



Flathead Electric Co-Op receives Conservation Achievement Recognition

Flathead Audubon is pleased to recognize Flathead Electric Co-op for our Conservation Achievement Recognition award. Flathead Electric is one of the most progressive electric cooperatives in Montana and probably in the west and for good reason! A brief mention of the many efforts Flathead Electric Co-op is involved with follows. Fuller details are available on the Flathead Audubon website www.FlatheadAudubon.org.

Are you aware that the Flathead Valley has a community solar project? Did you know that methane gas from the Flathead County Land fill is being recovered and converted to electricity so that this potent greenhouse gas doesn't escape into the atmosphere or groundwater? Did you know that you can save about \$4/month by allowing your electric hot water heater to be occasionally turned off for short periods of time? These are just a few of the many innovative conservation and energy efficiency programs that Flathead Electric Co-op has implemented over the last 5-10 years. These new programs are some of the first in the state. And this is only the beginning; Flathead Electric has many more creative and forward-thinking plans in the works.

Landfill Gas Plant- "Your garbage is producing your power." That's how Flathead County Public Works Director Dave Prunty describes Flathead Electric Co-op's biomass project at the landfill. The 1.6 megawatt generator that burns the methane provides enough electricity to serve up to 1,600 households.

F. H. Stoltze Land & Lumber- Flathead Electric Co-op and F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company signed a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement in 2013. The long-term agreement was needed to help Stoltze secure the necessary finances to replace an antiquat-

ed boiler and construct a biomass-fueled electric generation facility at their plant near Columbia Falls.

Whitefish Hydro- In 2012, Flathead Electric Co-op signed a two-phase power purchase agreement with the City of Whitefish for the advance purchase of electricity generated from the city's hydro-electric generator. The project benefitted Whitefish who needed to refurbish the hydro power plant and gave Flathead Electric another local source of clean energy .

Community Solar -The SUN (Solar Utility Network), Montana's **first** community solar array, was officially dedicated in 2015. By 2016, all 356 solar panels in the array had been purchased (for \$900 per panel) by members who support investing in alternative energy. The 356 solar panels total 100kW of output. This enables people to participate in solar energy without the large expense of a complete system at their location and for those who don't have the proper roof orientation or those with shading issues.



Electric Vehicle Committee- In 2015, Flathead Electric Co-op installed Montana's **first** Charge-point Vehicle Charging Station in the front parking lot of their Kalispell Headquarters in Evergreen. The charging station is available for anyone who wants to pull in and power-up their electric vehicles.

Rebates for Electric Hot Water Heaters- Recently, Flathead Electric developed a unit that can be placed on your residential electric water heater that allows the heater to be turned off briefly during peak demand times. The duration is short, maybe 30

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APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

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

Monday, April 9, 2018. 7 PM Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

Saturday, April 21, 2018, Waterfowl at the West Valley Ponds, 9 AM-noon, see page 5.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Hairy Woodpecker

By Mary Nelesen

As you may know, 2018 has been declared the “Year of the Bird”, by National Geographic, along with the National Audubon Society, BirdLife International and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Its purpose is to celebrate the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act passed in 1918 to protect birds from wanton killing. It would be difficult to image a world without the beauty of birds. To quote Jonathan Franzen from the January 2018 issue of National Geographic in his cover story *Why Birds Matter*, “It’s not just what they do for the environment – it’s what they do for our souls.”

Last summer as I sat watching hummingbirds at my feeder, a female Hairy Woodpecker arrived and landed on the feeder causing all the hummingbirds to scatter.

This was my first experience with a woodpecker feeding on sugar water. Typically I see them at the suet feeder or foraging on trees looking for insects, particularly wood-boring beetle larvae. They consume some fruits, seeds and plant material as well as tree sap. So I decided to do some research on woodpeckers and specifically on the fascinating behavior of the Hairy woodpecker, a member of the genus *Picoides* family.

The genus *Picoides* is the largest group of woodpeckers in North America, with nine species which includes the Downy and Hairy, American three-toed, Black-backed, Ladder-backed, Arizona, Nuttall’s, Red-cockaded and White-headed woodpeckers. This group has been referred to as pied woodpeckers because of their mixed black and white plumage. The males are slightly heavier than

females and have longer bills and shorter tails.

Specifically, the Hairy has a white stripe down the center of its black back and plain white underparts. The black wings are marked with white spots and the tail is black with white outer tail feathers. The males have a narrow band of red across the nape. Females have no red markings. The Hairy is nearly identical to the Downy, differing mainly in size and bill length. The Hairy measures approx. 9.25” to the Downy’s 6.75”.

Hairy Woodpeckers have one of the most extensive ranges of any North American woodpecker. Its call note is a loud, sharp “peek”. When agitated, it makes a whinnying call to sound alarm, which is a series of notes “peek rr kr” on one pitch. Courtship

includes both birds drumming in duet and tapping at nest site by females. In the west, aspens or dead conifers are often chosen and excavated by both sexes. The pair bonds are maintained year-round in some cases and may last lifelong. Clutch size ranges from 3 to 6 or 7 white eggs. Both parents incubate and feed chicks for approximately four weeks. They have one brood per year. There has been a noted decline in Hairys in many areas, thought to be due to forest fragmentation, loss of old-growth trees, and competition with European starlings for nest sites. Although they are mostly a permanent resident, some birds from the northern edges of their range may move south in winter and from high mountain ranges to lower regions.

As an aside, I have been told the best way to lure sugar-water loving woodpeckers away from the feeder is to place halved oranges, suet dough, or a small dish of jelly nearby. If all else fails, sit back and enjoy the show. Happy bird watching!



Mary Nelesen



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THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA



April Program

The Search for Black Swifts

A Species of Concern, Inventory Need and Legend

presented by Chris Hammond

Join us Monday, April 9, 7-9 PM at the Gateway West Community Room, US Highway 2 West, Kalispell, for an informative and entertaining program on Black Swifts. Chris Hammond will discuss this unusual neotropical migrant bird that initiates nesting in Montana when most other birds are completing their breeding season, with young not fledging until August or September. Black Swifts are reliant upon perennial streams, waterfalls, and insect prey for survival and are considered

at high risk of extirpation, due to climate change. In 2015, Canadian biologists listed Black Swifts as endangered due to significant population declines. Since 2012, partnerships have coalesced around the search for this elusive and hard-to-detect bird, striving for



standardized surveys that can shed light on the bird's presence and distribution in Montana.

Chris Hammond works for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks as the Regional Nongame/Mitigation Biologist in Kalispell. He is responsible for survey, inventory, management, and conservation of primarily nongame wildlife species. He also works on mitigation projects that involve conservation easements, acquisitions, and habitat restoration. His undergraduate and graduate work focused

on the ecology of Common Loons in northwest Montana. In 2010, with collaboration from members of the Common Loon Working Group, he completed the [Conservation Plan for Common Loons in Montana](#). Chris is currently a co-chair of the Montana Common Loon Working Group.

Not "Justa" Bird

While on a bird walk in Yosemite National Park with a naturalist with the Yosemite Conservancy, someone saw a bird and said something along the lines of, "Oh that's just a raven" or something to that affect. The naturalist cleverly noted that in his bird books, he's never seen any species named "Justa". Sure, he can find an American Robin, but there are no Justa Robins.

As I was looking at my feeder, I found myself looking at Justa Flicker. I put my binoculars on this common visitor to my feeder and noticed that this particular male Northern Flicker not only had the red whiskers, but also a stripe of red across the nape; the sure sign of an intergrade! (An intergrade is a cross between the red-shafted and yellow-shafted species of Northern Flickers.)



Jake Bramante

Of course, I would argue first that the Northern Flicker is a rather handsome bird, albeit a funny cocktail of fashion sense mixing stripes with polka dots. Spending some time looking at them is a worthwhile

endeavor from the flashy colors, incredible long tongue, and charismatic antics. That being said, I was reminded that taking a second look was worth it to find something special. I wouldn't be the first birder to find a unique sparrow amongst House Sparrows or a rare gull amongst Ring-billed Gulls.

So whether you have a flock of House Sparrows, Northern Flickers, or gulls, take an extra look. There are no "Justa"

birds. You might even end up with an even more exceptional one.

by Jake Bramante



Conservation Educator's Niche

By Denny Olson

The Value of Solitude

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be."
- Anne Frank

"I'll tell you what hermits realize. If you go off into a far, far forest and get very quiet, you'll come to understand that you're connected with everything."
- Alan Watts

"Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone."
- Paul Tillich

We are a social species, and for good reasons. Feeling part of a community leads to healthier immune systems and disease survival, better motor skills and cognition, and living longer lives. We are "packish", "clannish" and "village-y". Belonging is a paramount strategy for survival and well-being.

Being "alone" almost always has negative connotations. The concept of "loneliness" likely drives the busy-ness of our social contacts. This is especially true of our younger generations, even young children. Smart phones, pagers, car radios, televisions and an expectation of wi-fi service wherever we go -- all help to make sure that we aren't really alone. We take smart phones to bed with us, and laptops when we "get away" on vacation. We are only a push of a button away from contact. With stimuli coming from every direction, we are multi-tasking almost constantly. And, socially, our culture implies that being alone is equivalent to "lacking" something, or someone. "Alone" humans feel pressure to be apologetic about it.

Interestingly, a casual "google" on the word "solitude" brings up a profusion of articles tying solitude to being "alone with God" or alone with one's self -- both of which are oxymorons. It is impossible to be alone and "with" at the same time. The terms seem to arise from a need for reassurance that being alone (with no one) is inherently frightening.

When practiced, *solitude* isn't nearly as scary as it might seem to those who shy from it. And it does seem to have some research-based benefits. Student who study solo have better recall than those who study in groups. It is simply mathematical -- more dis-

tractions, less concentration. Teenagers, whose lives are developmentally more susceptible to peer pressure, usually don't describe solitude as a positive experience, but do admit to feeling better afterward, and are less likely to self-report depression.

When indigenous cultures were more traditionally tied to nature, which happened on every continent and island, solitude was celebrated and formalized with multi-day vision quests, tests of self-sufficiency, and personal growth. Solitude had power, and was sanctified even in the Christian tradition by Jesus of Nazareth himself; according to accounts in gospels written by Matthew, Mark and Luke, he spent 40 solid days and nights in the wilderness, in solitude. He certainly knew that extended, direct contact with nature breaks all complexity into its basic simple truths.

Many Eastern traditions have solo meditation, often in natural settings, as a central tenet in the path to "enlightenment". For the most part, they choose a very quiet place where distractions are minimal before starting the meditative process. Usually, that is in a natural setting.

From my experiences with extended solitude, I can opine that *being alone* is not easy -- without the help of a sensory deprivation tank. But *solitude* is a bit different in purpose. On a four-day solo canoe trip in Ontario, I did not see another human -- even at a dis-



Hellmancanoes.com

tance. Yet, every evening at dark, mosquitoes and bats came calling. Crayfish entertained me foraging in the rocks next to shore. I watched a garter snake sense a June-beetle on the far side of a rock with its vibration-sensitive belly, circle the rock, and have a small crunchy lunch. When I was sitting quietly in the

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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.



WATERFOWL AT THE WEST VALLEY PONDS, Saturday, April 21, 2018 9 AM-12:00 PM. Join us as we visit several ponds in the West Valley area during waterfowl migration. We should see many of the Valley's waterfowl and shorebirds. Be prepared for any kind of weather, including footwear for walking on muddy roads. Depending on road conditions, we may need to walk a short distance (<1/4 mile) to viewing areas. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Please RSVP to Cory Davis at 406-471-3314, or piranga99@gmail.com. Limited to 25 people.

BIRDING THE NORTH MISSION VALLEY, MAY 6. Join Janene Lichtenberg to explore the wetlands, grasslands, and forests of the northern Flathead Reservation. Details will be posted on the FAS webpage and in the May Pileated Post.

SPRING ARRIVALS IN THE SMITH LAKE AREA, Saturday, May 19, 8 AM-12 PM. Join us for a spring morning of birding west of Kalispell. We'll drive Smith Lake Road looking for recently arrived sparrows, orioles, warblers, and other breeding migrants and then make our way to Smith Lake to look for waterfowl and wetland species. We should have a good diversity of habitats and species! Bring binocs and scopes and appropriate weather gear. To RSVP contact Cory Davis at 406-471-3314, or piranga99@gmail.com. Limited to 20 people.

SEE OUR FULL LIST OF FIELD TRIPS FOR THE WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY BIRD FESTIVAL, JUNE 9-10, KALISPELL RED LION: <http://mtaudubon.org/birding/montana-bird-festival/>

GOING BATTY! Friday, August 10, 2018, 8:30 PM-11 PM. This cooperative trip between Flathead Audubon and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks will go to a site with known bat activity where electronic equipment will be used to detect the ultrasonic calls of bats flying overhead, and mist nets will be used to capture bats for closer inspection. Wildlife biologists Lewis Young, Lisa Bate, and Chris Hammond will demonstrate the equipment, handle bats captured in mist nets, and talk about the amazing adaptations bats have for navigating, catching food, and hibernating. Participants will not be allowed to touch or handle bats. Headlamps or flashlights are necessary and come with suitable clothing for the evening temperatures as the day cools. **Trip is limited to 25 participants**. To sign up contact Kathy Ross at 837-3837 or mkat67@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 19, 6 PM, Native Plant Trivia Night.

Grab some friends, eat good food and put on your thinking cap! Trivia starts at 6 PM. Each brew sold from 5-8 will benefit the Montana Native Plant Society, so bring a designated driver and help out Native Plants! Backslope Brewing, 1107 9th St. W (N side of HWY 2), Columbia Falls. This is not an event designed for native plant experts, but will be fun for everyone. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – ALL ARE MOST WELCOME!!

THANKS *Andrew Beltz and Forestoration, Inc.*

A big THANK YOU to Andrew Beltz and Forestoration, Inc., Whitefish, for helping members of the Owen Sowerwine Committee put together a grant proposal to fund weed management at OSNA for the next two years. Andrew's expertise, thoroughness, and collaborative skills, were crucial to the project. Forestoration generously gave Flathead Audubon a reduced hourly rate on the many hours Andrew put into the project, and in addition, contributed half of Andrew's time on the project as an in-kind donation to Flathead Audubon.

In May 2009, Flathead Audubon presented a Conservation Achievement Recognition to Forestoration for "growing and marketing exclusively native plants" in the Valley. Andrew was one of the Forestoration representatives who attended that meeting to receive the Recognition. Forestoration continues to market native plants and use them in landscaping and restoration projects. The company's support for this recent Owen Sowerwine project is yet another demonstration of their commitment to conservation in the Flathead Valley. *by Linda Winnie*

Education Committee News

The FAS Education Committee welcomes Flathead High School science teacher Renee Cordes to serve on our committee. Renee's expertise and contact with educators along with her commitment to educating youth will enrich our committee's work. Thanks, Renee for joining us.

Our committee met March 5 to evaluate the 2017-18 portion of the five-year Strategic Plan. We will move to the planning stage for the 2018-19 year at our April 12 meeting. A full report of our work with the plan will be available in the next Pileated Post.

The Ambassador program is 'up and running.' Linda de Kort presented an impressive Ambassador training just prior to the March 12 general meeting. She has compiled a packet of materials Ambassadors will use when they support schools and agencies to use the Audubon trunks.

The Ambassadors and the schools or agencies 'adopted' are:

- Linda de Kort, Sue Swab, Jeanne Olsen—West Valley School

Home

- Barbara Boorman—Montana Veteran's
- Jennifer Dodan—where needed
- Carole Jorgensen--where needed
- Linda Winnie, Linda de Kort—Heritage Place
- Sue Crawford—where needed
- Lana Batts—where needed
- Gail Linne—The Springs at Whitefish

Denny Olson—presents throughout the Valley and has arranged for trunk storage at Fish and Game's Lone Pine Park

Thank you Flathead Audubon Society Ambassadors! We are looking for additional members who can become Ambassadors. Help can range from inviting someone to use a trunk to shuttling materials to locations to delivering a program. Contact Linda De Kort or Gail Linne (gslinne@centurytel.net 406-871-4881) if you are interested.

Happy Birding!

by Gail Shay Linne, Education Chair

Montana Audubon Conservation Update - March

Just March lay between us and many of our favorite birds returning to Montana, including Long-Billed Curlews. Hard to believe!

Montana Audubon's bird conservation efforts this month focused on meetings and planning, the necessary groundwork for a successful spring and summer. Montana Wildlife Federation's Nick Gevock and I led a communications workshop titled "Effective Advocacy for Conservation - Communication and Lobbying for Wildlife" at the annual MT Wildlife Society meeting in Butte, and had over 60 people in attendance. We helped many area biologists take the first steps to being successful wildlife advocates, and attendees committed to raising their voice. We even got participants excited about reading Montana's constitution, our ticket to maintaining a "clean and healthful environment". There, I also presented on our Black Swift citizen science work alongside of Chris Hammond (FWP Region 2) and Lisa Bate (Glacier National Park). Larry, Janet, and I all attended the Montana Bird Conservation Partnership meeting in early February to discuss the state of grassland bird conservation in Montana and it became clear to me that the work we do in the Mission Valley fills an important niche. In March, I will be focused on volunteer outreach and planning, including preparing for the upcoming curlew surveys, and scheduling our summer's surveys. We are going to explore more options for electronic data collection this year, and so I am experimenting with

that as well. Finally, we plan to collaborate with a Montana Conservation Corp member to update Important Bird Area maps for our website.

Upcoming projects and events of interest:

- ◇ I am recruiting Black Swift survey volunteers for training at Holland Lake (July 18th and 19th) and in Glacier National Park (July 17th) – Volunteers for Black Swift surveys must be physically fit with back-country travel experience, experience in bear country, and the willingness to travel in rugged terrain at night.
- ◇ I will be presenting alongside of Wenfei Teng of the Avian Science Center at the Ninepipes Lodge on March 28th. It is a happy-hour and evening talk event from 6PM -8:30PM.
- ◇ I am recruiting volunteers that are interested in searching for Rosy-Finches, Chimney Swifts (in eastern Montana), and Short-eared Owl (along the high-line).
- ◇ May 17th is the date of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Birds and Bears Festival at SKC College.

by Amy Seaman, Conservation Program Manager



April 2018 Beauty of Birds Community Adult Education Class

Flathead Audubon is carrying on a highly anticipated tradition – the April “Beauty of Birds” class. Learn about the amazing world of bird beauty, topography, sight and sound identification, habitat, the physics of bird songs, bird intelligence, the physics of flight, fascinating behaviors, hawks, eagles and owls (with live birds!) -- all through a series of four Wednes-

day evening (6 – 8 PM) workshops and a field trip. Cost is only \$10 per person. Class size is limited, so join us soon! To register, call: *Debbie Newman, Flathead High School Administrative Assistant* 406-751-3461.

Contact auduboneducator@gmail.com for more information.

wings 
across the big sky

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

The annual Montana Audubon Bird Festival is fast approaching! Please register early by mailing the form included in the registration brochure or by visiting www.mtaudubon.org. If registering online, please only choose one field trip per day as the system will not allow you to register for a trip that is full. If you are registering by mail, be sure to include 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.

Rooms have

been blocked at the Kalispell Red Lion Inn. Call 406.751.5050 and mention you are attending the Montana Audubon bird festival to receive the discounted rate.

Register soon and join us in Kalispell this June! If you have further questions, please contact Montana Audubon at 406.443.3948 or festival coordinator Cathie Erickson at cerickson@mtaudubon.org.



Pngmart.com

AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes outstanding individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife by presenting **Awards** at the Saturday evening banquet. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories: Lifetime Achievement Award, Educator of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Special Achievement Award. To make a nomination, download a nomination form at www.mtaudubon.org. We must receive nominations by May 18th, 2018. Mail completed forms to *Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624*.

Looking for Desserts for the Bird Festival

The Dessert Auction will be a big fundraiser at the upcoming Wings Above Big Sky Bird Festival in Kalispell. Proceeds will help fund a local Flathead Audubon project - installation of a parking area for the new bird viewing area at the West Valley Ponds (coming soon!).

The auction takes place at the festival banquet, Saturday, June 9.

The FAS Dessert Auction Committee has been charged with arranging for donation of about 30 desserts for the auction. We have 18 promised so far, so we only need 12 more.

Can you help by donating a home-made dessert for the auction? Or by **arranging for a donation from a local bakery?** Desserts will need to be

delivered to the Red Lion the afternoon of June 9, before the banquet.

Please let us know if you would like to donate a dessert. Right now all we need is your name and email address. Later we will check in with you to find out what dessert you plan to bring, and give you more information about when and where to bring your dessert to the Red Lion.

For more information or to sign up as a dessert donor, contact a committee member: **Gail Cleveland** (406-212-8640, tanneland239@gmail.com), **Paula Smith** (837-0181, paulabob-smith@centurytel.net), and **Linda Winnie** (755-1406, lindawin626@gmail.com).

Curlew Survey Opportunity in the Mission Valley

It's curlew season again in the Mission Valley!

Are you ready to hear the 'currlleeee' of the Long-billed Curlew? Well, grab your binoculars and get ready, because this charismatic shorebird needs you. Montana's curlews will be trickling back next month and we want to keep tracking them in and around the Mission Valley!



catch up on Curlew identification and you are all set to go!

The best way to get involved is to visit our weebly website and view the routes available in the Mission Valley and Flathead Indian Reservation: <http://missionvalleycurlews.weebly.com/>.

We know that Montana and the Mission Valley harbor the very important grassland and wetland habitat that curlews rely on during breeding and migration. This species offers the perfect opportunity to involve citizen scientists, like you, to collect more details on local curlew hotspots. We are reaching out to ask you to join our great network of conservation partners in the Mission Valley by choosing an available survey route and getting out into the field!

It's easy. Survey routes consist of early morning road-side stops repeated every half mile. At each stop, you will get out of the car for five minutes and look and listen for curlews. Along the way you will collect important data on the time, habitat, and presence or absence of curlews. And, the great thing is that you only need to look for one big beautiful bellowing bird. So all you have to do is choose a route and

Here you will find survey details such as the protocol, data sheets, and route maps. You can also contact Amy or Janene if you would like us to send you a route packet. Feel free to take a partner, do a route more than once, or do more than one route. The Curlews are just waiting to be found!

To brush up on your Curlew identification before heading into the field visit Montana Audubon's webpage: <http://mtaudubon.org/birds-science/long-billed-curlew-initiative/> for a link to the Curlew's call and much more. Also visit Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed_Curlew/id.

Surveys can start as early as April 8th, so get those taxes done early! For more information contact Amy Seaman, Conservation Program Manager, Montana Audubon: aseaman@mtaudubon.org, 406.210.9449

Land health is the capacity for self-renewal in the soils, waters, plants, and animals that collectively comprise the land. Aldo Leopold

Time To Prepare For The Bears

Montana's hibernating black bears and grizzly bears will soon be stirring. Adult males usually emerge first from winter dens in mid-March. When bears emerge from their dens, they are physically depleted and food is a priority. Bears are often tempted to go where raccoons and domestic dogs are getting into garbage. If these animals are already causing problems nearby, consider it an early warning that food attractants are available and need to be removed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' bear experts stress that conflict prevention steps can greatly reduce the chances of attracting black and grizzly bears.

FWP recommends bear resistant storage bins in communities and on ranches; electric fence systems to protect bee yards and sheep bedding grounds; random redistribution of livestock carcasses each spring; and educational programs for schools, communities, and organizations.

FWP's **Be Bear Aware** website at

fwp.mt.gov is an easy way for homeowners and landowners to assess what they need to do now to prevent bear conflicts. Go there for tips and tools on obtaining and using bear spray, safe camping and hiking, access to bear resistant products and a guide to other items that attract bears to a property.

from MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks



defenders.org

Conservation Achievement Recognition continued from page 1

minutes, and might only occur once a week. Participants are rewarded with a \$4/month account credit.

Flathead Electric Cooperative is working on many other conservation projects that will ultimately reduce electrical costs and increase efficiencies. They have clearly raised the bar for electric cooperatives across Montana and other states. These innovative

and effective projects directly and clearly benefit not only Co-op members but also our environment, our children's future, and our bottom lines. For more information, visit <https://www.flatheadelectric.com/> or contact Wendy Ostrom-Price w.ostrom-price@flathead.coop or 406-751-1820.

We salute Flathead Electric for their accomplishments and encourage them to continue their innovative projects.

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campsite, a juvenile palm warbler insisted on perching on my toe for a part of each day, using it as a foraging lookout. Wolves howled behind camp two nights in a row. When I napped in the afternoon near (but not too near) the precipice of a sheer greenstone cliff overlooking my campsite, ravens and bald eagles circled and cackled, probably hoping I was taking the proverbial permanent nap. (I did indeed dream, with calm detachment for some reason, about decomposing on an elevated wicket, a la some indigenous traditions, with the wind cleaning dried flesh from my bones.) I was alone, but never felt lonely.

Solitude eliminates distraction and allows us to recalibrate our sense of self, examine our relationships without the distractions of being *in* the relationship, allows us to see more subtle – but not less important – things, and to inventory our daily messages

and prioritize them. We can be calmer and sharper. I came back from that canoe trip with clarity about what were priorities, and what were consuming distractions. And that afternoon dream reminded me that I didn't have unlimited time to sort them.

Stimulation usually comes from outside ourselves, and inspiration usually from within. The number of stimuli we encounter in our daily lives keeps thinking reactive and therefore shallow and unfocused. The real power in solitude is the unfettered descent into deeper thought, on perhaps a single topic. It passes directly through cleverness into the realm of wisdom. I would submit that our children should be taught how to sit quietly in nature, how to take comfort in it, and how to learn from those experiences. Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Seems like the perfect big-enough, but close to town, place for that. School field trips are planned, and solitude is in the curriculum.

Nongame Wildlife Tax Check-off

When filling out your Montana tax form this year, think "wildlife" by donating to the Nongame Wildlife Program, found on line 18a (short EZ form) or 69a



feps.edu

(long form). If your taxes are prepared, tell your accountant that you want to donate to wildlife! Your contri-

butions are tax deductible on next year's return. Look for the soaring Bald Eagle in the instruction booklet.

Montana has more than 500 species of "nongame" animals that benefit from public support each year at tax time. Since 1983, the check-off has contributed over \$27,000 annually to this important wildlife program.



liveanimals.tv

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from March 5, 2018 Board Meeting

- A spreadsheet for grants has been created to better track our grant requests and success. We did not receive the Forest Service Citizen Science grant. We will be participating in the Whitefish Community Foundation fund raiser this year.
- Road Scholar could use a few more volunteers this summer.
- We have decided not to accept the Wiley-Robbins Homestead Center as a donation to Flathead Audubon. We will continue to work with Dean on an agreement to continue using the area.
- Remaining calendars will be donated and distributed to area schools.
- A couple of names were put forward for Board nominations. More candidates would be welcome.

Probing an Antarctic Frozen Lake – April 3, *Science on Tap*

The vibrant benthic oasis of freshwater lakes in the world's coldest desert", a presentation by Dr. Shawn Devlin, Benthic Ecologist at the Flathead Lake Biological Station, will be the April program in the Science on Tap series, April 3, 6 PM, at the Flathead Lake Brewing Company.

Devlin recently returned from a six-week research expedition to Antarctica, where he was part of the McMurdo Dry Valleys Long Term Ecological Research Project. He and a team of researchers studied

and sampled the unique lake ecology of a permanently frozen lake centered in the McMurdo Dry Valleys, that is one of only two places on the continent not covered in ice.

Devlin will talk about this research, and about his own experiences while in the Antarctic –including his dive beneath the surface of the frozen lake to study what lives under the ice. For more information about *Science on Tap* visit:

www.scienceontapflathead.org/.

Family Forestry Expo for 2018

The 29th Family Forestry Expo will take place at Stoltze Lumber's Ron Buntmeyer Educational Forest located north of Kalispell along Trumbull Creek on Saturday, 12 May, from 9 AM — 3 PM. This is a free family-oriented event that offers a hands-on understanding of the role that local forests play in our everyday lives. Expo visitors get to explore how the different parts of a forest are connected to make up a dynamic ecosystem, how people and all parts of the environment are dependent on one another, and how each affects the other. There is a free "loggers lunch," demonstrations, exhibits, and a forest walk with many educational stops, including one run by Flathead

Audubon Society.

FAS has maintained an exhibit at the Family Forestry Expo for many years and are always looking for volunteers to help show Expo visitors the value and beauty of birds. If you enjoy being outdoors on a spring day and talking to people of all ages about forests, and especially birds, please contact Denny Olson, the FAS Conservation Educator, at auduboneducator@gmail.com. Or you can grab him at the general meeting. Whether you are a volunteer, participant or just want to enjoy a day in the woods, everyone is welcome to come on out to the Forestry Expo on Saturday, 12 May.

by Bob Lee

MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 14, 2018

Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street, Whitefish

Program: To be announced

Doors Open 5:00 PM, Potluck Dinner 6:00 PM,

Meeting Begins 7:00 PM.

Be sure to arrive early enough to look over and bid on silent auction items! Officers and Board Members will be elected.

SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at the Flathead Audubon May Potluck. Now's the perfect time to gather all of the valuable "stuff" that you might be able to live without. Popular items at past Silent Auctions have been bird books, outdoor gear, art work, live bedding plants, homemade pies and cookies and bird houses and feeders of all kinds. This is your opportunity to be a Primo Recycler!

Call for Nominations

Another election will soon be upon us: the one for new FAS Board of Directors members. At the annual meeting in May, FAS will elect a Secretary and Treasurer as well as new Director positions. Please start thinking about some people that you would like to see guide Flathead Audubon in the near future. The person who sat next to you at the last meeting is likely a good choice. And the person sitting in your seat is

also a good choice! If you know of someone who would be a good leader, please contact Bob Lee (270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net). Someone from the Nominations Committee will talk with them about roles and responsibilities and get hopefully them on the ballot. And anyone that would like to serve on the Nominations Committee should also contact Bob.

by Bob Lee



Thank You!

...to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through February 2018

Eagle

Tom & Teresa Quinn



My Own Vision

Duane Klarich

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

OSNA MONITORS NEEDED FOR SUMMER

Volunteers are needed to make monitoring visits to the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) throughout the summer.

Monitors record their OSNA observations on the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form. This form (and an OSNA trail map) can be printed from the FAS website or picked up at any FAS meeting. The completed form is sent to Kay Mitchell (address on the form).

There are two ways to be a monitor:

1. Take an OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Form with you **whenever you visit OSNA.**

2. Do a scheduled monitoring visit. We have Scheduled Monitors signed up for March and April, but still need volunteers for May through August. You can sign up for either the first half or the second half of any of these months, then make one monitoring visit to OSNA during that half-month period.

For more information about the OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Program, visit our website

www.flatheadaudubon.org (OSNA info is under Conservation), or contact me (755-1406 or lindawin626@gmail.com). You can sign up for a scheduled monitoring visit at the upcoming April FAS meeting, or contact me.

THANK YOU to all who have signed up already to be a scheduled monitor in 2018.

from Linda Winnie



Find us on: **facebook**



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





Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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

APRIL 2018



Spotted Towhee

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
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Kalispell, MT
59904-9173

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7 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 Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, 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: 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

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Denny Olson: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President Kay Mitchell kbmitch@centurytel.net 756-8130
Vice-President Gael Bissell gbissell535@gmail.com 261-2255
Secretary Marylane Pannell kuhlpan@cyberport.net 871-7613
Treasurer Joe Batts jbatts@me.com 844-0299

DIRECTORS

2015-2018 Jan Metzmaker jmetzmaker@hotmail.com 862-7960
2015-2018 Jake Bramante jake@hike734.com 250-8394
2016-2019 Cory Davis piranga99@gmail.com 257-3166
2016-2019 Barbara Summer parkview@cyberport.net 270-1285
2017-2020 Rod Walette rodwalette@gmail.com 314-5699
2017-2018 Carole Jorgenson cjmoving2AK@gmail.com 890-2211
2017-2018 Gail Linne gsinne@centurytel.net 871-4881
2017-2018 Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371
2017-2018 Kathy Ross mtkat67@gmail.com 837-3837
2017-2018 Jill Fanning shrldu@centurytel.net 862-8070
2017-2018 Mike Fanning shrldu@centurytel.net 862-8070

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation Lewis Young 889-3492 Owen Sowerwine Linda Winnie 755-1406
Carole Jorgensen 890-2211 Natural Area Bob Lee 270-0371
Education Gail Linne 871-4881 Newsletter Linda Winnie 755-1406
Field Trips Kathy Ross 837-3837 John Hughes 261-2506
Cory Davis 257-3166 Lewis Young 889-3492
Finance Mike Fanning 862-8070 Program Bob Lee 270-0371
Donations Mary Nelesen 755-7678 Publicity Jan Metzmaker 837-0181
Hospitality Lois Drobish 756-7405 Sales Jill Fanning 862-8070
Cory Davis 257-3166 Refuges Kathy Ross 837-3837
Membership Mike Fanning 862-8070 Website Jake Bramante 250-8394
Jill Fanning 862-8070
Nominations Bob Lee 270-0371



MONTANA AUDUBON

P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 443-3949 www.MTAudubon.org
Executive Director: Larry Berrin lberrin@mtaudubon.org
Board Member representing FAS, Bob Lee rml3@centurytel.net 270-0371



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

Total \$

You may renew or join online on our website:

http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/

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

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Address

City

State Zip Code

Phone

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Your email address is safe with us.

Mail this form with your check to:

Flathead Audubon Society Membership
P.O. Box 9173
Kalispell, MT 59904