



the

Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

September 2022
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American
Pipit



President's Column

This Saturday (2 Saturdays ago by the time you read this) a small contingent from Flathead Audubon will have the pleasure of attending a celebration at Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge with the Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland. We'll be celebrating the establishment of the Lost Trail Conservation Area near Marion as the newest unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This new unit is the culmination of a 20-year locally-led effort to conserve important wildlife habitat and recreational areas in our own backyard. The US Fish and Wildlife Service worked in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and Southern Pine Plantations Montana (the continuing landowner) to purchase the 38,052-acre conservation easement. One of the leaders and champions in this effort was Refuge Biologist Beverly Skinner who we are also celebrating this month (see page 4). So, if you haven't visited this amazing nearby area get out and explore! Beverly often leads field trips and other activities at the [Refuge](#) and now there are many more acres to explore in the adjacent Conservation Area (see map



of both [here](#)).

The Great Fish Challenge was conceived with the goal to bring our community together in a powerful way to provide sustenance to those who were giving to others. We are very fortunate to be a participating non-profit in this wonderful annual event. It provides us with our annual budget so we don't have to bother our members throughout the year to donate to FAS. We hope you'll take the time and donate through the [Great Fish Challenge](#), not only to Flathead Audubon, but to the many other hard-working organizations doing important work in the valley.

Lastly, get out and go birding! A lot of people don't like birding this time of year because it's hot and the birds have stopped singing. I actually think it's one of the best times of year because you never know what you might find. Adult and young birds haven't started migrating yet and are often wandering far and wide looking for food to fatten up on before heading south. You might be the one to find that rare flycatcher, hummingbird, or gull.

Happy birding!

Cory Davis, President FAS

Natural Events To See This Month:

Vaux's Swifts roost in Kalispell chimneys during fall migration by the hundreds

SEPTEMBER FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Tuesday September 6, 2022. 6:00 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting. Public Meeting Room, Fish, Wildlife & Parks building, 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell. You may bring your own dinner at 5:30.

Monday, September 12, 2022. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting. United Way Gathering Place Room 26, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. East side of Gateway Mall along Glenwood Rd. All are welcome. See page 3 for how to participate digitally.

Tuesday September 6, 8-11 AM. Birding at Smith Lake. See page 8.

Saturday September 17, 8, 9, & 10 AM. Birds of Prey Field Trips. See page 8.

Sunday September 18, 9 AM– 6 PM. Jewel Basin Hawk Watch. See page 8.

Thursday September 22, 11 AM. Birds of Prey ID Workshop. See page 8.

Thursday September 29, 7-9 AM and October 1, 6-8 PM. Sandhill Crane Viewing at West Valley. See page 8.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

The Amazing American Redstart

by Darcy Thomas

Sometimes a common bird is so startling it captures our imagination and washes us with a feeling of such pure delight when we take time to observe their beauty and special behavior. One such bird for me is the American Redstart. American Redstarts



Birds of the World

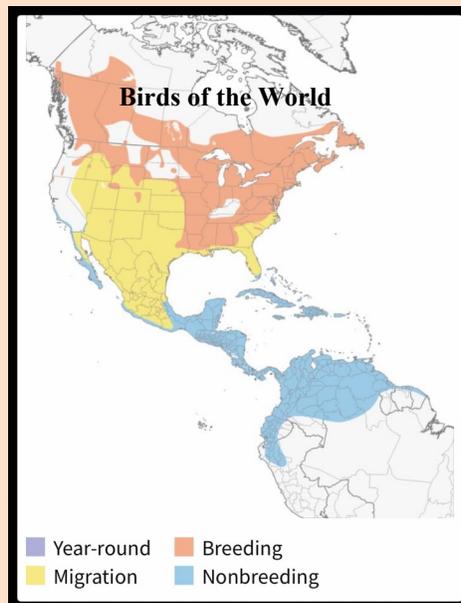


Birds of the World

Setophaga ruticilla are small, lively wood warblers who are abundant in a broad geographic range of North America. Their striking looks and energetic behavior make them quite conspicuous. Males are mostly coal black with rich orange patches on the wings, sides, and tail and a white underbelly. Females are just as striking but are mostly gray with soft yellow patches in the places where the males are orange, with an olive rinse on their backs and white on the throat and underbelly. They are about the size of a Black-capped Chickadee. Once you observe the whirling, twirling acrobatic flight of the American Redstart you will find them to be unforgettable. Their foraging and communication behaviors are eye-catching as they flash their orange and yellow patches by fanning their tail and spreading their wings to flush insect prey from vegetation as well as to communicate among other Redstarts. Their proportionately large wings and

long tails facilitate the flight maneuvers that make them so adept at pursuing insects. Redstarts also have well-developed rictal bristles around the gape of the mouth that may serve to help them capture insects in flight or at least assist the bird to know its speed and orientation in the air. This noticeable behavior along with their enthusiastic singing, especially during the breeding season, makes them easy to find. Look for them in deciduous woodlands often in the lower canopy. Their constant movement, dashing and pirouetting through the trees, make them fun to watch.

The song of the male American Redstart is explosive but sweet to the ear during the breeding season. Some people liken their song to a sneeze – *tsit tsit tsit tsit-achoo!* Females have a variety of calls and both genders will snap their bills – males doing this during territorial disputes and females while courting males. You may be lucky enough to find a nest that the female has made of firm, compactly woven plant materials and lined with fine grasses, hair, and feathers and tucked up against the main trunk of a tree or shrub. She often will decorate the outside of the nest with lichens or birch bark and bind them with spider silk. She chooses the placement of the nest site after the male shows her the potential sites during courtship displays. She will sit on each site, settling down into it with her breast and moving about, to determine which one suits her best before she begins building the nest. In Montana nesting begins in late May to early June with 1-5 eggs laid. Renesting may occur if the first nest is unsuccessful and up to six nests may be made in a single season to increase the likelihood of successfully fledging a brood. Only the female sits on the eggs. The male sometimes will feed the female while she incubates the eggs. This is more likely to



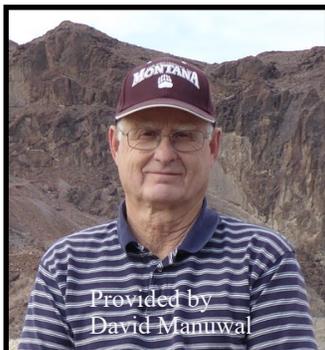
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September Program

Birds of the Noatak National Preserve, Alaska

presented by Dr. David Manuwal

Dr. David Manuwal, who has studied birds in the western US for over 60 years, will be the featured speaker at the Monday, September 12 meeting of the Flathead Audubon Society at 7 PM. (See below on how to join the Zoom meeting.) His presentation will cover his research on birds in the Noatak National Preserve, Alaska. He found 119 breeding species of which several had old-world affinities such as the Yellow-billed Loon, Bar-tailed Godwit, Gray-headed Chickadee, Wheatear, Arctic Warbler, Bluethroat, and Yellow Wagtail.



Provided by
David Manuwal

He received his undergraduate degree in wildlife conservation from Purdue University and a Master's degree working with Dick Taber at the University of Montana. He received a PhD studying marine birds at UCLA. Dave taught and conducted bird research for 41 years at the University of Washington's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences and retired in 2013 as Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Science. He has taught a bird course at Flathead Valley Community College. He now resides in the Kalispell area with his wife Naomi.

September Meeting FAS

We had a great turn out at our May potluck and auction! It was great to visit with friends we hadn't seen in a while and see some new faces. We hope more of you will continue to migrate back to our meetings at the Gateway Mall as you feel comfortable and while the weather is good.

The hybrid meetings seem to be working well, so we're going to stick with the mixed method for our September meeting:

Monday, September 12, 2022 7:00 PM

For those coming to the meeting, we'll meet in Room 26 of the Gateway Mall (United Way building). This room is on the east side of the building along Glenwood Rd in Kalispell. Look for our banner hanging outside. Masks are optional and we'll continue to

encourage distancing for seating. The doors will open at 6:30.

If you wish to join virtually, you can attend by Zoom, or by audio connection. To get the zoom link and meeting ID or the meeting phone number and pass code, contact cory@flatheadaudubon.org.

When using the Zoom connection, you will eventually be let into a "waiting room" where you will then be added to the meeting by the host. Please sign in with your name when you enter the room so we know to admit you. You will be muted when you first join the meeting. You can use your computer's microphone and speakers (most computers have both, whether you see them or not), and this is the preferred way to join.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!

by Cory Davis

Operation Bird Collision

The second most important source of bird mortality in North America is colliding with windows (American Bird Conservancy). Flathead Audubon has an opportunity to measure the importance of mortality associated with birds hitting windows of our homes. We propose to record all birds that die from hitting our windows for a period of one year (Sept. 1, 2022-Aug. 31, 2023). Most of us have bird feeders during the winter and some winter residents do hit our windows.

We encourage all of our members to participate in this study. It's easy. Here is all you have to do:

Contact Dave Manuwal

(manuwal2@centurylink.net) to enroll.

Tell us when you start to observe the areas around your windows for dead birds. After a year, we

would like to know how many days you recorded information on window mortality (that includes days with no mortality).

Contact Dave when you find a bird. If you are not sure of its identity, photograph it and send Dave the photo.

We will prepare a report that will be published in the Pileated Post. We will also provide suggestions as to how to reduce bird mortality from window collisions.



Beverly Skinner

awarded

Conservation Achievement Recognition

Beverly Skinner has been a Wildlife Biologist for the Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge for the past nine years. She and her husband Bob, also a Wildlife Biologist, live in one of the historic houses on the refuge. Doing the work of several, Beverly holds down the fort at Lost Trail as the only paid employee. Bob has been extremely supportive of Beverly's work and assists as her ready volunteer.

"Beverly was absolutely instrumental in getting a 100,000 acre Conservation Area established around Lost Trail", says Gael Bissell, past President of Flathead Audubon Society and FWP colleague of Beverly. "You can't imagine how much work that took internally and externally to get something like that accomplished within a very understaffed bureaucracy. Nothing would have been done for lost Trail had it not been for Beverly and her husband Bob. They had the vision, and she had the means. She approached the conservation plan using her experience and knowledge and then orchestrated the establishment of this larger conservation area within her agency.

Bissell also credits Beverly with inventorying

all the species within the Lost Trail NWR. "Beverly is just a great all-around person dedicated to wildlife resources and has done a yeoman's job with less staff and support than usual for a refuge of that size," Bissell adds. "I am so glad we are giving her this award as it is so well deserved."

Flathead Audubon has been lucky to have Beverly lead many field trips around Lost Trail NWR where she takes participants behind the locked gates to her special spots and shares information about the plants, animals, restoration work and so much more. She has also re-

cently organized a state-wide birding festival.

Flathead Audubon Society is thrilled to recognize Beverly for a lifetime of hard work on behalf of the birds and other animals in Lost Trail NWR and other locations throughout Missouri, Alaska, and Montana.

This is an abbreviated version of the full article that can be found on the FAS website at: <https://flatheadaudubon.org/conservation/Beverly-Skinner-awarded-lifetime-conservation-achievement-recognition/>
by Darcy Thomas



Larry Beckner, Great Falls Tribune

Conservation Corner

by Carole Jorgensen

Conservation Short Notes

According to APHIS, there have been 51 cases of wild bird mortality associated with avian flu in Montana, including one bald eagle in Flathead County, as of Aug 2022. Wild birds are apparently more resistant to avian flu than domestic fowl. Feeding birds (once the bears go into hibernation) should be ok according to new guidance from Cornell Lab of Ornithology if you aren't near domestic bird producers.

Last fall, the Biden Administration reversed adverse changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that were proposed by the Trump administration, thanks to overwhelming comments from Audubon members and others. Partially in response to the billions of birds lost

in recent decades, two bills have been introduced in Congress to strengthen bird protections. Although introduced, these bills need support to proceed further in the process.

Below are links to more info on these subjects.
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2773>. Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4833?s=1&r=81>. Migratory bird protection act.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1986?s=1&r=3>. Federal safe building act of 2021.

Below is the fifth installment in the Post series called
GETTING TO KNOW OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA

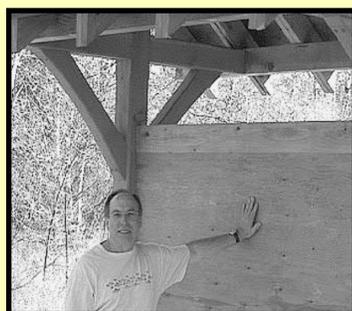
Adding a Kiosk and ADA Accessible Facilities

Earlier articles in this series described how a cadre of Flathead Audubon volunteers cleared trails and built bridges at Owen Sowerwine, carried out routine maintenance and weed control, monitored natural features, with Flathead and Montana Audubon covering the relatively minor costs of materials and equipment rental. In this article, we look at the three major improvements installed by Flathead Audubon that required professional help and more substantial funding.

The first was a fence along the south and west boundaries of OSNA. The May article of this series recounted the extensive preparatory work done by volunteers to brush and clear these OSNA boundaries to prepare the way for professional installation of the fencing. The funding for the materials and professional installation was provided by a grant secured by Janet Ellis of Montana Audubon.

The other two major improvements are the informational kiosk located just beyond the Treasure Lane entrance, and the trail, viewing area, and entrance gate at and beyond that same entrance that are ADA Accessible (i.e. compliant with the ADA requirements for accessibility.)

The kiosk project was headed up by Leo Keane, who had been FAS President when the chapter first began helping with the OSNA lease fee in 1994. After Audubon signed its first license for the area in 2001, Leo volunteered to take on the kiosk project. Leo designed the kiosk, and he and volunteers from his company North Country Builders did the lion's share of the construction. Funding for the materials was provided by Flathead and Montana Audubon.



Leo Keane building kiosk.
 Photo by Linda deKort

During the 2004 fall Work Day FAS volunteers dug holes, mixed concrete and set posts. In spring of 2005 Leo and his crew installed the display panel, bracings and roof on the posts. Before the May Board meeting, members of the FAS Board gathered at the site to apply the final coat of preservative, and to celebrate the completion of the new kiosk.

Initially the collection of notices and announcements that were tacked up on the kiosk were open to the weather so had to be replaced often. Then in 2012, Board member Ben Young and his students from Glacier High designed a frame-filling display for the front panel of the kiosk. It included a new OSNA logo designed by the students and an OSNA bird list

with pictures, and featured a large GIS-aerial trail map of OSNA prepared by Susannah Casey. Plexiglas was installed over the display to protect it from the weather, and a literature rack was added so visitors could pick up a brochure with a trail map and bird list.

Preparation for the third major project began in spring 2011 when the Owen Sowerwine Committee started researching ADA Accessibility requirements and consulting with ADA advisory bodies, and then measured site slopes and distances inside the Treasure Lane entrance to determine where an ADA Accessible trail could be built. They found that the initial 750 feet of the already existing Mainland Trail could be used by rerouting the first 50 feet to an area of shallower slope, and widening and hardening the trail surface. A 10x10 foot accessible viewing area could be created at the end of a short spur off this trail that sits beside a pool where waterfowl hang out and overlooks a stand of cottonwoods filled with nesting holes. The Committee took bids for the project from several trail builders, and chose Darren Pfeifle of Montana Made Trails in Columbia Falls to do the job.



Brent Mitchell and Lewis Young building entrance gate.
 Photo by Linda Winnie

That fall, Workday volunteers cleared and brushed the planned trail bed and viewing area, and the Committee worked with Darren to plan how and when the trail construction would be done, and what materials would be needed. In May the Mainland Trail was closed for several weeks while Darren and a crew of FAS volunteer helpers constructed the trail and viewing area. Committee member Lewis Young had drawn up plans for a wheelchair accessible gate to replace the old pedestrian pass-through at the entrance, and he and Brent Mitchell built and installed it as the trail was being completed. The completion was celebrated at an opening ceremony on June 15, where FAS President Paula Smith cut the ribbon on the new wheelchair-accessible gate.



Jane Lopp and friend enjoying the viewing area.
 Photo by Bob Lopp.

Partial funding for this project was provided by a Round-up-for-Safety Grant from Flathead Electric
continued on page 11



Conservation Educator's Niche by Denny Olson

Once again, the summer sneaked away with busy-ness, and it is Jewel Basin Hawk Watch (JBHW) time. A number of us addicts will soon be sitting on what seems like the top of the world,

straining eyes to the north, watching for approaching dots in the sky, and testing ourselves with the challenge of getting a hawk, eagle or falcon ID correctly -- with minimum information.

Even for reasonably good birders, identifying raptors as they fly by overhead (at 100 mph-plus!) can be intimidating. But if you are interested in getting better at it, 'ya gotta start somewhere'. I'll try to help by eliminating the "noise" of looking at the whole bird and not knowing where to concentrate for ID purposes. There are lots of people better at it than I am (Dan Casey, Josh Coville, Lisa Bate, BJ Worth all come to mind), but I'm having fun in the "student" role.

The 17 most common fall raptor migrants here in the Flathead fall into basic family categories of Accipiters (3 species), Buteos (5 species), Eagles (2), Harrier (1), Vulture (1) and Osprey (1). The Falcons (4) are birds of prey but not in the grouping of "hawks". They are most closely related to parrots and other songbirds (even hummingbirds!).

One of the strategies I'm coming to appreciate is that your overhead look will be very brief, and usually with poor light adding to the difficulty. And, there can be three to five birds arriving almost simultaneously! So, when the birds are still a mile out, with only a head-on view available, what can you decipher?

The Accipiters (3 kinds), with their short wings and long tails, will be doing some variation of repetitive flap-flap-flap-glide. Sharp-shinned Hawks are small, get bounced around a lot in the breeze, and their heads seem small as they get closer. Heavier Cooper's Hawks drive steadily through a medium breeze, and their heads are larger by comparison.

They also have a slightly longer, more rounded tail with more white showing at the tip. Larger Goshawks have a stiffer, slower, more powerful wingbeat, lift their wings higher on the upstroke, and the wings are more pointed when flying than their smaller cousins. They also have longer secondary feathers on their inner wings, which make the wings look more pointed.

The Buteos have large broad wings and shorter tails, and hence are prone to more circling and soaring. Red-tails have a slight dihedral ("v" shape) of their wings when soaring. Because they are heavier than most other buteos, their wingbeats are heavy, but fluid-looking. At JBHW, there are always some "resident" Red-tails circling and hunting. The migrants fly straight south, like they are all business and on a mission.

Most of the Buteos are similar enough at a distance so that overhead field marks become more important. Look for dark leading edge of wings and the "comma" farther out on Red-tail wings. Juveniles *won't* have the orange tail. Swainson's Hawks have a light bouncy flight, and are the only raptors with a dark *trailing* edge on their wings. Ferruginous hawks -- our largest buteo -- have long tapered wings. They are usually very light colored (90%), and adults have a distinctive dark "V" of dark feathers where their legs come together in flight. They also soar with a "modified" dihedral, bending their wings flat at the "wrist". Rough-legged Hawks, our far northern migrant, soar with a dihedral and tip back and forth in winds like a Harrier. Their dark "square" at the bend of the wing is a dead giveaway overhead. Broad-winged hawks -- an eastern bird which we have seen more of lately -- have a coarse banded tail and light underside with black edges around the entire wing.

More next time about the falcons, eagles, harriers, ospreys and vultures!

(If you can hike 2 hours with moderate but constant elevation gain, you owe it to yourself to visit the spectacular JBHW site!



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER
OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ⇒ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ⇒ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ⇒ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ⇒ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.

Great Fish Community Challenge

It's a new season of Flathead Audubon – welcome to everyone! After a summer of scattering to the winds, now we have an opportunity to flock back together (in person and/or virtually) to enjoy all of our birds (including some newborn speckled ones), view fall migration with awe, take in a field trip or two, and listen to fascinating programs at our general meetings. We educate people all year long - with birds, about birds and for birds.

Again, this year, Flathead Audubon has the pleasure and privilege of participating in the Great Fish Community Challenge, hosted by the Whitefish Community Foundation. This fundraising campaign gives you the opportunity to donate to your favorite local nonprofit organizations to help us help the Valley. With just one transaction (check or credit card), you can show your support for any or all of the nonprofits in the campaign. It's much easier than responding to many appeals for money several times during the year! We hope you will remember Flathead Audubon in your Great Fish Community Challenge contribution.

Donations to Flathead Audubon through the Great Fish Community Challenge are used 100% locally to further our dedicated mission of birds, their habitats and conservation. The campaign runs only until 5 PM, September 16.



Here are the details:

Online donation portal: <https://whitefishcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/list>

Printable Donor Form: <https://whitefishcommunityfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/DonorForm2022.pdf>

Mailing address: Whitefish Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1060, Whitefish, MT 59937

Do not send your donation directly to Flathead Audubon! Send your completed Donor Form and your check made out to Whitefish Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1060, Whitefish, MT 59937.

Thank you for donating! Your gift is especially welcome this year, to help us continue to bring birds and nature education to the Flathead Valley.

by Kay Mitchell

Birds Are Laying Their Eggs A Month Earlier Than Normal

A new analysis published in the Journal of Animal Ecology shows that the average egg-laying dates have moved up by nearly a month for 72 species of birds in the Upper Midwest region.

A 120-year-old collection of eggshells held by Chicago's Field Museum helped hatch an investigation by a national group of researchers. The museum houses hundreds of the shells, most of which were collected before the 1920s, along with data about the types of birds and when the eggs were laid. The scientists also used records of bird nesting observations taken in the Chicago area between 1880 and 1920 and about 1990 to 2015.

Climate change has shifted seasonal rhythms of animals and plants, which affects everything from bird food to bird habitats and can place birds in competition with one another for insects and other food sources. The earlier and warmer springs that accompany human-caused climate change can effectively strand birds that are born earlier than their traditional food sources.

The link to the full article is: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2022/04/02/birds-eggs-climate-change/>



A bird egg collection at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. (John Bates/Field Museum)

submitted by Lana Batts

FALL 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. Please read our field trip guidelines at <https://flatheadaudubon.org>. 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 the individual field trip leader listed below. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic we are taking precautions to ensure safety for all participants. Masks and respect for others' personal space are highly recommended, and we ask you to not share binoculars or spotting scopes. The number of participants allowed on trips will be limited as will carpooling.



BIRDING AT SMITH LAKE, Tuesday September 6, 8-11 AM. Join FAS field trip leader Darcy Thomas for a morning of birdwatching. We will walk a portion of the paved Great Northern Historical Trail along Smith Lake before driving around the lake stopping at the boat launch and other pullouts along the way to view birds. Smith Lake is a complex of large, shallow wetlands and marsh, surrounded by stands of willow and other shrubs as well as conifers. Among other birds we will be looking for mixed flocks of migrants such as warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, sparrows, and thrushes that feast on the chokecherries. Vault toilet available at the Fishing access site. Bring binoculars, water and a spotting scope if you have one. To register contact Darcy at 406-407-8263 or darcy@flatheadaudubon.org. Space is limited.

BIRDS OF PREY FIELD TRIPS at Lone Pine State Park, Saturday September 17

Join Audubon leaders for walks, Bird ID, and discussion at Lone Pine State Park in conjunction with the Birds of Prey Festival.

Three separate walks are scheduled:

8 AM with Darcy Thomas

9 AM with Dee Baginski (USFS)

10 AM with Bridger Donaldson; this is a kids' birding hike

No sign up in advance is necessary. There will be a sign directing you to a meeting place. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring binoculars if you have them.

JEWEL BASIN HAWK WATCH, Sunday September 18, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM (approximately).

Dan Casey will lead a trip to the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch site on Sunday September 18. The second half of September offers peak numbers and diversity of passing raptors; we expect to see more than 100 hawks of 10 or more species if conditions are right. (See Jewel Basin Hawk Watch article elsewhere in this newsletter).

This trip involves a 2.2 mile hike of moderate difficulty (each way), gaining 1,400 vertical feet from the Jewel Basin parking lot. Attendees should wear sturdy footwear; hiking poles are recommended. You should also bring binoculars, water, lunch and clothing layers for changing weather conditions (we will cancel or reschedule if weather conditions are unsuitable). The trip is limited to 10 participants. Please contact Dan at (406) 270-5941 to sign up and get more information. Carpooling will be encouraged for vaccinated people as the road to the Jewel Basin is rough and parking limited. Time of trip includes both driving from Bigfork and hiking to the viewing area.

BIRDS OF PREY ID WORKSHOP at Wild Wings Raptor Recovery Center, Thursday September 22, 11:00 AM. Sponsored by Flathead Audubon, no charge for participants.

Join veteran Hawk Watch and Wild Wings volunteers for exciting close views and discussions of raptors and their identifying characteristics. This will help with identifying migrating raptors at the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch or enhance any birding experience. The volunteers will be assisted by the Wild Wings educational birds of prey, of which 10 represent raptor species migrating through here in the fall and/or call this valley home. This includes a Cooper's Hawk, three Falcons of different species, three very different Red-tailed Hawks, a Ferruginous Hawk, and others. Sign up is required and space is limited. To sign up call Kathy at 406-837-3837 or mktat@gmail.com. For the birds! Start your native habitat with a free native plant seedling for each participant

SANDHILL CRANE VIEWING at WEST VALLEY, Thursday September 29 (7-9 AM) or Saturday October 1 (6-8 PM). View Sandhill Cranes as they stage in the West Valley on their fall migration. See these magnificent birds as they fly out at sunrise to nearby agricultural fields where they feed during the day or in from their daily feeding in the fields to roost overnight in pothole wetland ponds around sunset.

Join Darcy Thomas for an early morning crane viewing on Thursday, September 29 at 7-9 AM. For information and to sign up call Darcy at 406-407-8263 or darcy@flatheadaudubon.org.

Join Denny Olson for an early evening crane viewing on Saturday, October 1 at 6- 8 PM. Please call Denny at 406-249-3987 or educator@flatheadaudubon.org to sign up.

Jewel Basin Hawk Watch 2022

As we suffer through the hot, dry, smoky days of August it is hard to imagine that the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch season is almost upon us. But the 15th consecutive season of season-long migration monitoring will begin on August 25th. We are once again happy to have local birder extraordinaire Joshua Covill on board as our paid technician, and a cadre of volunteers will help man the ridgetop this fall.

The Jewel Basin site has become well-known as THE place to get close-up views of migrating raptors, with passage rates exceeding one bird per minute on the best migration days. We have tallied over 37,000 hawks, eagles, and falcons of 18 species over the past 14 seasons. Peak migration usually runs from mid-September through the first week in October; last year our best day was relatively late in the season, with 488 birds counted on October 8th. We also recorded new season-long high counts for ten species, including an incredible 2,490 Sharp-shinned Hawks, on our way to our best season ever, with 4,418 birds counted.

The Jewel Basin Hawk Watch is supported through cooperation with the Flathead National Forest

and hundreds of hours donated by local and visiting volunteers. There will always be an experienced primary observer on site, but extra sets of eyes are needed on the busiest days! The Jewel Basin site sits on the ridge crest about ½ mile north of Mt. Aeneas. Getting there involves a 2.4 mile moderately difficult hike from the Jewel Basin parking lot to the ridgetop, steadily gaining about 1,400 ft in elevation. The scenery is as spectacular as the birding. Surveys will run from August 25th through November 7th, weather and safe access permitting!

We will be including monthly updates of this year's effort in the Pileated Post. But if you would like more information, contact Dan Casey at (406)270-5941. There is a google group dedicated to the effort (jewelers@flatheadaudubon.org); you can also follow daily surveys in real time by visiting dunkadoo.org/explore and clicking on the Flathead Audubon Society icon. Or visit the Jewel Basin page on the Flathead Audubon website for more information and survey calendar: <https://flatheadaudubon.org/protect/jewel-basin-hawk-watch/>

Tally Lake Campout Sunday June 12 to Tuesday June 14

This Year's Tally Lake Campout provided some excellent birding to about 17 Flathead Audubon members and guests. We met at Tally Lake Sunday afternoon and after our opening birding walks had a potluck meal around the fire. Some people stayed the night and were joined by others for Monday birding. The birding was exceptionally good this year partly because we saw many nesting birds. Pam and Jake were excellent guides and we had a lot of fun togeth-

er. Monday night started with a rather damp dinner and proceeded to rain heavily through the night. A few intrepid souls spent the night. By 9 AM they were gone when Jill and I arrived to check it out. By then the snow covered the nearby hills and the campground. The only remaining bird to be seen was a solitary raven.

Here is the list of birds we saw:

by Jill and Mike Fanning

55 species

*Heard only

Common Goldeneye

Common Merganser

Ruffed Grouse*

Common Loon

Turkey Vulture

Osprey

Bald Eagle

Northern Goshawk

Spotted Sandpiper

Common Nighthawk*

Vaux's Swift

Rufous Hummingbird

Williamson's Sapsucker

Red-naped Sapsucker

Hairy Woodpecker*

Northern Flicker

Western Wood-pewee*

Willow Flycatcher

Hammond's Flycatcher

Cordilleran Flycatcher

Warbling Vireo

Red-eyed Vireo

American Crow*

Common Raven

Tree Swallow

Violet-green Swallow

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Bank Swallow

Cliff Swallow

Black-capped Chickadee

Mountain Chickadee

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Red-breasted Nuthatch

American Dipper

Ruby-crowned Kinglet*

Townsend's Solitaire

Swainson's Thrush

American Robin

Varied Thrush

Gray Catbird

Cedar Waxwing

Northern Waterthrush*

Orange-crowned Warbler*

MacGillivray's Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

American Redstart

Yellow Warbler

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Chipping Sparrow

Fox Sparrow

Song Sparrow

Western Tanager

Black-headed Grosbeak

Brown-headed Cowbird

Pine Siskin

Flathead Valley Bird Report

by Dan Casey

Rare and Notables – Spring-summer

May-August 2022 was characterized by much drier weather throughout, and near record temperatures late in the period. Some avian highlights included a long-staying Cattle Egret near Lakeside, two adult Sabine's Gulls at Somers, 2 Long-tailed Ducks, and a Sage Thrasher near Whitefish. Boreal Chickadees were reported more frequently than normal in Glacier and Flathead National Forest, primarily by listers specifically seeking the species. Feral Whooper Swans (up to three) were seen throughout the north valley from April through June.

- 5/03 – **Cattle Egret** (1) Mission View Terrace, Lakeside (Dan C.) seen by many through 5/16
 5/04 – **Common Redpoll** (15, late) Truman Saddle trail (Joshua C.)
 5/10 – **Lark Sparrow** (1) Herron Park (JRK) Away from south county are where more regular
 5/23 – **Bonaparte's Gull** (53) Somers Beach SP, with 13 (late) Red-breasted Mergansers (Dan C.)
 5/26 – **Sabine's Gull** (2) Somers Beach State Park (Dan C.) Very rare in spring.
 5/26 – **Sage Thrasher** (1, photo) Whitefish area ranch (Beth V.)
 5/27 – **Snow Goose** (1) North of Lake Blaine (late)

- (Jake B.); also at Bigfork, 7/17 (Leslie K.)
 5/29 – **Long-tailed Duck** (1f) Wayfarer's SP (Allison R.); 1m at Somers, 7/11-7/16 (many obs.)
 5/29 – **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (1) Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (Christian B.)
 6/04 – **Baltimore Oriole** (1) Creston (Craig H.)
 6/14 – **Black Swift** (29) Over Breezy Point, Somers (Dan C.)
 6/22 – **White-throated Sparrow** (1 singing) Bowdish Road (Scott P.) (not known to breed here)
 7/27 – **Boreal Owl** (2) Jewel Basin Road (William H.)
 7/28 – **Ferruginous Hawk** (1 imm) Farm Rd, Somers (Dan C.)

What to Expect – September 2022

Late August through September offers perhaps the greatest diversity of southbound migrants through the Flathead Valley. The last swallows and hummingbirds are about to leave, shorebird migration is in full swing, and the first cold fronts of fall bring in raptors and flocks of sparrows. This is a time to look for rare migrants, such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper, jaegers, Broad-winged Hawks, and Sabine's Gulls. And be sure to check out the growing flock of Sandhill Cranes in the West Valley!

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from the May 5, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting and Elections May 2022

BOD Meeting 5/2/22

- Tom Roberts presented the newly revised Education Strategic Plan, which added both formative and pre/post assessments and better tracking of participant numbers. In addition, Cindy Roberts rewrote several sections to make them easier to understand and to reflect our newly developed technological resources.
- Rod Walleto presented the proposed 22-23 budget, which the Finance Committee prepared. After questions/answers and comments, it was approved.
- Dave Manuwal coordinated a survey of window-strike bird fatalities. He distributed information and recruited volunteers to complete the survey.
- Other items included: the need for a replacement newsletter editor, plans for field trips, and preparations for the Birds of Prey Festival and the Road Scholar field trips.

At the general meeting held on 5/9/22:

- Kathy Ross was presented with a Conservation Achievement Recognition Award.
- Rod Walleto, Treasurer, and Pam Willison, Secretary, were reelected for 3-year terms.
- Margaret Parodi, Dave Manuwal, and Will Beyer were reelected for 3-year Board terms.
- Bridger Donaldson, Shannon Donaldson, and Jason Garver were elected as new Board members, and will serve 3-year terms.

The Fourteenth Annual Birds of Prey Festival!

Hawks, Owls, Eagles and Falcons -- up close and personal -- and FREE! From **9 AM until 1 PM on Saturday**, September 17th Flathead Audubon and Lone Pine State Park, will have our biggest event, with activities for everyone, exhibits, booths great programs, and prizes!

Kate Davis, Director of Raptors of the Rockies, a 34-year raptor educator, photographer and artist, and author of seven books about birds of prey, will be our dynamic keynote presenter on "Fascinating Falcons", along with her Peregrine and Aplomado Falcons and a "surprise" owl. Kate just published her second edition of *Falcons of North America* to rave reviews, and she will have some copies along for sale.

Dr. Kurt Lindsay, Neurologist and owner of Nebulosa Photography, will present "Owls Through the Lens" his intimate and absolutely stunning photographs of all the owls of Montana, and tell us stories about his relationships with owls.

Dan Casey, retired professional Ornithologist, founder of Jewel Basin Hawk Watch, and co-author of *Birds of Montana*, will present "Who's That Flying Over?"-- very informative tips and tricks on identifying birds of prey from below. Flathead Audubon will have 27 full-sized color raptor silhouettes for your practice, and you can take a quiz and win some prizes! Dan will also lead a field trip the next day to our Jewel Basin Hawk Watch viewing site near the top of Mt. Aeneas (limited to 10 participants, 2 hours uphill!).

Flathead Audubon Society (FAS) will premiere "Birds Rock!", "Bird Trouble", and "Bird Help" -- three

entertaining short films produced by FAS during the COVID hiatus. Visit their website below for other new videos.

Beth Watne and Wild Wings Recovery Center volunteers will be outdoors with many rehabilitating birds, possibly including Ferruginous, Red Tail, Harlan's, Cooper's Hawks, Great Gray and Pygmy Owls, and Peregrine, Merlin and Kestrel Falcons.

Fancy Face Design face painting will be there to turn you and your kids into "raptors" for the day. Glacier Institute (thanks for in-kind donations!) Hockaday Museum, Flathead Land Trust, Center for Native Plants (with raffle prizes), Owl Research Institute, US Forest Service, Montana Loon Society, River 2 Lake Initiative, and many other organizations will be there with fun activities. "Early Birders" can go on guided bird hikes at 8 AM, 9 AM and kids at 10 AM. Binoculars provided!

Continuing a tradition started by the family of the late Rod Ash in 2006, Over 850 people participated and learned at the last Festival! Come early if you are a glutton for knowledge and fun!

NOTE: Parking is severely limited at Lone Pine Visitor Center, so a short walk from the parking along the entrance road may be necessary. No food or drinks provided. BYO bottles for refill at our cold water station.

Visit flatheadaudubon.org for more information, or contact Jan Metzmaker (406-260-6443), Nancy Gresham (406-544-0385) or Denny Olson (406-249-3987).

Jewel Basin Field Trip

Dan Casey will lead a trip to the Jewel Basin Hawk Watch site on Sunday, 18 September. The second half of September offers peak numbers and diversity of passing raptors; we expect to see more than 100 hawks of 10 or more species if conditions are right. Peak seasonal counts have varied from 9 Sept through 6 Oct, and our all-time high count (in 2020) was 595 birds on 21 Sept! (See Jewel Basin Hawk Watch article elsewhere in this newsletter).

This trip involves a 2.4 mile hike of moderate difficulty (each way), gaining 1,400 vertical feet from the Jewel Basin parking lot. Attendees should wear

sturdy footwear; hiking poles are recommended. You should also bring water, lunch and clothing layers for changing weather conditions (we will cancel or reschedule if weather conditions are unsuitable).

The trip is limited to 10 participants, on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Dan at (406) 270-5941 if you are interested in participating. He will share logistics information with confirmed attendees. Limited carpooling may be available (by choice) for vaccinated and masked attendees. Approximate times will be 9 AM – 5 PM including driving and hiking time (from the Bigfork area).

OSNA History continued from page 5

Coop and by Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon. In addition, all the materials and rental equipment were donated or provided at a discount by local companies: LHC, Inc. donated all the gravel needed to harden the trail and viewing area (5 truckloads); Sli-ters Lumber and Building Supply contributed the lumber for the gate and viewing area edging; Murdoch's Farm and Ranch Supply in Kalispell gave a discount on gate materials; and Midway Rental gave a discount

on rented equipment.

Owen Sowerwine is frequently used by local folks for walking and bird watching, and by local teachers and the FAS education program for nature education. Over the years, Flathead Audubon has brushed open and maintained game trails and put in foot bridges to ease visitors' way. The new accessible trail, gate, and viewing area expanded the range of people who are able to visit Owen Sowerwine and enjoy its natural features.

by Linda Winnie

GOING BATTY FIELD TRIP

“Going Batty” was finally back this year with a surprising, uncommon bat guest. A Townsends Big-eared Bat was a special treat for bat biologists and participants, young and old. The enthusiasm for bats was shared by all! Thanks so much to Leslie Kehoe for once again letting us share her beautiful batty habitat and to the wonderful biologists that shared their wealth of knowledge and endless dedication to help us understand this interesting mammal we share the night and world with. Thanks to Lisa Bate, Lewis Young, Jesse Coltrane, Gabby Eaton and Leah Breidinger. Also, a special thank you to Kathy Ross who handled signups for the event.

If you missed the “Going Batty” field trip this year watch for this interesting event next August.

by Darcy Thomas and Kathy Ross



Townsends Big-Eared Bat

Carson Cantrell

OSNA Work Day 2022

The 2022 Owen Sowerwine Work Day will be held Saturday, October 1, from 9 am until about noon, and we would be thrilled to have you join us. Meet in the parking lot of Kalispell Montessori (349 Willow Glen Drive), to say hello, and to divide up the jobs (we will not have access to the school building/bathroom). Then we can regroup at the various locations to volunteer a few hours to get some work done and enjoy some time in OSNA. Everyone should wear sturdy footwear, long sleeves, and clothing appropriate for the weather; and bring a pair of work gloves and some water. At least one person in each work group should

have bear spray, so if you have it, please bring it.

The various jobs (and the tools you could bring) include: cutting & stacking along the property boundary near Treasure entrance (loppers, gloves, safety glasses); cutting/bagging seed heads along the southern boundary (hand nippers, gloves); emptying nesting boxes (mask/nitrile gloves/small ladder); re-working the edges of ADA trail and bench area (loppers, Pulaski, hoe/shovel/rake, gloves). If you have questions, call/email: Pam Willison, 406-270-0225, pam@flatheadaudubon.org. Thanks, and I hope to see you there!!

by Pam Willison

American Redstart continued from page 2
happen in colder climates such as Montana and allows the female to incubate longer.

Once the female has begun incubating her eggs the male will often court another mate and establish another breeding territory out of earshot from the primary territory. He spends more time providing food for the chicks of the first nest than the second. But while both parents feed the chicks on the nest the parents divide the brood up after they fledge with the mother feeding certain chicks and the father feeding the rest. They do this until the fledglings can feed independently. American Redstarts eat insects but will also eat some small berries and fruits in late summer. They capture more flying prey than most other warbler species and are even able to compete with flycatchers for the same prey.

American Redstarts are preyed upon by raptors while they forage and by climbing mammals such

as squirrels when they nest. Chicks and fledglings are preyed upon by climbing mammals, snakes, and some birds such as Blue Jays, Common Ravens, Gray Jays, Northern Saw-whet Owls, and Cooper's Hawks.

Redstarts breed throughout most of Canada, Montana, and a few other areas of the far Northern States and most of the Eastern United States. They winter in Florida, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Migration is nocturnal and Redstarts often join mixed flocks such as chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, and other warblers.

Redstarts are unlikely to be interested in your bird feeders, but they may enjoy your birdbath where they will come for a drink. Since they change their diet in late summer to include berries and small fruits you may be able to attract them to your yard by planting native plants such as serviceberry. They may also eat suet with berries in it.

Volunteer Opportunity

I am looking for volunteers who would like to write a Bird of the Month column. Most desperately needed is someone to write for the month of November. If you are interested please contact me. Writing an article is a great way to learn about a bird in more depth. Plus, it is fun to see your name in print. Your volunteerism would be greatly appreciated. Darcy Thomas, Bird of the Month Editor. Contact [Darcy](#).

HELP MITIGATE HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICT THIS FALL

Keep fruit picked—Flathead Food Gleaning Group can help!

Need help picking fruit on your property? Want to donate to local Food Banks or the Yellowstone Wolf and Bear Discovery Center? Check out the Flathead Food Gleaning Group Facebook page to connect with folks that can help pick and /or those who might be looking for fruit for winter. It will help keep your neighborhoods safer and help some to keep bears out of harms way. We can all do our part! *by Kathy Ross*

*Natural Events To See This Month:
Little brown bats swarm for mating*

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+
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Flathead Audubon Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our federal tax ID number is 81-0447830.

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

President	Cory Davis	cory@flatheadaudubon.org
Vice-President	Darcy Thomas	darcy@flatheadaudubon.org
Past President	Gael Bissell	gael@flatheadaudubon.org
Secretary	Pam Willison	pam@flatheadaudubon.org
Treasurer	Rod Walette	rod@flatheadaudubon.org

DIRECTORS

2022-2025	Will Beyer	beyer59901@yahoo.com
2022-2025	Margaret Parodi	margaret@flatheadaudubon.org
2022-2025	Dave Manuwal	manuwal2@centurylink.net
2020-2023	Bob Lee	bob@flatheadaudubon.org
2020-2023	Carole Jorgensen	carole@flatheadaudubon.org
2020-2023	Joe Batts	joe@flatheadaudubon.org
2020-2023	Cindy Roberts	cindy@flatheadaudubon.org
2020-2023	Tom Roberts	yellranger@yahoo.com
2021-2024	Dan Casey	dan@flatheadaudubon.org
2021-2024	Kay Mitchell	kay@flatheadaudubon.org
2021-2024	Jake Bramante	jake@flatheadaudubon.org
2021-2024	Derrick Rathe	derrick@flatheadaudubon.org
2021-2024	Dan Kotter	dankotter7@gmail.com
2022-2025	Bridger Donaldson	bridger@flatheadaudubon.org
2022-2025	Shannon Donaldson	shannon@flatheadaudubon.org
2022-2025	Jason Garver	jason@flatheadaudubon.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation	Dave Manuwal	manuwal2@centurylink.net
Education	Cindy Roberts	cindy@flatheadaudubon.org
	Tom Roberts	yellranger@yahoo.com
Field Trips	Margaret Parodi	margaret@flatheadaudubon.org
	Darcy Thomas	darcy@flatheadaudubon.org
	Rod Walette	rod@flatheadaudubon.org
Finance	Cory Davis	cory@flatheadaudubon.org
Great Fish	Mike Fanning	jake@flatheadaudubon.org
Membership	Darcy Thomas	darcy@flatheadaudubon.org
Newsletter	Jake Bramante	jake@flatheadaudubon.org
	Lewis Young	llyoung@interbel.net
Nominations	Bob Lee	bob@flatheadaudubon.org
Owen Sowerwine Natural Area	Cory Davis	cory@flatheadaudubon.org
	Pam Willison	pam@flatheadaudubon.org
Outreach	Jake Bramante	jake@flatheadaudubon.org
	Jan Metzmaker	jan@flatheadaudubon.org
Programs and Hospitality	Dave Manuwal	manuwal2@centurylink.net

CONSERVATION EDUCATOR

Denny Olson educator@flatheadaudubon.org
FAS REP ON MT AUDUBON BOARD
 Bob Lee bob@flatheadaudubon.org



the

Pileated Post

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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and Montana Audubon <https://MTAudubon.org>. We meet on the second Monday of each month September through May. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meets the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM. See page 1 for locations. 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. To become a member or to renew your membership, go to the FAS website or use the membership form below. **Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; or darcy@flatheadaudubon.org.**

Check our website <https://FlatheadAudubon.org> for
Late breaking FAS news & announcements
Online FAS membership sign up or renewal
Newly scheduled field trips & events



THE PILEATED POST is delivered BY EMAIL!

So be sure to include your email address when joining or renewing.

You may renew or join using the form below or online on our website: <https://flatheadaudubon.org>

To report a change of address - postal or email - contact Mike at shrdlu@centurytel.net

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You will receive occasional short emails with last minute updates, reminders, and breaking FAS news.



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 \$ _____
Total \$ _____

New member? Renewal?

If you wish to receive a paper copy by
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PDF's created using cutepdf writer had working links at one time but don't seem to now (Nov 19, 2021) PDF's created by Publisher using Print may or may not have working links. Uninstalled cutepdf writer and installed updated version (Nov 2021) so have to see if this helps with links.

PDF's created using Export in Publisher appear to have working links (Nov 19, 2021). It appears to only use the basic address if put cursor on top line of multiline addresses but does go to the full address if put cursor on bottom of multilines. Middle line of addresses may go either way. Maybe all lines work (Jan 19, 2022).

Black and white PDF using Publisher/Print done by selecting grayscale instead of color. This way appears to result in much larger file than using CutePdf.



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT
THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER
OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ⇒ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ⇒ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ⇒ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ⇒ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.