



Marilyn Wood Receives Conservation Achievement Recognition

Bigfork biologist Marilyn Wood has left a positive mark on Montana's natural landscape that will benefit people, water and wildlife for decades to come. Ironically, that was never her intention.

"I kind of fell into conservation," she said, recalling her undergraduate studies at Montana State University in the mid 1970s. "I took a lot of wildlife classes, but didn't want to be a hook-and-bullet biologist. I wanted to be a generalist, to know a little bit about everything."

Montanans who cherish our natural resources should be grateful that Wood honed her focus on conservation. Many of the richest, most vibrant wild places of northwestern Montana are conserved in perpetuity because of her rare mix of biological knowledge, emotional intelligence and dogged optimism.

"Conservation is really the people business," she said. "It's about having the ability to listen to people and find areas of common interest."

Wood grew up in rural Nevada, riding horses and interested in the outdoors. She earned her masters' degree at MSU, studying the impacts of wildfire on the ecology of Yellowstone National Park long before the historic burns of 1988.

She went to work for the Montana Department of Fish and Game (back when it was titled Fish and Game) as well as the National Park Service, the state agriculture agencies and the US Forest Service. Aside from her stints at government agencies, she worked for The Nature Conservancy and ran the Flathead Land Trust. She is now semi-retired and does work as



a consultant biologist.

She came to the Flathead as habitat conservationist at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks,

documenting the habitat lost because of erosion caused by Kerr Dam. By comparing 1938 aerial photos to modern images, and painstakingly tabulating lost land, her team documented that 1500 acres were lost forever – and deserved to be mitigated.

Wood also became involved in efforts to conserve shortgrass prairie in the Tobacco Valley in attempts to preserve the Sharp-tailed Grouse population there.

At the Flathead Land Trust, she worked on a strategy to conserve ecologically rich habitats along the Flathead River Corridor and the North Shore of Flathead Lake, many of which have taken effect.

One of her most remarkable conservation successes came while she worked for The Nature Conservancy. She worked with North Fork Landowner Tom Ladenberg to conserve the working ranch at Home Ranch Bottoms south of Polebridge. That 1100 acres had huge development potential, but is also some of the richest wildlife habitat for wolves and grizzly bears in the lower 48 states. Ladenberg was known as an outspoken critic of wilderness, the government and environmentalists.

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FEBRUARY FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, February 5, 2018. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. All welcome.

Monday, February 12, 2018. 7 PM Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

Sunday, February 18, 2018, Great Backyard Bird Count, exploring the Bigfork and Swan River area, see page 7.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Mourning Dove

By Linda de Kort

What better bird to feature in the month of St. Valentine than our native "lovebird", the Mourning Dove, *Zenaida macroura*. Mourning Doves will soon begin their breeding season, and their courtship behavior and devotion to each other is legendary.

Some of the male Mourning Doves have been able to remain here through our white winter, if they have found a friendly bird feeder or a snow-free granary. These males have a major advantage; they can ferret out the best nesting sites before the others return from their wintering grounds as far south as Panama. A male will mark his territory and proclaim his intent with his recognizable, romantic, plaintive coo. He perches with neck arched, and it appears as though every muscle is tense in an effort to make this a perfect performance to entice his future mate. The female responds with a thinner and more variable song. She chooses the nest site from within the territory the male has claimed. She will generally choose a crook of a tree, a flowerpot or even a hollow on the ground for their nest, which is made of an assembly of twigs, grass stems and pine needles.

The nest is made over 2 – 4 days with quite a bit of ritual. Each time the male returns with a twig there is an exchange of caresses and coos, followed by preening and feeding of the female by the male. The female then weaves the stems into the nest one by one. The nest is unlined because the eggs do not need insulation since the devoted pair never leaves the nest unattended. The male generally incubates during the day and the female at night. When this changing of the guard occurs, it is also accompanied by gentle nibbles and shared preening. The bonded pair can also be observed grasping beaks and bobbing their heads up and down in unison.

Mourning Doves can store large quantities of seeds in their crops so they do not have to leave the nest frequently for foraging. The crop is an enlarged portion of the esophagus.

Because the nest is always occupied by one of the parents, the eggs do not need to be speckled nor camouflaged. Mourning Dove eggs are

white, and the clutch size is generally two. Because of constant incubation chicks hatch within two weeks, and both parents immediately provide their hatchlings with rich crop milk. Crop milk is the consistency of cottage cheese and has more protein and fat than mammalian milk. Parents open their beaks, and the hatchling sticks its head into the open mouth and consumes food right from the parent's crop. They eat seeds from the parent's crop in the same fashion. Because of all this rich food and constant attention, the young are ready to leave the nest in two weeks. With this quick turnabout time from egg to fledgling (about four



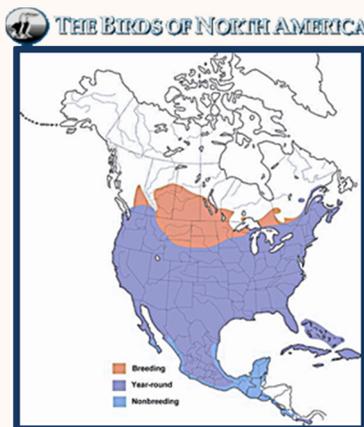
Frank de Kort

weeks), the devoted pair can begin a new brood. In Montana, Mourning Doves can raise up to three broods during the nesting season, which is from April through September.

The Mourning Dove is the only native North American bird to breed in every contiguous state.

Their U.S. population is estimated to be more than 400 million, but despite these numbers their lives tend to be short and difficult. In any given year, more than half of the adults and two-thirds of the first-year birds will die. It is a good thing that they are adapted to produce many broods per season for their population to keep up with this mortality.

The Mourning Dove is a legal game bird in most states and on their wintering range in Latin America. In the U.S. alone, hunters take more than two million birds annually. Doves also face the less visible problem of lead poisoning because they forage on the ground, and in heavily hunted upland bird areas they wind up eating fallen lead shot. In light of this evidence, it is unfortunate that last March, Ryan Zinke's first act on his first day as Interior Secretary was rescinding an order *continued on page 10*



February Program

Kari Gabriel, Montana Bird Lady

The Montana Bird Lady, Kari Gabriel, will be the featured speaker at the Monday, February 12 meeting, 7-9 PM at the Gateway West Community Room, US Highway 2 West, Kalispell.

Kari Gabriel has been working as a raptor educator, trainer and rehabilitator since 1991, following a life-long dream of working hands-on with animals.

She got her start working with bald eagles at the Alaska Raptor Center, in Sitka, Alaska, and traveled North America with an imprinted Bald Eagle, named Buddy, until relocating to Kalispell in 1997.

In 2015, Kari obtained her own federal permits to do raptor education programming, and founded "Montana Bird Lady," a raptor education and conservation organization. She has trained three permanently disabled raptors as education ambassadors, and is also per-

mitted for raptor rehabilitation through the FWP's Montana WILD education & rehabilitation facility located in Helena.

She has a male Prairie Falcon named "Jack," a female Rough-Legged Hawk named "Hawkeye," and a female Northern Saw-whet owl named "Tink," on her state and federal permits. Gabriel uses live raptors to provide education and wildlife art programming to schools and the public, to instill a sense of respect and admiration for raptors, and to promote raptor conservation and habitat preservation. Her work is mostly self-funded, and supplemented with program fees and private donations.

Kari supports her "raptor habit," by working in marketing and communications for Professional Therapy Associates, and as a 4th term city councilor for the city of Kalispell.



Photo by Sue Hagen

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Glacier National Park CBC 2017

This winter, Glacier National Park (GNP) held its annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Sunday, December 17. Twenty-nine participants contributed to this event by covering 10 different routes in Glacier, and one bird feeder in West Glacier. Participants spent the day counting all bird species and individuals detected; and the main description for this fun winter tradition this year was... "quiet". This was due to a continual freezing rain, mist, and clouds that engulfed the area and put a damper on bird activity. As one participant described it, his "pack looked like it had Krispy Crème donut icing on it", due to the rain falling in sub-freezing temperatures.

Although our overall count of individuals was low, with only 392 birds counted, participants detected 34 different species! We even added two new species! The most surprising of these were **Harris's Sparrows** observed at the lone feeder count in the circle. This participant reported having as many as four Harris's Sparrows at her bird feeder this fall. The other new species on the count was the **Wild Turkey**. A team spotted seven birds across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River as they hiked the Boundary Trail.

Some of the more unusual bird sightings included a Red-necked Grebe on the open waters of Lake McDonald. Observers on the Camas/Inside Road loop detected the rare Northern Hawk Owl. One team reported a Northern Pygmy Owl feasting on a rodent of its choice.

Black-capped Chickadees were the most abundant bird species detected with 61 individuals counted, followed by Canada Goose at a count of 54. No additional species were detected during count week (3 days before and 3 days after count day).

Glacier's CBC started in 1962, and contributed to the 118th year of the National Audubon Society's CBC. Thanks to all participants for contributing their expertise, time, and energy for this annual event. Your efforts are invaluable in tracking long-term changes in species abundance, diversity, and range changes, in Glacier and throughout North America! Looking forward to our next outing and remember...2018 is the 'Year of the Bird' so stay tuned for more birding events! *Lisa Bate, compiler*

Bigfork CBC 2017

The 44th annual Bigfork Christmas Bird Count was held Saturday, December 16th, under cloudy skies and mild weather conditions; snow depth 1-4 inches, temperatures ranged from 28-34 degrees F with little or no wind. Rivers and lakes were mostly open and there was a little ice on Flathead Lake at the edges.

Thirty-nine volunteer participants counted **18,847** individual birds of **98** species (a new record for the Bigfork CBC), up from 79 species recorded last year. The overall number of birds increased from last year by about 34%, mostly because of the mild fall/winter. There was one new bird species found this year, a 1st cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull!** Highlights were twenty-five **Snow Geese, Cackling Goose, Wood Duck, Glaucous Gull**, one ad. female **Pere-**

grine Falcon, Sandhill Crane, one imm. **Snowy Owl**, a female **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, sixteen **Rusty Blackbirds**, and a **Brown-headed Cowbird**.

There was one Gray Partridge and one Evening Grosbeak seen during count week. We had a record high of 39 Western Grebes, 55 Trumpeter Swans, 526 Ring-necked Ducks, 765 Greater Scaup, 231 Hooded Mergansers, 82 Bald Eagles, 4 Merlins, 11 Killdeer, 5 Wilson Snipe, and 172 Eurasian Collared-Doves for the count!

Thank you to all the great participants who helped make this a best CBC count ever!

Craig Hohenberger, Compiler

Kalispell CBC 2017

The 19th annual Kalispell CBC was held on Sunday, December 31. A total of 78 species were counted. This is a respectable number given the harsh weather conditions (subzero temperatures, up to 3 feet of snow).

The count's first ever Northern Shoveler was found as well as the second ever Common Grackle. Record high numbers were reached for Trumpeter Swan (4), Eurasian Collared Dove (749) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (126).

Also, a report of a Snowy Owl was received. The bird was seen at the junction of Batavia Road and Boorman Lane west of Kalispell. This would be the 3rd ever Snowy Owl for this circle.

Birds conspicuous by their absences were Gray Jay, Great Horned Owl and American Dipper.

All in all, it was a good day. Many thanks to the 28 intrepid field observers and the 8 slightly less intrepid feeder watchers that contributed data.

Pete Fisher, Compiler

2017 EUREKA CBC

The 25th annual Eureka Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 16 in mild weather that ranged from 22F to 35F. Twenty-two field observers and 15 feeder watchers recorded 69 species and 2779 individual birds. The 69 species were the second highest total in our history.

Three new species were reported on count day—Northern Shoveler, White-winged Scoter and Chipping Sparrow (note: CBC reviewers did not accept the Chipping Sparrow report). Record high counts were recorded for Redhead (10), American Coot (14), Killdeer (22), Eurasian Collared-dove (139), European Starling (125), Blue Jay (8), Red-breasted Nuthatch (126), Pygmy Nuthatch (24), and Brown Creeper (10).

Canada Goose (331) was the most numerous

species observed and other most common birds included Common Raven (212), Wild Turkey (210), and Black-capped Chickadee (181). Only 1-3 individuals were seen for 20 species such as American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Western Grebe, and Golden Eagle.

For only the second time in count history, a Prairie Falcon was sighted and for only the 3rd time, Red-naped Sapsuckers. Horned Grebe was seen only during count week.

Thanks to all the participants for making this another enjoyable CBC!

Lewis Young, Compiler

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from January 2, 2018 Board Meeting

- ◆ Because FAS made only about \$4,000 from the 2018 calendar sales we will not produce another phenology calendar next year.
- ◆ FAS plans to apply for inclusion in the Great Fish Challenge sponsored by the Whitefish Community Foundation.
- ◆ No Birdathon is planned for this year because FAS is hosting the Montana Audubon Bird Festival in June.
- ◆ Bruce Tannehill reviewed the FAS books from the past year and found everything to be in good order.

Troy CBC 2017

The Troy Christmas Bird count was scheduled to be on December 30th 2017 but was postponed one day (the 31st) as the Troy area experienced a large snowstorm dumping 14+ inches of snow. Due to the change in count dates, we lost a number of participants due to conflicts. We still managed to pull together 12+ folks to cover our count area and a few feeder watchers. Our count has never really resembled a circle but this year it looked more like a snake that had just eaten. We could only go about 1/2 mile east or west of our center but thankfully for county and state roads that were plowed, we were able to make it to our most northern and Southern points. Snow levels varied from 20-30+ inches.

Our total species count was 47 with two spe-

cies in Count Week (Sharp-shinned Hawk & White-throated Sparrow). Birds that were common to previous counts but absent this year were both Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Great Horned Owl, Robin and Pygmy Owl. In previous years we have had a couple of hardy individuals boat the Kootenai River, but snow and ice prevented that this year and our count suffered as the Kootenai is about our only open water and most of it was not covered or not covered well. The potluck was great that night at our house and we'll do better and have even more fun next year.

Don Jones, Compiler

Education Committee News

The Education Committee designed the 'Adopt-a-School' program during our January meeting. The program's intent is to increase teachers' access to the educational trunks so that students have the opportunity to learn about birds, conservation and local habitat. We hope Flathead Audubon members will adopt a school. Involvement can be as easy as delivering and returning a trunk to a school of your choice in your neighborhood.

Linda de Kort shared the contents of the 'Cavity Nesters' trunk at our general meeting. The audience had the opportunity to look at the activity book, DVDs and CDs, a packet of photographs of twenty-four cavity nesters, and a Pileated Woodpecker skull. A felt woodpecker puppet and accompanying puppet for students to make were also shown. Linda described how she has adopted an area school to sup-

port teachers' efforts to teach students about the natural world.

A sub-committee will address how to implement the 'Adopt-a-School' program, consider additional curriculum for the trunks, and will find permanent storage for the trunks. Thanks, Linda de Kort, Denny Olson, and Rod Walette for joining in this endeavor.

We will bring other trunks to the next several Audubon meetings for you to review. Is there a school you could adopt to help children and youth learn about birds, climate change and conservation? Please sign up at our next meeting, or contact Denny at docwild.mt@gmail.com.

Happy Birding!

by Gail Shay Linne, Education Chair



SAVE THE DATE!

June 8-10, 2018 Kalispell, Montana
Red Lion Hotel

Montana Audubon's 19th annual Wings Across the Big Sky bird festival is coming to Kalispell in June 2018! Our longstanding community event draws birders and wildlife enthusiasts from around the state and beyond, to celebrate Montana's birds and the landscapes they inhabit. The festival is co-sponsored by the **Flathead Audubon Society**.

Visit our website for festival updates: mtaudubon.org

- Field trips to Glacier and other breathtaking areas in the Flathead region**
- Silent Auction: bid on a private tour to an amazing Montana destination**
- Birding & conservation Presentations**
- Evening Banquet, Dessert Auction and More**



Conservation Educator's Niche

By Denny Olson

We are about to transition into the traditional winter-spring conservation education schedule – Great Backyard Bird Count with at least two different schools, FVCC Senior Institute Birds of NW Montana for six weeks, four weeks of the Beauty of Birds class for the general public at Flathead High School (Wednesday evenings), Earth Day Celebration at Whitefish High School April 21, Arbor Day and International Migratory Bird Day celebrations in Kalispell and Pablo (dates TBD), Family Forestry Expo on May 5th, and Field trips to Owen Sowerwine Natural Area with school groups throughout the spring.

The field trip groups will have better access from here on, with Kalispell Montessori providing parking and bus drop-off, and we will have a new connector trail with walkways over seasonally wet areas between the Montessori grounds and out existing OSNA trail system.

In the background, there is always something going on, and this year is no exception. We will be moving our trunk storage area from the NW Montana Educational Coop to Lone Pine State Park. The Coop is moving to a much smaller space in the early spring, and there is no room for us there. It is the end of a wonderful relationship between FAS and the Coop which has been going for decades, and we are extremely grateful for their help over the years.

Lone Pine State Park jumped in to help, and will provide storage space in their downstairs area for us. It is a nice reciprocal relationship for both us and

them, as they have been frequent users of our trunks in the past.

And, the trunks are being overhauled a bit. We are adding new activities to most of them which follow a “call to action” theme. For example, the Cavity Nester's Trunk will culminate in some construction and placement of bird nest boxes. We also will be adding curriculum with two very important conservation themes, (1) the value of birds to us and to the world (why they matter), and (2) how the rate of climate change is already affecting bird survival.

We also will be correlating every activity in our trunks with New Generation Science Standards, to make them even more teacher-friendly than they already are. And speaking of teacher-friendly, we are going to beat the drums for a new set of volunteer FAS School Ambassadors to promote trunk use in the schools, identify teacher users, help with transportation to and from schools and generally shepherd the trunk use in their adopted school. So if you are interested in helping with this, please let us know!

Off in the distance, we are looking at producing a new Osprey Trunk, which will lead to some wonderful conservation messages and field trip opportunities in OSNA to watch Ospreys, and also to provide research opportunities for local high school students. Exciting horizons ahead!

SHORT-EARED OWL MONITORING—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Owl Research Institute is embarking on a 3-year collaborative study to monitor Short-eared Owl populations in the western U.S. The study will rely on volunteers to make it a success.

Project WAFLS (Western Asio flammeus Landscape Study), involves 15 other agencies and organizations across 8 states and is designed to assess the population status, trends, and threats against the Short-eared Owl – an enigmatic, open-country species.

Volunteers will be asked to select one of 50 grids in the state and will be responsible for two 1.5 hour visits, each occurring in a separate 3 week window (March/April and April/May). The timing for a given route is dependent upon elevation. It is a road based survey (8



- 11 points along a secondary road, separated by 1/2 mile) that starts 100 minutes before darkness, and finishes 10 minutes after darkness. The survey timing is set to coincide with the Short-eared Owls elaborate courtship displays. Check out this video from partner Neil Paprocki (Hawkwatch International) in Utah: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-YKEmTvEQE>

More information, maps, and sign-up will be coming shortly. In the meantime, if you're interested in learning more about this ambitious project or want to know how to participate, please contact Matt Larson, Research Director – Owl Research Institute, Cell (701) 866-5771, Email: owlinstitute@outlook.com

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 at 837-3837 or Cory Davis at 257-3166, 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.



FIFTH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT, EXPLORING THE BIGFORK AND SWAN RIVER AREA, SUNDAY, FEB. 18, 2018, 10AM-1PM. Join us for an exciting morning of birding and learning about our winter avian residents of this area. We will be visiting local feeders to ID and count our wintering songbirds including 3 different species of Chickadees and Golden-crowned Kinglets, as well as many other feeder surprises. Exploring the River corridor and surrounding fields by car, we hope to see Trumpeter Swans, Bald Eagles and perhaps resident Pygmy Owls. This is an excellent outing for families with children, as well as bird lovers of all ages. Minimal walking to some view areas. Dress warm, bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes. Contact Kathy Ross for information about meeting place and to sign up, 406-837-3837, or mtkat67@gmail.com. Limited to 15 participants.

FREEZOUT LAKE AND THE SNOW GEESE MIGRATION, March 24-25, 2018. The Snow Geese are moving from their California wintering grounds to their arctic nesting areas along with thousands of other waterfowl. There is nothing like Snow Geese and the Rocky Mountains at the same time and place. The place is Freezout Lake near Choteau; the time is the annual Flathead Audubon field trip. We will meet on Saturday morning at 10 AM, caravan/carpool to Choteau and arrive in time for the afternoon "fly-out." After spending a night in Choteau, we will head back out just before daybreak to watch the "mass ascension" of geese 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 Lee will provide a suggested schedule and route, and will be in the front of the group. Participants may choose to pursue the geese on their own as much or as little as they, the weather and the birds allow. Please make your own arrangements for lodging; primitive camping is available at Freezout WMA. Motel options include the Stage Stop (406-466-5900), Gunther (406-466-5444) and Big Sky (406-466-5318). Make your reservations early as these hotels will likely fill up. For more information, including the meeting location, contact Bob Lee at 270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net.

WINTER/SPRING ECOLOGY OF THE OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA, Saturday, March 31, 2018 9AM-3PM. Come with us for a magical mystery tour of one of the most unique areas in the Flathead Valley! Our guide will be Brian Baxter, forester and wildlife researcher, who has taught outdoor educational programs for over 16 years. We'll begin with a 1-hour classroom session to view and discuss the slide presentation "The Essence of Animal Tracking." Then we'll walk into Owen Sowerwine to visit its wetlands, and study the wildlife, vegetation, and predator/prey relationships that give this area its special flavor. As we quietly enter along the southern trails, we will search for and identify the track patterns and sign of the weasel family, muskrat, beaver, and water loving birds such as Great Blue Heron and American Dipper. All the while, we will scope for birds of prey, waterfowl, woodpeckers, and songbirds. Come prepared for the day, with proper layers, lunch, water, binoculars, spotting scope, bird books, and waterproof boots or snowshoes as conditions require. Trip is limited to 15 participants. To sign up and get the meeting location contact Brian Baxter at b_baxter53@yahoo.com or 406-291-2154.



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

FireSafe Flathead

Rick Trembath's presentation at last month's general meeting blended his interest in wildfires and birds, so we'd like to follow up with more information about a local FireSafe Flathead group and tips on how to prepare for our next inevitable wildfire season.

Our Flathead area is covered in forests that have evolved with wildfire and can be expected to burn with fires of various size and intensity depending on the conditions of a particular fire season. It's also an area growing in population, as development pushes out into areas of forest, brush, and grass, otherwise known as the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).



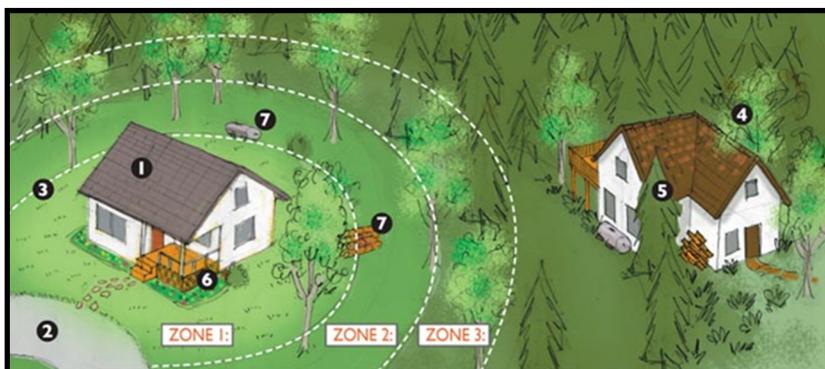
Because of these factors, there is a local FireSafe Flathead group excited about connecting individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, and wildland fire professionals interested in creating fire-

adapted communities. Here are just a few ways to get started:

- * "Harden" your home by building or retro-fitting with ignition-resistant construction.
- * Incorporate Firewise landscaping concepts in a "lean, clean, and green" area immediately surrounding your home (i.e. create a 5-foot noncombustible perimeter, minimize use of wood mulch, keep grass trimmed short, install gravel paths and irrigated garden beds of high moisture plants)

- * Break up forest fuel continuity by pruning tree branches up 6 to 10 feet from the ground and thinning trees so that there is at least 10-feet between the longest branches.
- * Create a Wildfire Action Plan for your family that includes: contacts list, home inventory, an evacuation plan, and an emergency go-bag for every member. Take special care and plan for extra time needed for pets, those with special needs, elderly, and children.
- * Be aware of local fire conditions, work with your community, host a firewise event...

Contact FireSafe Flathead members Rick Trembath or Ali Ulwelling (wildfire prevention, educa-



tion, and information specialist for the Montana DNRC) if you are interested in a presentation specific to your community or would like more information about preparing for wildfire!

by Ali Ulwelling

Bird Collisions with Windows

Bird collisions with windows continue to be a major source of mortality for our feathered friends especially near feeders. A variety of methods exist to prevent or reduce collisions and American Bird Conservancy has good information on how to make windows more bird friendly on their website (<https://abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions/bird-friendly-window-solutions/>).

A method new to me but apparently well documented in other areas is the use of hanging pieces of dark parachute chord spaced about 3.5 to 4.25

inches apart. A commercial product called AcopianBirdSavers utilizes this method but also provides directions on how to make your own (<https://www.birdsavers.com/buildyourown.html>).



© Acopian BirdSavers

www.birdsavers.com/buildyourown.html

They appear simple to make, don't look too bad, maintain good visibility out the window, are inexpensive, and highly rated. If you have tried other methods that haven't worked as well as you would like, these appear to be worth a try. *Lewis Young, Conservation Committee*

Lisa Bate Harlequin Duck Presentation

Glacier National Park Biologist Lisa Bate will be presenting her ever-popular **What is a Sea Duck Doing in Glacier?** on February 11 at 2:30 PM at the Museum at Central School as part of the ongoing John White Series. The presentation is about Lisa's

dedicated work in GNP and the Harlequin Duck's success in the Montana high county as well as the struggles faced by the species. There is an admission of \$9 for non-members and \$6 for museum members.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

You Can Be Part of the Team, Every Bird Counts

The 21st annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held February 16-19, 2018. The GBBC is a free, fun and easy event that engages bird appreciators of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations around the world. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes or spend the day(as long as you wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and then report their sightings on line at birdcount.org. All the instructions to participate are at this website, along with lots of bird-wise information and a photo contest you can enter. Anyone can take part in the GBBC, from

beginning bird watchers to experts and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. If you know a local teacher in the valley, consider FAS Adopt-a-School (or classroom) program. The GBBC is a great way to engage young people in the world around them. For more information about the GBBC and how you can participate, contact Kathy @ 837-3837. Become a Citizen Scientist in your own backyard. You count, every bird counts!



diyncrafts.com

Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks—ID Tips

Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks may be seen on a Backyard Bird Count as well as many other places and they pose a real ID challenge, even for longtime birders. Throughout the year there is great variation in plumage and in size for these two species. They look so much alike that no single field mark stands out to help bird watchers easily tell one from the other. Size is the defining factor, but that's sometimes hard to judge with a single bird. The rule of thumb is that a Cooper's Hawk is about the size of an American Crow and the Sharp-shinned Hawk is more the size of a jay. Other ID help may be found in field guides and online especially at Allaboutbirds.org. Adapted from Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Cooper's Hawk

Long, rounded tails with a broad white band. The middle tail feathers are usually the longest

Dark cap. Feathers on back of head often raised giving it a crested look never seen on the Sharp-shinned

Slow wing beats that could easily be counted

The head projects far beyond the wings

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Square, long tail. Outer feathers usually the longest

Hooded appearance from dark feathers on crown and neck

Quick, erratic wingbeats

Small head barely extends beyond wings

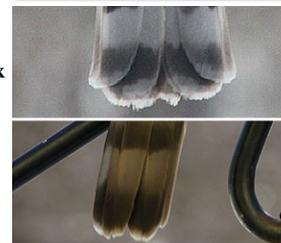
Cooper's Hawk

David Lang, top
Gerald Levitz, bottom



Sharp-shinned Hawk

Robin Solomon, top
Frank Moltz, bottom



2018 Beauty of Birds Class

April is our traditional month to get local newcomers (and old-timers!) into the fantastic world of birds and birding through our *Beauty of Birds Class* at Flathead High School. The classes are sequential, for two hours each Wednesday evening, April 4, 11, 17 and 24. Topics will be: Bird-Brain Stories; Bird Topog-

raphy and Identification Techniques; The Magic of Flight; A Closer look at Bird Songs and Calls; Live Hawks, Falcons and Owls; Bird Song ID Strategies ... and a Field Trip to local birding hotspots!

Call Flathead High School to enroll in the class, and join us in the fun!

Marilyn Wood continued from page 1

However, Wood found that he shared a love of the land and concern over the wildlife, particularly the elk that wintered on his ranch. After decades of discussions and negotiations, Ladenberg and TNC were able to sign conservation easements, perpetually protecting Home Ranch Bottoms from development, while protecting traditional uses of the land.

"We ended up inking that deal at Syke's," Wood recalled, a humble café favored by Kalispell's older clientele. Conservation, after all, is about meeting people where they are.

Over the decades, Wood has watched conservation change from protecting "postage stamp" properties with rare plants, for example, to strategies that incorporate landscape principles of island bio-

geography. That is, that it's not enough to protect biological hot-spots; it's also crucial to link those spots together over larger areas.

But perhaps the largest lesson of Wood's career is that conservation is much more than just drawing circles on maps. To succeed, conservationists must also win the hearts and minds of the locals who live on the land. That's when the magic happens.

"It's a remarkable feeling to go back and look at a piece of habitat that you have helped conserve and – decades later – find it just as it was when you first saw it. Meanwhile, the world around it has changed so much. That's a cool legacy. That feels good." *by Ben Long*

Mourning Dove continued from page 2

that banned the use of lead ammunition on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands. Predators, including house cats and bad weather, are also limiting factors to these gentle birds.

Some have feared that the rapid increase in numbers of the non-native Eurasian Collared-Dove might have negative effects on our native doves. The

Mourning Dove's long slender tail distinguishes it readily from the square-tailed Collared-dove. The Eurasian Collared-Dove is also a bit larger and has a dark ring around the back of the neck rather than the



Mourning Dove's sweet cheek smudges. Over the past decade, in spite of the invasion of the Eurasian Collared-Dove, the population of our native Mourning Dove seems to have remained steady. We hope that they continue to flourish.

If you would like to attract these graceful, melodious birds to your yard, you can plant dense native shrubs or evergreens, pro-

vide seeds on a platform feeder and keep your cats inside. Then anticipate the soulful coo of this tender bird as courtship begins.

Science on Tap Flathead

Dr. Robert Korechoff will present "The Hubble Space Telescope: A Quarter Century of Remarkable Discoveries." February 6, 6 PM at the Flathead Lake Brewing Company.

Dr. Korechoff (retired) has been an aerospace and optical engineer for 43 years; the last 26 years as an optical engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena, CA. The Hubble Space Telescope is

arguably the most important astronomical instrument ever built. This presentation will describe the Hubble Observatory and the advantages of a telescope in space and how it was repaired in orbit. He was involved with the design and build of the second generation Wide Field/Planetary Camera (WF/PC 2). This camera was the principal imaging instrument for the Hubble Space Telescope for 15 years.

Wildfire Lecture Series

The University of Montana Alumni Association in its 2018 Community Lecture Series is sponsoring six lectures on Wildfires from February 20 to March 27. The lectures will be held on Tuesday evening from 7-8:30 pm at the University Center Theater on the university campus. The speakers will be University of Montana faculty and will focus on the complexity of wildfires while examining the history, science and poli-

cy of forest management, as well as, the impacts on our health and economic resources.

Tickets are for the entire series and range in cost as follows: \$25 for general public, \$20 for UMAA members, \$10 for students and \$5 at the door.

Call (406) 243-5211 to order or go to www.grizalum.org to purchase tickets online.



Thank You!

We wish to give a hearty "Thank You" to our members who contributed to the year-end appeal. Thanks to you we received a total of \$3645.50, \$2185.50 from non-board members and \$1460 from the board. The money, of course goes to support our Conservation Education activity.

Flathead Chapter of Montana Native Plant Society

Thursday, February 15. 7 PM

Hometown Habitat: Stories of Bringing Nature Home

Join us for a screening of this new video illustrating how the use of native plants in landscaping is revitalizing ecosystems across the country. Followed by a discussion of the film and native plant gardening in the Flathead. North Valley Community Hall (also North Valley Physical Therapy), 235 Nucleus Ave., Columbia Falls.

2018 FAS CALENDAR

It's not too late to get one of the wonderful calendars chock full of great photos and daily tips on what's happening out in Glacier Country. Pick up the calendar at our general meeting, on our website, or at various stores in northwestern Montana. Find out more at: flatheadaudubon.org/calendar.



GLACIER COUNTRY

2018 Phenology Calendar

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

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Be sure to check flatheadaudubon.org for

- Late breaking FAS news and announcements
- Online FAS membership sign up or renewal
- Latest eBird reports on species being observed in the Flathead area



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Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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FEBRUARY 2018

White-breasted Nuthatch



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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 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: lindawin626@gmail.com. Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin626@gmail.com

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FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY Membership Individual or Family

- Basic Membership \$25 Pays for newsletter and operating costs
Supporting Membership \$40 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

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