



The Pileated Post

VOLUME 15

NUMBER 5

MAY 1990

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OUR ANNUAL MAY POTLUCK: Lone Pine Visitor Center, Kalispell, 6:00ish. Bring a dish, whatever you wish--it's always delish. We'll provide drinks; coffee, tea, other good things. Pack your own tools (knife, fork and spoons) a plate too if you're in a conservative mood. Entertainment? Well we get to vote, for next year's officers who'll be running the show. But there is more than that--Lynn Kelly, she'll talk about **loons, goon and turtle fat**. Naw, that's stretchin' the truth. Loons maybe, but goon and turtle fat!? Sounds horrific. Knowing Lynn it'll be, certainly, more scienterrific. So remember that day--Monday, May the 14th. Does it ring a bell? I should say, **Happy Birthday Michele!**

WILD HORSE ISLAND FIELD TRIP: details inside, along with our complete field trips schedule.

AUDUBON REGIONAL CONFERENCE: September 4-9. Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone National Park. Call Robin, 837-4294.

*To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.*
William Blake

EDITOR'S DESK

Leo Keane

I hate long goodbyes. Not so very fond of short ones either, but there comes a time when you must go. After four years at the Editor's Desk of the Pileated Post I sense that inevitability. It's time for a change. "But why would you want to leave?" several faithful readers have asked me. Tough question. Just when our membership at Flathead Audubon is strong, active and growing, when it seems the sky's the limit for making good progress in the name of conservation, and just as the Pileated Post is evolving as one key ingredient in what makes our chapter click. I've considered these things, plus thought about the personal satisfaction of producing a newsletter that people have enjoyed reading, the challenge of having it in the mail on schedule every month, and most of all, the consistent reward of your encouragement and praise. I've appreciated all these and will miss most aspects of the job very much. Thus my decision boils down to two factors always in short supply in this universe--time and energy. Ask any of the officers listed on the back page of this newsletter, from the president on down, and I know you'll hear the same story. Time and energy are the limiting factors of volunteers. We could make Audubon a full-time job!

So before I get dull and bogged down I'm going to turn this newsletter over to a fresh recruit. Sharon Bergman of Polson has stepped forward to take over as editor of the Pileated Post. Sharon has experience with writing, editing and publishing, and has volunteered for Audubon work before. I know Sharon will do her best, and encourage all of you to make her job interesting by contributing your thoughts and experiences to the Pileated Post beginning again with the September issue. Meantime, let's not rest on our laurels too much this summer. There are great adventures lurking not so very far afield. Take that hike in "The Bob" you've been dreaming about for years. Float a boat down some merry river. Get up at sunrise and listen for warblers. I hope to. As an old voyageur once said, "It's a rough life, but it's a good one". Ho Rye!



As this green May morning dawns, I wade through a bowl of hot cereal and four years worth of Audubon paperwork. Although most has already made its way into our chapter's filing cabinet or one of three associated boxes, all these are getting full and need weeding out. (Angelina will be very glad when the whole mess gets weeded out of her closet.)

As a chapter we have had a good influence in Northwest Montana. Isn't our goal to present the environment as more enjoyable, make it more appreciated, and thereby gain more constituents speaking out to protect, conserve or enhance its many facets? We are accomplishing this through environmental education, our newsletter, the heart-felt welcome at our meetings, as well as the programs, the sunflower seed and other sales, and the multitude of meetings and committees attended by our officers. Perhaps our greatest influence comes from our nearly 500 members, who in their individual ways are able to reveal the environment with a wider field of vision to friends and colleagues.

We have an extraordinary chapter. Our membership is growing steadily. The mix of officers has changed each year yet throughout the ample discussion we have on every decision at the board meetings, there has always been an harmonious atmosphere.

It's been a fun and rewarding four years as president. An organization should meet an individual's goals for growth, community service or whatever. Audubon has always fulfilled my expectations.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS

Flathead Audubon will elect its officers for the 1990-1991 term at the annual pot-luck dinner, Lone Pine State Park in Kalispell on Monday, May 14. The dinner will commence at 6:00 PM, followed by elections and the program--The Loons of NW Montana, by Lynn Kelly. The nominating committee has made the following recommendations for officers.

*PRESIDENT
VICE-PRESIDENT
SECRETARY
TREASURER*

*Brent Mitchell
Leo Keane
Gail Leonard
Tommie Clark*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*second term
second term
second term
new on board
new on board
President Emeritus*

*Dick Fretheim
Bob Shernum
Lynn Kelly
Ed Prach
Ferre Cohen
Robin Magaddino*

*CONSERVATION
EDUCATION
FIELD TRIPS
HOSPITALITY/SALES
LIBRARY/AUDUBON ADVENTURES
MEMBERSHIP
MEMBERSHIP/CIRCULATION
NEWSLETTER
PROGRAM
REFUGE PROJECTS
SCHOOLS/CLUBS*

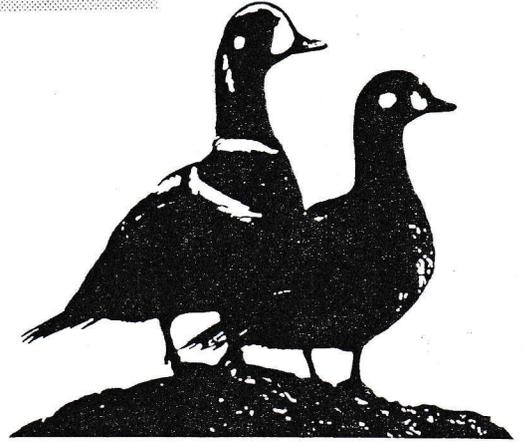
*Rod Ash
(need applicant)
Dan Casey
Patti Brown
(need applicant)
Evelyn Kile
June Ash
Sharon Bergman
(need applicant)
Bob Ballou
Jean Robocker*

ATTENTION WILDLIFE WATCHERS

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS DUCK?

We need sightings of Harlequin Ducks. The Montana Natural Heritage Program is surveying Montana's mountain streams for harlequin ducks--one of the state's rarest and most beautiful wildlife species.

The status of the harlequin duck in the northern Rocky Mountains has long been poorly known. Recent studies in Montana, Idaho and northwest Wyoming have revealed several small, disjunct breeding populations. The Montana Natural Heritage Program, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, is investigating the distribution and population status of the harlequin duck throughout much of the mountainous portions of the state.



Prior to 1985, harlequin ducks were well known only from Kootenai Falls and MacDonald Creek in Glacier Park. Since then, observations, surveys, and information from biologists and birdwatchers has revealed a larger and more widespread population in Montana. Harlequin ducks are now known to breed on several tributaries of the lower Clark Fork, Kootenai, and Flathead rivers. Females with young have also been reported on tributaries of the Sun and Two Medicine rivers on the east slope of the Continental Divide. Breeding populations also occur on the Yellowstone and Boulder rivers of south-central Montana.

Studies to date indicate that harlequin ducks prefer mountainous streams with productive invertebrate communities, with areas of quiet water and heavy vegetative cover for nesting/fledging, with riffle areas for feeding, and with adequate flows through late August.

Paired males and females arrive from the coast during April and early May. Breeding occurs until late May/early June, when females move upstream into tributaries to nest. Males stay in "loafing" areas for several weeks, then depart for the Oregon/Washington coast. Females incubate and hatch 5-7 young during June--a time during which they are particularly sensitive to disturbance. Young stay with the hen until late August, when she leaves for the coast; they follow shortly after, in late August through mid-September. During August and early September these birds can be more easily observed than at other times.

Survey work in 1990 is planned for western Montana in areas within and near the Lolo, Kootenai, Flathead and Gallatin National Forests. Anyone with sightings of harlequin ducks or with an interest in assisting with studies on this species is encouraged to contact Dave Genter at the Montana Natural Heritage Program, 1515 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620, (406) 444-3009.

Montana Native Plant Society
Flathead Chapter



May
16

Wednesday Flathead Chapter meeting at new location - Dept. Fish, Wildlife and Parks Bldg. 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell. Meeting begins at 7 pm with a presentation by the group RAILS TO TRAILS of NORTHWEST MONTANA on their proposed trail between Kalispell and Marion using the abandoned railroad bed of the Smith Valley Line. A short meeting will follow.

Earth Day Review

Earth week in the Flathead and the Swan was a smashing success. Over sixty organizations, agencies and companies were involved. Thirty organizations had excellent displays in the Kalispell Mall. Many schools and students took part. Dozens of Earth Week activities occurred in the Flathead and the Swan.

As far as I could tell the displays and activities were all positive and constructive. People and groups with a wide range of viewpoints worked well together to carry out the Earth Week programs.

Some of us even received recognition for our efforts. It was gratifying to attend the United Way luncheon where Ferne Cohen, coordinator of Flathead's Earth Week, received an honorable award in the competition for Flathead's Volunteer of the Year. Three students from the Swan Valley won Montana State awards for Earth Day essays and posters.

Personally, I felt good and even optimistic about the future of our portion of the Earth as a result of active participation in the celebrations. People seemed concerned, seeking understanding and committed to improving the earth.

The only sour note wasn't local, but came from the national media. Apparently it became the fad to be cynical about Earth Day. The celebrations were criticized for too much "hype". Participants were accused of being extremists, alarmists and opportunists. I suspect that these highly paid, insulated columnists and commentators simply don't understand or appreciate the deep feelings people have about the places they love and the conditions they observe around them.

I didn't see any extremism in the Flathead, or excessive alarmism or even any hype. I did see people who love their land and want to live in some sort of reasonable harmony with it. I suspect the same was true in most of the thousands of communities which celebrated Earth Day. Unfortunately most of the cynics are press release readers, cocktail circuit observers, know very little about the details of conservation issues and do very little observation of their own.

That's a shame because if they had used their own senses in real places, with real people expressing their love and concern for the Earth, they might have gained some understanding of the deeper meaning of Earth Day.

However, it is ultimately up to us, as we follow through on the momentum of Earth Week, to disprove the cynicism about the celebration of the Earth.

EARTH DAY IS EVERYDAY

As I reflect on my experiences and feelings in coordinating Earth Day 1990 in the Flathead Valley. I am inspired by the warmth and dedication of those involved. They are too numerous to enumerate here, but I value each for their contributions and interest.

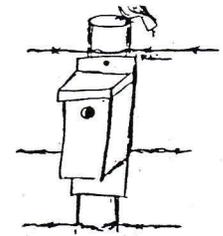
I am profoundly grateful to Flathead Audubon Board of Directors who accepted my offer to coordinate Earth Day activities, and provided the people power, and seed money to do so. Our focus from the beginning was information about our environment with special emphasis on recycling, and including everyone interested to bring our community together. When you have a project people want, participation follows.

The celebration of Earth Day was no exception. From the beginning we knew Earth Day was not a sometime thing, but an ongoing process.

I am proud to have been a part of providing the mechanism to commemorate Earth Day. I am excited by the variety of participation, which produced the Flathead Valley Earth Day Coalition. The Coalition financed and produced a wonderful schedule of Earth Week events; informative, serious and entertaining. The cooperation and effort expended was phenomenal. I derive an enormous amount of pleasure just recalling what occurred over the past six months. But most important, now I know our citizens can work together to build a happier and healthier community for us all.

Ferne Cohen

THE WHITEFISH LAKE GOLF COURSE BLUEBIRD TRAIL



A **BOUQUET OF ROSES** to Ferne Cohen who put heart and soul into organizing the Flathead's amazing Earth Day celebration

Personally, I had a wonderful Earth Day. We established a bluebird trail along the fairways of Whitefish Lake Golf Course. Ten of us basked in this most serene spring morning, walking out the trail with wheelbarrows full of nest boxes. The golf course has abundant bluebird nest sites and we put up all 40 of our boxes. Everybody had fun. I'm always amazed how the love and appreciation of bird life can bring people together. Thanks so much Everett Lundgren, Cindy Cross, Linda Babiak, Rob Bates, Holly Clary, Steve McCluskey, Bill Bruzek, Jan Metzmaker (and sons; Grant and Luke, who got free rides in the wheelbarrow as the nest boxes went up) and Gail Leonard for turning out in celebration of Earth and wildlife. Additional thanks to Steve

McCluskey who put in an afternoon in my shop assembling the nest boxes. And a special thanks to Bill Bruzek, assistant course manager at Whitefish Lake Golf Course, who took the bluebird trail idea and ran with it (and helped build the boxes, and drove me around the course after work to mark the trail). Also we appreciate Dick Collins and the golf course management for opening the course to us and the bluebirds.

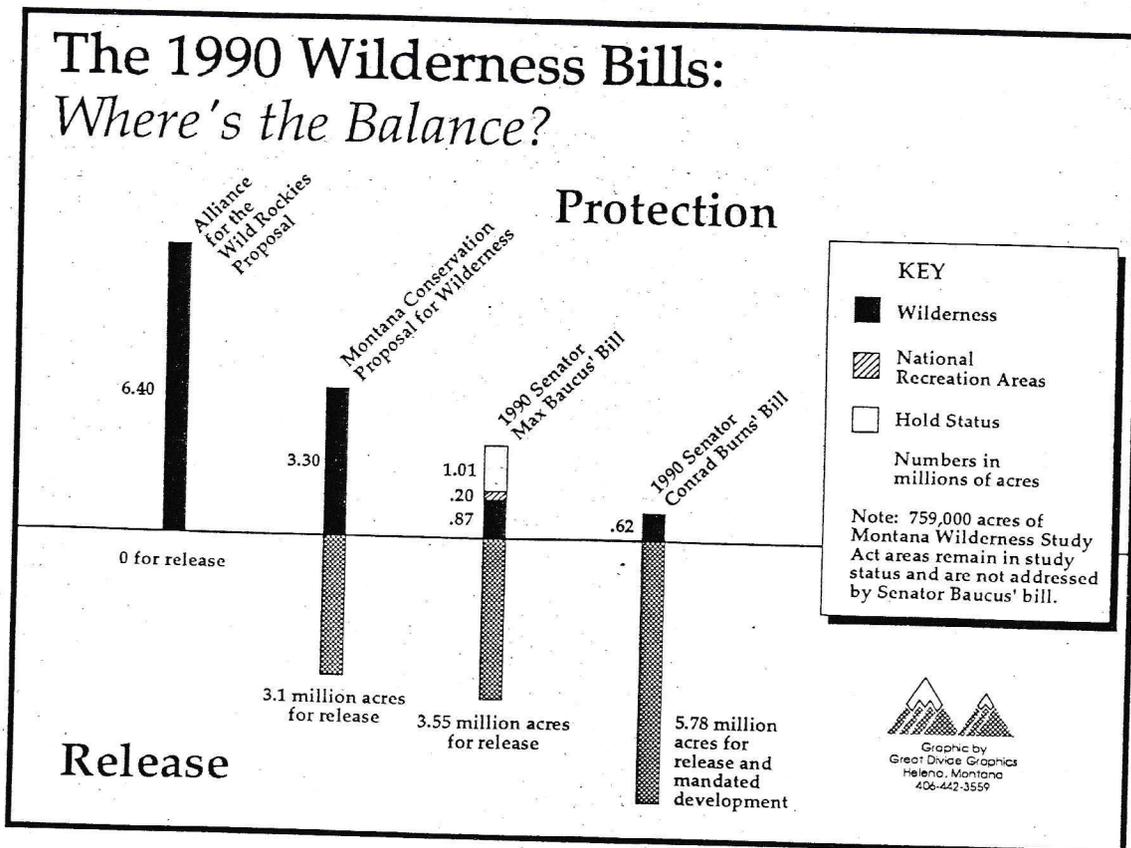
Hey, if you're not a golfer--I'm just getting started myself--it's not a bad way to take a pleasant walk, and now at the Whitefish Lake Golf Course you can keep an eye on those nest boxes too.

Leo Keane

MONTANA CONSERVATION '90 BILL

Montana conservationists, under the leadership of MWA, are in the process of drafting a revised citizen's bill for Montana's remaining wild lands, based on the 1988 Alternative W plus additional

deserving lands proposed by local conservation and sportsmen groups throughout Montana.



1990 BIRDATHON - MAY 19

The main goal of the annual Audubon Birdathon is fund raising. Last year, over \$800,000 was raised by Audubon Chapters across the nation. This year, Audubon has set a nation-wide goal of 1 million dollars! While the Flathead Audubon has had some very enthusiastic participants each year, we feel that we can do better towards the goal of raising funds for this "Million Dollar Birdathon". One half of the total money we raise goes to our local chapter, the other half to the regional office in Boulder, CO. Last year we specified that we wished our funds to be spent for preservation of old growth forests and wetlands - causes near and dear to Flathead residents.

The Flathead Chapter of Audubon has over 300 members, which puts us in competition with much larger chapters (for prizes). Our goal this year is to raise over \$1,500.00. If EVERY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEMBER CONTRIBUTED JUST \$5.00 we could reach our goal.

Flathead Chapter is fortunate to have some enthusiastic and noteworthy birders who participate in the fun but demanding aspect of Birdathon - going out and finding the birds! We are asking YOU as a member of Audubon to sponsor and to solicit sponsors for this years Flathead Audubon Birdathon participants. Our designated team members are the Montana "Big Day" record holders: Jim Rogers, Sherry Jones, and Dan and Susannah Casey. The team should see 130 species or more, so a pledge of 10 cents per species would add up to a total pledge of \$13 or so.

Please fill out this sponsor form and return to Dan and Susannah Casey, Birdathon Coordinators, with a minimum of at least yourself as a sponsor. We'd really appreciate it if you would ask 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 people you know to also pledge support. We don't get many \$100.00 sponsors like big Audubon Chapters can, but if we get enough \$5.00, \$10.00 and \$20.00 sponsors, we can reach our goal.

Sponsor

Name/Address/Phone Amount per Species or flat amount pledged

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

For greater efficiency, you can collect at the time of solicitation and mail your tax-deductible check(s) (to: Flathead Audubon) with your form.

Mail your pledges to Dan Casey, Birdathon Coordinator,
P.O. Box 2922, Kalispell, MT 59903 by May 15.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!



THE BEAVER CREEK EXPEDITION

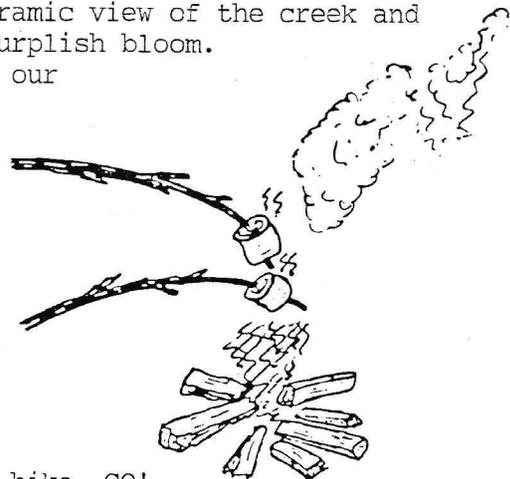
Leo Keane

My eight year old nephew and I have a little tradition. Every Easter morning (for the past three) we get up early, before anybody else in the house is awake, dress in hiking clothes, fill up a pack with snacks and other survival gear and head for the hills. Actually we head for Beaver Creek which flows about a mile behind Nathan's house up against the mountains near White Pine. This year Nathan took charge of the snacks and had the pack filled and ready to go when I crawled downstairs Easter morning--before daylight.

Once out in the cool air I found myself waking up and slowly tuning into the wonders of a Montana sunrise. Towhees calling. A pair of hooded mergansers floating quietly on the pond. The staccato thumping of a ruffed grouse (Ginger, Nathan's dog, went in for the flush). Our hike led us on a circuitous route through bogs and brambles in search of elusive hideouts known only to kids. When we finally emerged from the woods, Beaver Creek rushed before us green and gurgling. True to its name too, a beaver was busy at work shuffling sticks around in a shallow back-water--and Galoomped! his broad tail at our approach. Nathan announced that this would be a good place for our snack. Fine with me. So we settled in on a spit of gravel and Nathan dug into the pack: Rambo knife, binoculars, two cans of Dr. Pepper, and a Ziplock oozing with a pair of cinnamon rolls. Okay, ah sure, let's dig in boys. Grabbing my cinnamon roll I quickly realized the reason for their "ooziness". The rolls were uncooked. Pure dough. Nathan had packed some that were still rising, instead of the ones already baked. (Lesson #1: Always check your survival gear before hiking with a kid.) "Oh well", Nathan said with a bright and cheerful smile, "let's just eat 'em anyway!" (Lesson #2: Get a second opinion before eating raw cinnamon rolls.) At this point I insisted that we settle for the Dr. Pepper and hold off for the cooked rolls at home. Within roughly three seconds Nathan had another plan. "The Rambo knife has matches in a secret compartment so let's build a fire and cook our rolls on sticks." That actually sounded feasible. We used to do it that way in Boy Scouts (you can cook anything on a stick in Boy Scouts), and by now I was just hungry enough to go along with anything to do with warm cinnamon rolls. We packed up and marched off downstream toward a forested hill overlooking the creek. There would be dry firewood up there under the trees.

The site we chose beneath an old tamarack had a panoramic view of the creek and environs. Near at hand, early violets were sprinkled in purplish bloom. I showed Nathan how to carefully scrape the duff away for our fire, then take a handful of tinder and build a teepee of kindling around that. I left to scrounge up some larger sticks of dry wood, and came back surprised to find a little fire crackling. Nathan proudly explained that he'd started it with only two matches. What a kid. Soon we had a warm, cowboy fire dancing in the chill breeze and our big, fat, doughy cinnamon rolls baking on green sticks. Not a bad way to celebrate Easter I thought, and glanced down on the creek just in time to see a herd of 30 some elk slowly grazing along a distant meander. We watched them until they melted into the forest beyond. Then we ate our fresh-baked rolls.

Lesson number three: When a kid says let's go for a hike, GO!



I would like to thank Flathead Audubon for helping me purchase not one, but TWO mist nets especially made for catching the hummingbirds I am studying. Mist net companies have stopped production of these nets. They should last a long time, if I can keep robins, dragonflies, bats and bumblebees away from them. I found out my new feeder trap works and caught an unbanded rufous male hummer. I hope he makes it through the cold weather. Thank you so very much for helping me continue with this fascinating, exciting study.

Ellen Jones

1990 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Robin Magaddino, 2100 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4294
Vice-President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
Secretary	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Treasurer	Tommy Clark, 231 Pine Needle Lane, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-6615

DIRECTORS

Bob Ballou, Box 11881, Rt 1, Charlo, MT 59825	644-2365
Jack White, 1235 Swan River Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-6157
Bob Shennum, 2888 Swan Hwy, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-6208
Lynn Kelly, 905 B 5th Ave E, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Dick Fretheim, 904 Woodland Ave, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-5768

CHAIRS

Conservation	Rod Ash, Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Education	Jim Rogers, Box 984, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
Field Trips	Dan Casey, Box 2922, Kalispell, MT 59901	857-3143
Hospitality	Susannah Casey, Box 2922, Kalispell, MT 59901	857-3143
Audubon Adventures/ Library	Nancy Trembath, 6065 MT Hwy 35, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-6298
Membership	June Ash, Box 957, Condon, MT 59862	754-2289
Newsletter	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Program	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130
Schools/Clubs	Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Road, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-6344

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Regular monthly meetings are preceded by an Executive Board meeting, the time and place of which are published in the preceding newsletter. The business meeting (7:30) and program (8:00) are held in the downstairs meeting room of the Flathead Bank of Bigfork. These are all open meetings and all interested people are invited to attend. THE PILEATED POST is published nine times a year, September through May, and is sent to all members of the Flathead Audubon Society as one benefit of the National dues. For others who would like to receive the newsletter, the cost is \$5.00 per year. Our address is FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. Box 715, Bigfork, Montana 59911.

*- AUDUBON'S BIRTHDAY WALK
- MORE FIELD TRIPS
- AND THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD*



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