



# Pileated the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 19

Number 6

September, 1994

## Purple Loosestrife Pull

Things are looking up at Flathead Audubon's adopted pot holes at Nine Pipe National Wildlife Refuge. This year nine people pulled and dug purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Co-sponsored by Flathead Audubon and the Montana Native Plant Society, the volunteers were able to work one entire pot hole and get a good start on a second one. It was encouraging to find the plants much reduced in numbers and stature. The only large mature plants were those allowed to remain last year as a control for a beetle release. With great gusto and satisfaction those plants were pulled as well as all other blooming purple loosestrife. Flower stalks were also removed and bagged for disposal. In less than four hours the project was complete.

More beetles have been introduced in the area this year. Hopefully further degradation of the "purple invader" will be seen where they find their way to this adopted wetlands. Last year was the first year the beetle, *Galerucellia californiensis*, was released in the Nine Pipe area. Purple loosestrife is the beetle's preferred food source for its entire life cycle.

The potholes have seen one species reintroduce itself this year: *Ursus horribilis*. A sow grizzly with this year's triplets and last year's cub, plus one other immature male have spent most of the summer in the area.

These six bears appear to be feeding on the abundant vole population and avoiding the mature males found at higher elevations

The bears were not observed by the loosestrife pullers, but numerous piles of vole fluff was proof positive that our largest carnivore can choose to sustain itself on small rodents.

A special thanks and a gold star go out to each of the 1994 volunteers: Rod Ash, Susannah, Dan and Hannah Casey, Shirley MacLachlan, Dee and Claire Strickler, and Bill West of the National Bison Range.

Neal Brown

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## Take Note!

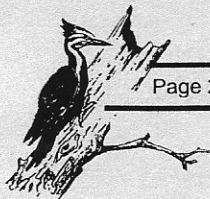
- September General Meeting  
Monday, 9/12/94  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg  
490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell  
Meeting 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

## September Program

Janet Ellis, Program Director for the Montana Audubon Council, Helena, will be the featured speaker. Her presentation is entitled "Bicycling from California to Southern Baja, Mexico." She will also speak on the upcoming Montana legislative session.







## The Editor's Spotting Scope

From childhood through adulthood, I've driven by and flown over the Great Salt Lake numerous times and was never really impressed with what I saw. As a kid, before I could swim, I was intrigued by the lake. When I stretched out in water I sank, with all the accompanying splutters, splashes and squeals. I was impressed with the Great Salt Lake when I was given to understand that you could stretch out in the salty water and you would float, but I never had the opportunity to try it.

Last spring, while working in Salt Lake City, I heard about Antelope Island State Park, which is the largest island in the Great Salt Lake. (I didn't even know there was an island in the lake, much less more than one.) In 1843, the island was named for its numerous antelope and by 1870, the antelope were gone, but the name stayed. As time went on, the island was used for cattle and buffalo ranching. It became a state park in 1967 and in 1969, a causeway was built, connecting the island to the mainland near Ogden. The rising lake took it all back in 1983, affectively closing the island to the public. Ten years later the causeway was rebuilt and the park was reopened in July, 1993.

The state park is a wonderful place for birding! Driving along the 7.5 miles of causeway, with the Great Salt Lake stretching out on either side of me, I was fascinated with the gulls and sandpipers who lined the water's edge to the north of the causeway and the eared grebes and stilts who claimed the eating rights to the south of the causeway. I never saw a gull land on the south side or a stilt meander over to the north. They all maintained their own territories.

The grebes were apparently migrating north — there were too many to count — and what a sight: the Wasatch Range in the background, the late afternoon sunshine on the lake and jillions of grebes with their colorful golden cheeks, diving and reappearing at will. The Great Salt Lake really came into its own as far as I was concerned.

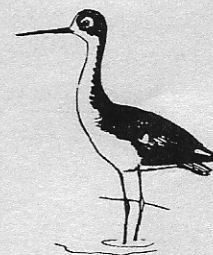
Driving around the island, I followed the road that wound along the bays and inlets and into the highlands. Some brownish birds flew low out of the brush and across in front of the car. I wondered what they were, but they were too fast for me. After another mile or so, I wound down the car window and their evening song burst upon me — Whip-poor-wills! First, the sights and then the sounds to wrap up this island birding excursion.

Dusk approached as I returned to the causeway, mellowed out and with a change in attitude toward the Great Salt Lake. Birds have a way of doing that to you, just by being there.

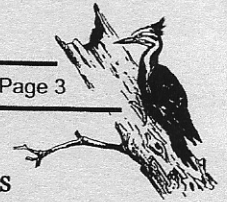
As I headed for the freeway and civilization, I noticed some stilts at the water's edge, with their heads tucked over their backs, ready for nightfall.

They were apparently satisfied with their day and I was most certainly satisfied with mine.

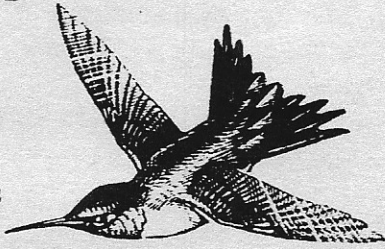
Sharon Bergman







## Birding with Elly



Summer is winding down and we found that birds nested and left their breeding grounds earlier this year. The most birds were banded during the week of July 4. After that the numbers dropped dramatically, probably due to the dry conditions and lack of insects. In late August migrants in mixed groups passed through and we banded more, but not like earlier.

Wildflowers bloomed early again and many hummers went straight to their nesting areas. Capture rate at the feeders was better than a year ago, but still not like other years. Ten pounds of sugar was served, rather than the five of last year, but in previous years I have served 30 to 35 pounds a season.

The birds have been harder to catch as they came irregularly to feeders a few at a time. This season 170 birds were banded, compared to 250-350 birds in other years. The recapture rate was good, however, at 42 birds. Of these, two were five-year-olds, four were six-year-olds and one was seven. That was exciting. These were all female Rufous hummers, showing how tough we old gals are.

Hummers at the new study site on 6 Mile Road were a challenge to catch as they are extremely net wise. (Spider webs must be an important natural hazard in their lives.) One must be a super sleuth to figure out good net sites and two alternate sites are ready for next year.

The new nets, thanks to Flathead Audubon, are very nice and birds come out more easily with the smaller mesh. Among

the species banded were Swainson's Thrushes, MacGillivrays, Townsend's Warblers, Redstarts, Dusky Flycatchers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, Warbling vireos and a few others, plus the hummers.

The total number of hummers banded and those seen or heard throughout the nesting period until dispersal have been sent to Dr. Bill Calder, who can use these figures to estimate the population density. The effects weather has on this will be studied from year to year.

Justin Paugh did a wonderful job banding 17 Mountain Bluebirds, 16 Western Bluebirds, five tree swallow nestlings, and he kept excellent records of it all. He was thrilled to see his bands flying around.

**Elly Jones**

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## Report on Bird America-94

Bird America 1994 was a record-breaking fund raiser! Between the Silent Auction at the May meeting and the Birdathon in June, we raised about \$1800! That's a big increase from 1993.

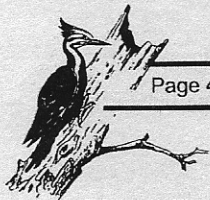
The money will be split between our chapter (50%), National Audubon (25%) and a new fund for Montana wetlands (25%). Thanks to all the folks who participated — by donating items to the auction, pledging Birdathoners and, of course, the Birdathoners themselves.

If you didn't get a chance to participate this time, have no fear! Bird America 1995 will be here before you know it and help is always needed. We'll see you then.

**Susan Hitchcox**







## The President's Page ➤ ➤

From the land of cardinals, blue jays and orioles (the birds, not the baseball teams) I'd like to welcome everyone to the new season at Flathead Audubon. You see, I'm writing this far, far from Big Sky Country, on vacation in the rolling hill country of upstate New York. "Upstate" is, of course, everything north of The City. But to be more precise, we are visiting in the Finger Lakes region of Bath, Savonna and Hammondsport — home of Babcock ladders, Rand Compressors and my wife, Gail Leonard, whose life history is written all over the map of these hills and valleys.

They tell me it's incredibly beautiful in autumn when the countryside is aglow with maple, oak and hickory. This time of year, I find it simply ... enchanting. Warm and serene. Hypnotic this afternoon with the peaceful calls of mourning doves and wood peewees. Rip Van Winkle slept here.

The purpose of our far-flung vacation (from here we'll forge on to the land of 10,000 lakes, largemouth bass and great blue heron: my home state of Minnesota) is a baby tour. We have a new baby girl and we're showing her off to all the folks back home.

Her name is Linnaea May and she was born May 18. To us she is perfect in every way and we feel incredibly blessed. Her name comes from a wild flower that grows in the woods of our back yard, in the shade of birch and fir. It's pink and tiny and blooms in May: Linnaea Borealis, the twin flower. When I walk with her, a little bundle in my arms, to her garden of twin flowers, she is alert to the bird songs and squirrel chatterings; she is wide-eyed and peaceful. I can't help but think she will be an outdoor girl, another lover of birds and wildlife, woodlands and wetlands and places left to

nature. If mom and dad have any influence, she will. However, if she wants to be a stock broker or a hockey player or play in a jazz band, we'll love her just as much.

What is it about a newborn? She's all future. Her blue eyes and first smile seem so full of hope. We respond by giving her all the love and protection she needs and pray that nothing befalls her. Beyond that, we want her to have all the advantages — life enriching things like turtles to catch, bluegills to fish, robins to wake up to. We want to show her the sun rising. We want her childhood to be as full of wonder as ours was.

There's something about a newborn which reminds us of our foremost responsibility: to pass the world along complete with all its life and natural beauty.

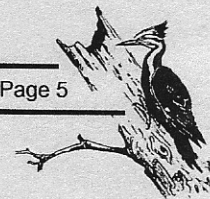
For me, this little baby has been a renewal of my commitment to conservation. In fact, they go hand in hand: raising a baby and caring for the earth. Neither is something you do for yourself. You do it purely for the love of life; for the fulfillment of hope. You raise a child or care for the earth simply to be a part of creation.

With that in mind we look forward to carrying on the mission of Flathead Audubon, to work for the conservation of wildlife and wild places in our beautiful corner of the world. From the officers and directors, welcome back, and we hope to see you at our September meeting. Remember: Fish, Wildlife and Parks building in Kalispell.

Leo Keane







## Report on May Meeting

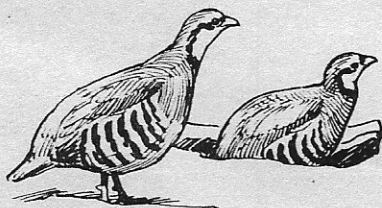
Potluck & Silent Auction. The annual potluck at Lone Pine State Park was again a huge success. Besides all the great food and good company, there were lots of terrific items up for bid in the Silent Auction. We managed to raise over \$440, which was split between the Montana Wildlife Fund and Bird America 1994.

A big THANK YOU to the businesses and generous individuals (too numerous to mention) who contributed to our success: Art Fusion, Bigfork; The Big Mountain, Books West, Kalispell; Bookworks, Whitefish; Brookies Cookies, Bigfork; Electric Avenue Books, Bigfork; Eva Gates Preserves, Bigfork; The Greenhouse, Bigfork; Grizzlyware, Seattle; Graphic Threads, Kalispell; Montana Coffee Traders, Whitefish; Montana Raft Company, West Glacier; Northwind Shirt Company, Whitefish; Rocky Mountain Outfitters, Kalispell; Third Street Market, Whitefish and Wildflower Pottery, Kalispell.

The Big Mountain donated two day ski passes which will be raffled off at the September meeting. Be there for a chance at this great prize!

Election Results. At the business meeting the following were elected to serve two-year terms as officers of the chapter: Leo Keane, president; Susannah Casey, vice president; Kent Miller, secretary; and Susan Hitchcox, treasurer.

Elected as directors for three-year terms were Sharon Bergman, Neal Brown, Dan Casey and Ferne Cohen.



## Bird Seed Ordering Delayed

It's that time of year when Flathead Auduboners and friends usually receive their order forms for the winter supply of bird seed. It'll happen soon — but not right now.

Last year excessive rainfall had an affect on the sunflower seed crop. This year the *lack of rain* is a major factor. Consequently, the exact harvest date and delivery date can't be determined at this time.

Please, don't give up on us. A special order form mailing will be made as soon as there is full information on delivery date, cost and pickup sites. It is anticipated that the bird seed will be delivered in the latter part of October.

### GALAPAGOS ISLANDS! ECUADORIAN AMAZON Dec. 18 - Jan. 3

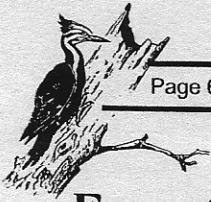
A group of Montana nature enthusiasts is being organized by Dr. Jack Kirkley, ornithologist of Western Montana College, to visit the Galapagos Islands and key natural areas for viewing Ecuador's jungle wildlife. For more information write him at Western Montana College, 710 S. Atlantic St., Dillon, MT 59725 or call (406) 683-7321.

## Thanks to Flathead Audubon from Polson School

Today I finished cataloging some wonderful natural history books for the Linderman School Library. Thank you for your generous gift. I'm sure the students and faculty will use and enjoy them. Happy reading.

Mary Lou Ratzburg





## From the Raptor Room

It has been a busy spring and summer here at the rehab center.

### A Rare One.

We received some unusual species this year, including a recently fledged flammulated owl (*Otus flammeolus*).



This small owl was struck by the radio antenna on a logger's pickup at 4 am (the logger on "hoot owl hours" during the hot weather). The impact happened along Salmon Lake and the logger continued on to his jobsite by Ovando. But, the owl had tumbled into the back of the pickup and attached itself to the tail of the logger's golden retriever. Following a shift in the woods, one beatup little owl was brought to us. The owl suffered fractures to a leg and elbow and probably will not be releaseable.

This owl appears just like a piece of Douglas fir bark and would be most difficult to spot in the wild. It eats mostly insects, rarely eating rodents or birds. Like most birds, its greatest enemy is humanity: logging, deforestation, woodcutting. The first nest record in Montana was found by a woodcutter, after felling a tree in 1986. One source said there have been nine sightings of flammulated owls in Montana and ours would make #10.

**Back to the Woods.** Among the more gratifying 'patients' this year included returning a juvenile golden eagle to its parents east of Lewistown, following a three-week tour through this place. Other patients included three osprey: one, a juvenile survivor of nest collapse that killed a sibling on Seeley Lake; two, an adult male recovering from a gunshot wound near Spotted Bear; and three, an adult female recovering from 19 gunshot wounds near Helena. All are in the huge flight room and

all will migrate out of here together in September. An assortment of red-tailed hawks, ravens, crows, horned owls and others will also be able to migrate this fall.

Two young Barred owls that arrived locally were treated. This is a very common owl in the eastern states which has expanded into this area only recently.

Just recently we released a juvenile northern waterthrush. Two Yellow-rumped warblers stayed around our house for a couple of weeks, along with a family of five mountain bluebirds. We spotted several pairs of Western tanagers this summer, as well as some generic flycatchers and warblers.

It is September. Do you know where your snow shovel is?

Ken Wolff, Director



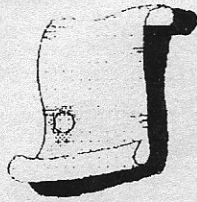
## Duck rebound expected to produce dramatic fall flight

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service indicates this fall's duck migration will be the best in a decade. Improved habitat conditions resulted in one of the best fall flight forecasts in over 10 years.

In the recently released Waterfowl Population Status Report for 1994, the USFWS says there were more than 32 million ducks in the north-central region of North America this spring. That's a 24% increase over 1993.

Even more impressive are Montana's own duck numbers. Surveys of Montana's duck breeding grounds conducted in May turned up 1.4 million ducks, a 60% increase over last year. Follow-up surveys conducted in July, to determine how many ducks were produced after the nesting season, revealed record duckling numbers that tripled long-term averages.

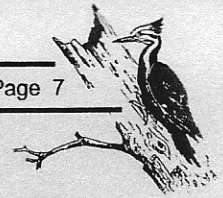





### Flathead Audubon Society Mission Statement

The Flathead Audubon Society is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society.

- Our mission is to conserve birds, wildlife habitat and ecosystem diversity.
- Awareness and appreciation of the natural world is promoted through educational activities and advocacy programs.
- We work with diverse groups and agencies to achieve sound decisions on natural resource issues.
- Our community outreach includes school programs, work projects and field trips.
- While focusing our efforts in northwest Montana, we believe in the protection of the earth and all its inhabitants.

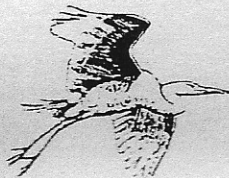




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## PEOPLE WATER WILDLIFE



## 1994 Audubon National Convention

Nowhere in our country better emphasizes the complex interactions of exploding growth, an internationally renowned ecosystem (The Everglades) and endangered species forging a new dynamic in ecosystem management, than South Florida. Audubon is returning to its roots of a century ago—now facing a far more complex set of circumstances, with many more players. Audubon can again be the leader to "save the glades" and its incomparable wildlife values.

Will this be a worthwhile experience? Each of us asks this question when investing time and money. Consider these personal benefits:

- Gain valuable insights from fellow Auduboners and interact with staff
- Develop proactive strategies to win environmental battles in your "backyard"
- Enjoy fabulous field trips with premier birding
- Learn about effective communication networks and chapter building
- Share an evening with Audubon's National Board members, who will award the Audubon Medal to Jimmy Carter at the Great Egret Annual Dinner
- Receive the very latest info from the Cairo Population Conference
- "Rub elbows" with leading scientists on the Mobile Learning Lab
- Hear about new programs offered by our Education Dept. & TV Productions

Participants can choose from three unique components—Fort Myers Convention, Mobile Learning Lab into Everglades National Park, and the Population Conference in Miami. It's a perfect opportunity for you to make a difference!

For registration information please contact:  
**AUDUBON CONVENTION OFFICE**  
4150 Darley Avenue, Suite 5; Boulder, CO 80303  
(303) 499-3622; Fax (303) 499-0286  
Travel Information: CALIGO VENTURES (800) 426-7781





## Flathead Audubon Society Directory

### OFFICERS

President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Susannah Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Secretary	Kent Miller, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130

### DIRECTORS

1993-96	Elaine Corrigan, 7405 Valley View Rd, Polson, MT 59860	883-6895
1993-96	Carol Purchase, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
1994-97	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Ln, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
1994-97	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek, Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
1994-97	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
1994-97	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028

### CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Field Trips	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Hostess	Carla Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Librarian	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Membership	June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Newsletter	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Lane, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
Program	Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Publicity	Liz Hill, 888 McCaffery Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-1444
Refuge Projects	Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Schools, Clubs	Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Road, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-6344
Wetlands/Waterfowl	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

### Montana Audubon Council

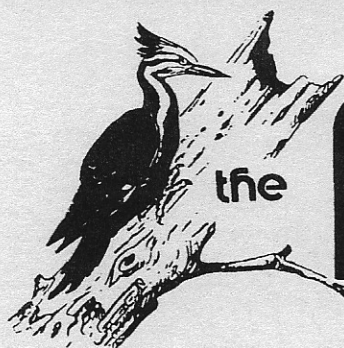
OFFICE	Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624	443-3949
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**BIRDING HOTLINE: 756-5595**

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. A business meeting is held at 7:30 p.m. followed by a special program at 8:15 p.m. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. Subscriptions for non-members are \$5.00 per year.

Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month.



**the Pileated Post**  
Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173  
Kalispell, MT 59904

### National Audubon Society Membership Application



Enjoy full National Audubon Society benefits and AUDUBON magazine, as well as PILEATED POST newsletter.

Check your category rate from the following:

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Life	\$1500	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Name

Address

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N54 7XCHA

Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

For Newsletter Only Send \$5 ☐

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