circle is divided up among the participants and the area censused as completely as possible. The observers note the bird species seen and the number of each species. The count is an all-day census which in our area at that time of year is about 8 hours. The Flathead Audubon Society's count center is Bigfork.

Individuals who live within the count circle and who maintain a feeder may serve as feeder watchers. If you do not wish to be out in the field you can count the birds that come to your feeder and they will be added into the day's census.

The count will be held 17 December (Saturday) and each person participating must notify count compiler Dan Sullivan (982-3281) in advance. There is \$1.00 mandatory fee for each participant set by the National Audubon Society to aid in the cost of publishing the count results.

If you feel you are not an experienced birder, please join in anyway. We will pair you up with others who are. The count is an excellent way to learn bird identification and a pleasant way to spend a day.

This year as in the past we will have a potluck dinner and count tally at the end of the day. Participants will meet at 5:30 P.M. at the Bigfork Elementary School Cafeteria. The potluck committee will provide the main dish. Other participants are asked to bring side dishes. Please contact Lillian Tubb (Ph: 837-4323). Families of participants are invited to the potluck but please notify Lillian of the number coming in your party by December 10<sup>th</sup>. Participants are also asked to bring their own place settings.

LOWER FLATHEAD RIVER FLOAT: On 10 October a one day float from the Buffalo Rapids Bridge to Sloan Bridge was made. Ten people in five canoes spent a remarkably sunny, warm Indian summer day enjoying the peace, quiet, and primitive character of the 28 mile stretch of river. In addition to six chapter members present were - Bob Turner, National Audubon Society representative for the Rocky Mt. Region, an individual from the Montana Environmental Information Center and two people representing the Five Valleys Audubon Society in Missoula.



The primary purpose of the float was to acquaint Bob Turner and the others with the river so they would have first-hand experience when speaking about the quality of the area. It is hoped this and similar efforts will help prevent the construction of the proposed dams along the Lower Flathead.

Observers on the spring float recorded 72 bird species. The sixteen species seen on the 10th reflected the non-breeding season and the oncoming winter. The majority of the birds seen are permanent residents and will remain in the area throughout the winter.

The following are the bird species seen on this float: Mallard, Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk -2; Osprey -1 ( a rather late sighting for Osprey in the Flathead ); Prairie Falcon -1; Rock Dove; Belted Kingfisher; Flicker; Hairy Woodpecker; Magpie; Raven; Black-capped Chickadee; Townsend's Solitaire - 17 (Solitaires were particularly abundant along the river. The river is bordered by Ponderosa Pine and Juniper. The juniper berries provide the primary food for the solitaires during the winter months. The solitaires maintain winter territories and were heard singing during most of the day. There was undoubtedly many more than the 17 birds observed scattered along the river.); Golden-crowned Kinglet; and Dark-eyed Junco.

EAGLE WATCH: Bald Eagles gather annually along Lower McDonald Creek in Glacier to feed on spawning salmon. In mid to late November the eagles start disbursing to points all over the western U.S. Many move south through the Flathead drainage. Eagles stay within the Flathead area in varying numbers and varying lengths of time depending on the severity of the winter and amount of food available. Last winter we began a project to record the winter distribution of eagles within the Flathead.

Some of the data we wish to gather include: 1) number of birds wintering 2) number of adults and immatures 3) length of stay 4) pattern of movement through the drainage 5) favored roosting and feeding areas 6) how movements and length of stay correlate with climate 7) feeding behavior and food sources.

Observers are needed through the Flathead drainage. Observers are not required to be Audubon members, but should be interested in making observations and keeping simple notes (i.e. date; place; number of birds, adults and immatures; any interesting behavior - feeding, night roosts). The most desirable observers are those who live in areas where eagles frequent (rivers, lake shores) and who can make day to day observation as an incidental part of their daily activities. Isolated or irregular observations are wanted however, since these may be the only ones from a particular area.

Anyone interested is encouraged to be an observer. The more people observing the greater the net result. Please contact Wanda Jamieson (257-5840) or Dan Sullivan (982-3281) if you are interested.

UPDATE ON SWAN RIVER ISLAND: The Swan Lake District of the Forest Service has not had any action from the Regional Office as yet on their application for a Swan River Island natural area below Gildart Flats which is south of Swan Lake. This area of about 200 acres was not accepted in the recently revised roadless area inventory. However, a large portion of the Forest Service lands on the East Shore of Flathead Lake were accepted in this inventory.

WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS - HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR MEETINGS!!!

Ms. Dorteia Darwall	Box 618	Bigfork, Montana	59911
Mr. Howard Hash	Rt. 2, Happy Valley	Whitefish, Montana	59937
Kelly Kimzey	Box 578	Columbia Falls, Montana	59912
Dr. Michael Moredock	Route 1	Ronan, Montana	59864
Mr. Bill Otto	1408 South Main	Kalispell, Montana	59901
Mr. Tom Hoover	River Street	Bigfork, Montana	59911
Ms. Cheri Seli	Cliftwood Apts. #9	Bigfork, Montana	59911



CHECKLIST MATERIAL DUE BEFORE DECEMBER 10th: The next report for American Birds is due on December 10th. People should have their September, October, and November checklists into Wanda Jamieson before that date to be included in the report. Anyone not keeping checklists but having unusual observations is asked to send them to Wanda (1340 Willow Glen Dr., #11, Kalispell, Mt. 59901).for inclusion in the report.

OUT AND ABOUT - BIRD SIGHTINGS: A Black Duck was sighted by Elly Jones at Swan Lake on September 10. There have been no previous records for this area and there have been only 15 other sightings for Montana. (There was a sighting at Ninepipe NWR in Aug.-Sept., 1961).

Dan DeJong photographed American Golden Plovers in Pleasant Valley October 4th, a first sighting for this area. Dan has also reported seeing a Peregrine Falcon on several occasions this year in the Pleasant Valley area.

A Great Gray Owl was photographed by Dan DeJong in Pleasant Valley on Sept. 25th.

Barbara Fenner reported seeing a Barred Owl being chased by ravens, chickadees and woodpeckers September 14 and 16 in Kalispell. Rick Trembath observed a Barred Owl October 10 near his East Shore residence. Dan Sullivan observed and photographed one for about 40 min. on September 4 at Yellow Bay. Several other sightings have been made near Bitterroot Lake and Glacier Park. Only a few years ago the Barred Owl was considered quite rare but is apparently becoming more common in the Flathead area. Other sightings to help document its range extension are desired.

Mae Sudan reported Lapland Longspurs (Oct. 9) and a White-throated Sparrow (Oct. 10) near the end of River Bend Road, Bigfork. Since we've started keeping records three years ago, these are the first reports of these two species.

SEEN ANY UNUSUAL BIRDS LATELY???????? A poster is now available at our monthly meetings for people to record description, location and date of any unusual bird sightings. This can be a valuable tool not only to supplement Wanda's reports to American Birds but also to direct people to places where they may see a species new for them and to offer an opportunity for birding exchange. This is an excellent place for those not keeping daily checklists to get their "two cents worth" in for Wanda's reports. Please use it and enjoy what you discover!

NEED A CHRISTMAS IDEA? Bird Feeders, fashioned by members of the Flathead Audubon Society, are planned to go on sale in the B & B Store in Kalispell.

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY: 1977

- PRESIDENT: Dan Sullivan Yellow Bay, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (982-3281)
- VICE PRESIDENT: Newton Reed 1230 Mt. 209, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (837-4494)
- SECRETARY: Wanda Jamieson 1340 Willow Glen Dr., #11, Kal., Mt. 59901 (257-5840)
- TREASURER: Nancy Paul East Shore, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (837-4152)
- MEMBERSHIP: Karen Sullivan Yellow Bay, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (982-3281)
- PROGRAM & PUBLICITY: Rick Trembath East Shore, Bigfork, Mt. 59911 (837-6717)

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY  
BIGFORK, MONTANA 59911