



# the Flathead Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 22

Number 8

November 1997

## Montana Audubon offers grants for wildlife

Montana Audubon will be offering wildlife grants totaling \$1,200 in 1998. This money, generated by an endowment fund called the Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana, will be awarded to individuals or nonprofit organizations whose project will directly benefit wildlife in Montana. Preference will be given to projects involving non-game wildlife, from birds to invertebrates, and their habitats.

The purpose of the Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana is to support research or other activities that focus on the public appreciation, preservation and enhancement of Montana's wildlife and natural communities. Eligible uses of the funds include mileage, supplies, equipment for schools or nonprofit organizations, printing and communications. Ineligible uses include salaries, stipends, per diem and personal equipment.

Interested applicants should prepare a brief typed proposal (a maximum of two pages) that emphasizes the significance of the proposed project in regard to its research value, educational value and/or recreational value.

The proposal should include the following: 1) project title; 2) name, address and phone number; 3) affiliation, if any, with a school or organization; 4) project

objectives; 5) significance of proposed project; 6) method and materials; 7) budget; 8) status of the project; 9) schedule for implementation and completion of the project; 10) description of the final project (written report or presentation?) and 11) a letter of reference regarding your ability to accomplish the project.

The proposal should be submitted to the Audubon Wildlife Fund, Montana Audubon, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. **Applications must be postmarked no later than Monday, December 1, 1997.** The grant winner(s) will be announced by March 1, 1998.

Questions about the wildlife grants should be directed to one of the Wildlife Fund Board members: Jack Kirkley (683-7321(w), Dillon); John Ormiston (363-5464 (h), Hamilton); Bea Vogel (442-1514 (h), Helena); or the Montana Audubon office (443-3949), Helena).

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Audubon's Projects ❁

Get your winter supply of bird seed  
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## The editor's spotting scope

*(The editor just returned from a vacation trip to the Olympic Peninsula and the following resulted.)*

"Sharon! You're back I see. How was Washington State?"

"It was a great trip. We were in sight of the Juan de Fuca Strait and I walked along the Port Townsend bay every morning. There were lots of gulls. Lots and lots of gulls!"

"You must have lived a birder's delight. What kind of gulls did you see, Sharon?"

"There were more than gulls, my friend. One morning a school of fish attracted a lot of water fowl and a Brown Pelican really stood out in the crowd. On another day and another school of fish, there were two Red-throated Loons. It made me wonder why they're called "a school of fish." If they're in a school, they sure aren't learning how to evade hungry birds."

"You're evading my question, Sharon. What kind of gulls did you see?"

"The gulls? There were mature white and grey ones and brownish younger ones.

"I also saw a pair of Fox Sparrows under a bush by the bedroom window, and that was a new one for my bird list. Out on the spit in the Dungeness Wildlife Refuge, there was a lot of driftwood and at the water's edge was a Heron who seemed to show little interest in those of us who were climbing around and over the driftwood."

"What's with you and the gulls, Sharon? I'm sure you had your guide book, so all you had to do was look them up."

"I have a problem identifying gulls and when I saw so many, so close on my morning walks, I just knew I could get them pegged this time. I whittled them down to Herring Gulls and California Gulls. Then I

had to refine the identification because the guide book admitted that the two are quite similar. So one day I looked to see if the legs were pink, yellow or greenish, and on another day I double-checked the bills, to see if a small red spot was on the end. And what did I wind up with? A gull with yellow legs (aha, a California Gull!) and its beak had a red spot on the end (a Herring Gull?).

"At that point I gave up my futile attempt to identify them and strongly suspect that they intermingle. I've concluded that only a mother gull knows for sure, and it's not her problem. It's no longer my problem either. I put a checkmark after each one on my life list cuz chances are very good that I have seen both of them, many times over."

**Sharon Bergman**

### Help Wanted —

Position open as the editor of this newsletter. No prior experience required, other than a knowledge of the written word, a willingness to learn and a dedication to Flathead Audubon. Contact President Leo Keane or current editor Sharon Bergman.

### TAKE NOTE—

#### November General Meeting

Monday, November 10, 1997

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell

Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

**Program:** Allen Rowley of Whitefish, Public Affairs Specialist with the Flathead National Forest will be the featured speaker.

Rowley's presentation will be based on the "Proposed Old-growth Management Plan for the Flathead Forest" in which he will provide an update and revision of the existing plan. The new approach emphasizes managing the forest for all species in the ecosystem rather than a limited few. He has been in his present position with the USFS since 1991.





## Science spotlight: Bird Abundance and Forest Structure

A paper authored by a group of scientists headed by Dr. Andrew Hansen of Montana State University contained a study relating forest structure (the size and number of trees in a stand) to the abundance of various bird species in the west Cascade Mountains of Oregon. The study divided stand structures into five stand types: clear-cut, retention cuts (where one to five large trees per acre remained after logging), young stands (35 to 79 years old with closed canopies and simple stand structure), mature stands (80 to 200 years old with complex stand structure) and old-growth stands (more than 200 years old with complex stand structure).

In looking at 23 different species, it is no surprise that Dr. Hansen and his colleagues found different species associated with different types of forests. The scientists were able to identify 14 species as members of one of four "habitat-use guilds" (groups of species that are most abundant in a particular forest structure). The guilds were: the clear-cut guild (Robins, Juncos and White-crowned Sparrows); the retention cut guild (MacGillivray's Warblers, Western Tanagers and Western Bluebirds); the mature and old-growth guild (Brown Creepers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Hammond's Flycatchers and the young-stand guild (Black-headed Grosbeaks, Black-throated Gray Warblers, Golden Crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes and Swainson's Thrushes).

Based on their analysis, the scientists concluded that a variety of habitats are necessary to preserve the biodiversity of birds on the landscape. However, they also point out that birds associated with logged forests are generally common in unlogged forests, but that birds associated with unlogged forests are not common after logging.

Specifically, Dr. Hansen and his colleagues concluded "We do not recommend maintaining the even-aged, closed canopy plantations that are produced by traditional silvicultural practices. The guild of birds

reaching peak abundance in this stand type is also numerous in mature and old-growth forest." They further state that "The mature and old-growth bird guild will most benefit from [retaining] much higher levels of [trees after logging]."

If one of our goals for forest management is to preserve biodiversity, these findings are just one more indication that we should focus future logging activities toward learning how to restructure stands that have regrown after past logging instead of cutting the little old-growth forest that remains.

A copy of the 1995 scientific paper, *Bird Habitat Relationships in Natural and Managed Forests in the West Cascades of Oregon*, can be requested from Dr. Andrew Hansen, Biology Department, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717. The authors include Hansen, W.C. McComb, R. Vega, M. Raphael and M. Hunter. The paper is included in *Journal: Ecological Applications*, Volume 3, Number 3, Pages 555-569.

Geoffrey Poole,  
Conservation Chair

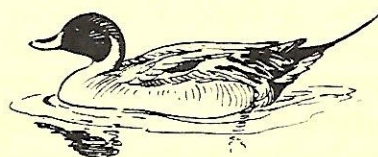


## Eureka Auduboners to meet

The Dancing Prairie Bird Club is a satellite chapter of Flathead Audubon in Eureka. The group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Eureka Ranger Station.

On November 27, Mary Sloan, president of the Montana Native Plant Society, will present a program on "The Three Forks of the Flathead: Exploring the Ecosystem."

On Saturday, December 20, the Bird Club will participate in National Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count. The contact person for the bird count is Lewis Young. Call 889-3492 for more information.



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## President's Page >>

Who cares? They've buried a little aspen grove I've always admired on my drive into town. No larger than somebody's living room, it was truly a postage stamp sanctuary for the eyes of anyone who would notice, a perfectly proportioned green patch along the busy highway. Today it is gone.

**A**cross town an equally modest wetland is finally dead after several months of accepting a seemingly endless supply of construction debris. Bulldozed, leveled and gone. It is now only a memory of cattails and cottonwoods, for the few who may have paid attention.

You see it every day, everywhere you go. The dump trucks, the bulldozers and the chainsaws are keeping busy clearing away nature. Where the thicket grew, where trees passed the seasons, where wood ducks courted; these places are vanishing overnight and without a trace beneath the overburden of our junk: used car and trailer lots, franchised food, gas, gambling, groceries, all amidst acres of free asphalt.

My question is: does anybody care? Do most people even notice when the fields and forests disappear, or is this really their preference: concrete for nature? My fear is that those of us who care for nature are the vast minority and everybody else would rather have abundant shopping in a world bereft of wildness. If not, what is this deafening complacency? Where is the hue and cry?

Sometimes I think I'd be much happier if I could just drive by like everybody else and let myself get used to it, this inevitable sprawl; not agonize over the changes, the incremental but inexorable transformation of the place I hold dear.

It is little consolation, and not without irony, that actually you do forget what used to be. Like when they raze a building downtown, within a year it's hard to remember the site *with* that building. So too when the trees come down and the pavement

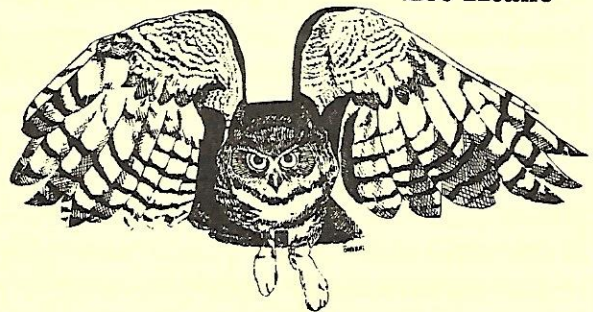
rolls out, before long that original beauty of birches and firs fades from memory. The greens of spring, the blaze of autumn, the songs of birds and frogs, was it really there? Hard to remember.

For the most frightening perspective, for snapshots of change it is enlightening to go home, to the place where you grew up. I do from time to time and the transformation I've witnessed seems anything but incremental. No, it's a plague out there. Big cities are engulfing nature, little home towns, like mine, are simply pushing it aside with astonishing abandon. It occurs to me, the view of my hometown today could easily be the Flathead Valley on fast forward.

**O**nly we've got more to lose. The Flathead is, without doubt, one of a kind. Nowhere else that I've been is nature so dramatic, yet serene; so abundant, pervasive and wild, and still so livable. Our Flathead seems fashioned expressly for both man and creature, with homes, towns and farms sewn to a quilt of woods and meadows and wild patches. This could be another Garden of Eden.

We can easily choose the low road and lose it all. Gratefully, we can still set a new standard and choose to keep it all. But first, maybe we must simply choose to care.

**Leo Keane**







## Winter Bird Feeding

*(The following excerpt appeared in "Bird Notes from Sapsucker Woods", a publication of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.)*

If you feed birds, you're in good company. Birding as a hobby currently stands second only to gardening as America's favorite pastime. A 1997 report from the Kaytee Avian Foundation estimates that 43% of U.S. households or about 65 million people provide food for wild birds.

### **Wintertime — and the living's not easy.**

In much of North America, winter is a difficult time for birds. Days are often windy and cold; nights are long and even colder. The lush, berry-laden vegetation of summer and fall has withered and been consumed, and most insects are dead or dormant. Birds may have difficulty finding enough food during the short winter days to fuel their internal furnaces.

Setting up a backyard feeder makes their lives easier and ours more enjoyable. One study, being done at Purdue University, is focusing on how a home-based, wild-bird feeding program can increase knowledge of birds and conservation issues among children. In addition, participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project Feeder Watch have indicated that the project has changed the way they think about science and conservation. In other words, feeding birds can benefit both birds and humans.

**Types of bird food.** One key to attracting a diversity of bird species is to provide a variety of food types, but that doesn't mean you need to purchase one of everything. Different birds prefer different types of seeds, but the seeds that attract the greatest number of species are black-oil sunflower. These seeds have a high meat-to-shell ratio, they are nutritious and high in fat, and their small size and thin shells make them easy for small birds to handle and crack. Several studies show that this high-energy food is the flock-pleasing favorite of the majority of birds that visit feeders.

Whole-kernel corn is a favorite of jays, pigeons and doves, quail and pheasants. It is perhaps the least expensive of all birdseeds. Cracked corn, however, is easier for blackbirds, finches and sparrows to eat. Niger, or thistle seed, is a delicacy for small finches such as goldfinches, siskins and redpolls. It's best to offer niger seeds in a special niger feeder, which has tiny ports to prevent the seeds from spilling out. Peanuts are another readily available food than many backyard

birds will eat. Most ground-feeding bird species prefer white millet or red milo to black-oil sunflower seed.

**Mix your own.** As an alternative to commercial mixtures, you can create an attractive, low-cost mixture yourself. Pour 25 pounds of black-oil sunflower seed (purchased from Flathead Audubon, of course), ten pounds of white proso millet and ten pounds of cracked corn into a clean trash barrel. Mix it up with a brookstick and be sure to replace the lid tightly. In fact, always store whatever seed you decide to provide in a tight, waterproof container.

**Leftovers: for the birds?** You don't have to limit your offerings to commercial birdseed. Some people save the seeds from squash and melons. Spread them out on trays to air dry before placing them in the feeders or on the ground. Smaller birds may have a tough time breaking them open, but if you run the seeds through a food processor first, they will be able to eat them with ease.

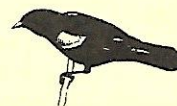
Stale bread, cake or doughnuts are okay, but be sure the food is not moldy or it may harm the birds. Another caveat: table scraps may attract less-welcome visitors such as Starlings, House Sparrows, rats or raccoons, so give it complete consideration before feeding leftovers.

**High-energy foods.** You can also attract insect-eating birds such as chickadees, woodpeckers and nuthatches to your yard by offering peanut butter or suet (beef fat).

Some people worry that birds will choke on sticky peanut butter, but there's no evidence that they do. You can completely eliminate any risk by mixing peanut butter with corn meal or oatmeal. Drill holes in a small log and fill the holes with the peanut butter mixture, or simply spread the mixture on tree trunks, branches or a feeding platform.

Offer suet in a wire basket or plastic mesh bag tied to a tree. Premade suet cakes are also available in most stores that sell bird-feeding supplies. These cakes often contain a mix of birdseeds. The cakes are great to have on hand in case your local supermarket is out of suet.

**Bird feeding concerns.** Poorly maintained feeders may contribute to the spread of infectious diseases among birds. Avoid overcrowding by placing numerous feeders several feet apart, and always keep the feeding area and feeders clean.







## The Population & Habitat Connection

At the risk of sounding un-American and anti-family, America needs a National Population Policy which encourages couples to give thought to the idea of small families. It is no longer fruitful to multiply. The very idea of limiting ourselves to anything, especially the number of children we'll have, is quite unthinkable. We Americans have a strong sense of entitlement, to live our lives without limitations and especially without government intrusion.

And what does population growth have to do with Audubon, a group that cares about birds and habitat? The earth's natural habitats which have provided birds and other wildlife with a safe and healthy environment are now in danger due to the explosion of the human population.

**Fact:** Since 1950, our global population doubled and 20 % of the world's topsoil has been destroyed and 33 % of our forests have been consumed. !!

Some of the earth's smallest creatures, birds, are the barometer of the earth's environmental health. The greater our population growth, the greater our consumption of earth's resources and the more threatened habitats such as wetlands and rain forests become. Controlling our population growth and our consumptive nature is the key to saving important habitats, saving species and ultimately saving ourselves.

There is an inverse relationship between growth of human population and the loss of healthy habitat. But, we live in Montana. What does population growth and habitat loss have to do with us? We have clean air, clean water and hundreds of square miles of beautiful, pristine habitat; we have the quality of life that most Americans can only dream of.

**Fact:** The U.S. is the world's third most populated country and the fastest growing developing country. !!

Everyday people from urbanized, industrialized, over-populated areas are coming to Montana. If you don't believe it, take a drive on Hwy 93 from Whitefish to Missoula and on through to the Bitterroot Valley. Also, watch as Laurel becomes a suburb of Billings. Better yet, float your favorite river (if you can get a permit) or fish your favorite fishing hole without feeling a bit crowded from others in pursuit of that "quality of life".

Everyday in Montana, farmland is being

subdivided for commercial property or for that out-of-state couple wanting to buy a piece of Montana. Everyday trees are being cut to satisfy our constant hunger to build. Everyday our crisp, fresh air is being polluted and our mountain streams are being dirtied, just to satisfy our voracious appetite for gas, oil, metals and, of all things, gold for jewelry.

**Fact:** The U.S. has the second highest natural population increase among industrialized countries. !!

What can we do in our communities and our great state to reverse the effects of a growing population? First, every Montanan who cares about maintaining our quality of life must take personal inventory and responsibility for our own gluttonous consumption of the earth's natural resources. Also we must re-evaluate the need for that third, fourth, fifth child.

Today we have answers and solutions for many of these problems. Recycling, composting, electric cars, cars with better gas mileage, family planning programs, community development laws which protect habitat and less consumption.

The United States could adopt a National Population Policy. The United States could start to "walk the talk" and be an example for other developing countries, by putting more value on wildlife habitat and our spiritual connection to the land than the almighty dollar. The United States Congress could restore the 87% or \$227 million for International Family Planning that was cut in January, 1996, which was making a difference in population growth around the world.

**Fact:** By 2000, 3 billion young people will enter their productive years. In 1960, the world's population was 3 billion. !!

For those of you who remain skeptical and say, "it will never happen in Montana in my lifetime," may you live a very long life and not have grandchildren who wonder "why?". For it is our future generations who will suffer most and wonder why we didn't curb our appetites. They will wonder why we didn't see more value in a tree than in the house it built; see more value in a wetland than in a crop it might produce; see more value in maintaining the Rocky Mountain Front for wildlife than in drilling for oil and gas. And they will wonder why we left them with a flood of humanity, economic development and growth, with many of them wanting to relocate to another state with a better quality of life. **Mary Fay of Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, Member, Montana Audubon Population & Habitat Committee.**





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Annual  
**Sunflower Seed Sale**  
Order Form

**BLACK, OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS — High quality, 50 lb sack - \$17**

Number of Sacks: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$17 = Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I will pick up my order on **Saturday, November 15**, in (check one)

Bigfork ☐ Columbia Falls ☐ Condon ☐ Kalispell ☐ Whitefish ☐

or on **Sunday, November 16**, in Polson ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Are you a member ☐ or non-member ☐ ? Why not join — it's just \$20.



Send your order & check by **Nov. 8** to:

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(Do NOT send order to Kalispell!)

**Remember Your Feathered Friends!**

When you stock up on your winter supply of sunflower seeds through Flathead Audubon, you achieve results in two ways: 1) the birds at your feeders are delighted and delight you in return; and 2) you assist Flathead Audubon in continuing the funding of several conservation and educational programs. The money raised through this annual sale of bird seed **supports** Audubon Adventures, an educational program for school children; **enables** the chapter to assist in the care and upkeep of local refuges, such as Ninepipe Reservoir; and **provides** scholarship funds for environmental education. It also **helps** other Audubon projects.

**DELIVERY LOCATIONS:** After completing the order, make note of the delivery location & date and mark it on your calendar, so you won't forget the time and place.

✓ **Bigfork: Lakehills Shopping Center**  
Saturday, 10 - 12 noon; 837-5018

✓ **Columbia Falls: First Federal Savings**  
Saturday, 10 - 12 noon; 892-1317

✓ **Kalispell: Fish, Wildlife & Parks Parking Lot**  
Saturday, 12:30-2:30 pm; 756-8130 or 257-4100

✓ **Condon: Call June Ash, 754-2289**  
for arrangements

✓ **Whitefish: Train Depot Parking Lot**  
Saturday, 12:30 - 2:30 pm; 862-2028

✓ **Polson Super 1 Foods Parking Lot**  
Sunday, 12 noon - 2 pm; 849-5286





## Flathead Audubon Society Directory

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President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Secretary	Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Avenue, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5775
Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Road., Bigfork, 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130

### DIRECTORS

1997-2000	William Breen, 335 Mountain Meadow Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901	755-2142
1997-98	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
1997-2000	Sharon DeLong, 2495 Grave Creek Rd., Eureka, MT 59917	
1996-99	Sorja Hartman, P.O. Box 1388, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	758-8516
1996-99	Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
1997-2000	Bruce Tannehill, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-4548

### CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Field Trips	Betty Winzenburg, 1436 Rogers Lane, Kila, MT 59920	755-1697
Hospitality	Betty Winzenburg (see above)	
	Debbi Rossi, P.O. Box 1884, Columbia Falls, MT 59912	892-1317
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	Jim Rogers, P.O. Box 984, Polson, MT 59860	883-3611
Publicity	Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920	755-1406
Quality of Life	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028
Refuge Projects	Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Wetlands/Waterfowl	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

### Montana Audubon

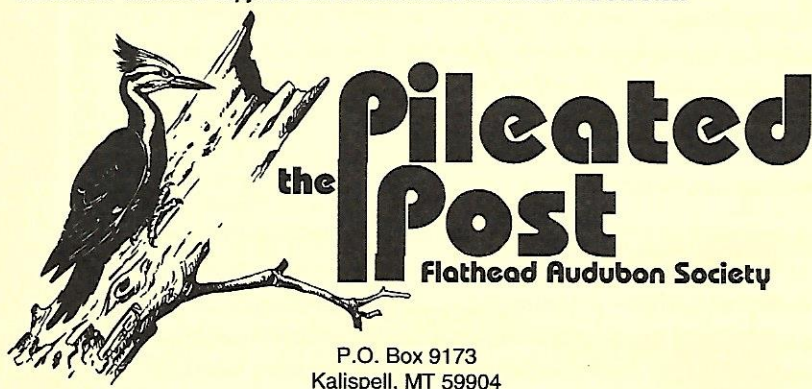
OFFICE	Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624	443-3949
PRESIDENT	Rod Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289

**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. The regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. and includes a featured guest who will present a conservation or nature program. 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 \$10.00 per year.

**Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month. Newsletter Fax: 849-5486.**



### National Audubon Society Membership Application



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N54 7XCHA

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

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