



Pileated Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

VOLUME 50, NUMBER 5

Red-throated Loon



Photo by Jake Bramante

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Spring Migrant: Snow Goose

By Darcy Thomas

Late March provides a magnificent birding opportunity to view hundreds of thousands of snow geese staging at Freezout Lake before flying onward to breeding grounds in the NW Arctic coast of Canada. Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area is located a few miles south of Choteau, Montana, just east of the Rocky Mountain Front. What a stupendous background to watch massive flocks of geese flying and honking overhead!



Photo by Josh Covill

Spring migration occurs from mid-March through early May, with peak activity typically occurring the last weekend of March. Flathead Audubon offers an annual overnight field trip to view the Snow Goose migration during its peak. (Details regarding the trip can be found on page 6.)

It's not difficult to identify a Snow Goose with its white body and black wing tips. Snow Geese are smaller than swans with shorter necks. They sport a pink bill with a thick black line known as a "grinning patch."



Photo by Ryan Schain

You may also spot a Ross's Goose, which is similarly marked, but smaller, usually whiter, and has a daintier bill with a thinner "grinning patch." When looking with binoculars over the huge flocks, you can sometimes spot a blue morph, a Snow Goose with a mostly blue body and white head. The blue color is controlled by a single gene that is dominant over white.

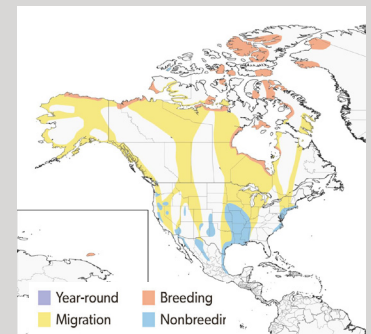
Snow Geese are notoriously loud waterfowl. Their primary call is a nasally honk, which both male and female geese make day or night, year-round. In flight, they also quack and make shrill cries. Look for a sentry goose during winter and migration that is apart from the flock, keeping an eye out for eagles and other predators. Watch the entire flock ascend in a cacophony if a threat is announced. Fast on their

feet, they can even outrun most predators!

During migration, Snow Geese roost on the water of lakes, large marshes, slow-moving rivers, and other wetland complexes like Freezout during the night. At dawn, they take off in impressive and raucous flight to forage in harvested fields of barley and winter wheat, returning to the water again in the evening. They are easy to locate, as the sound of their honking will lead right to the flock.

Whether you join Flathead Audubon on our annual field trip to Freezout or go on your own, you will be certain to enjoy the magnificent spectacle of the migrating Snow Goose.

Attention potential BOM authors: Want to share your bird knowledge and observations? Send your submissions our way at bom@flatheadaudubon.org!



Map courtesy of Birds of the World

JANUARY PROGRAM

Travels in Victoria, Australia

Presented by Dan Casey

Join Dan Casey at our January 12 general meeting, where he will discuss the trip he and his wife, Susannah, took to Melbourne and other areas in Victoria, Australia's southeastern-most mainland state. While the majority of the talk will cover birds found in the area (think parrots!), Dan will also discuss the landscape, culture, and some of the unique mammals (including humans) encountered along the way. Habitats visited include everything from city parks to coastal scrub and estuaries, tree fern and eucalyptus forests, dry scrublands, and sky islands. And what visit would be complete without a trip to the best hotspot in Victoria, the Western Treatment Plant?

Dan has been a stalwart of Flathead Audubon and the Montana birding community for more than four decades. A co-author of "Birds of Montana," he retired from a career in bird conservation in 2020 that included stints with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, American Bird Conservancy, and the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture. Dan and Susannah live in Somers.



Laughing Kookaburra,
Photo by Daniel Casey

JANUARY MEETING FAS

We will continue our hybrid meetings this month and continue through the fall/winter for the remainder of the year. For those coming to the meeting on January 12, we'll meet in Room 26 of the Gateway Mall (United Way building) at 7pm. This room is on the east side of the building along Glenwood Drive in Kalispell. Look for our banner outside.

For those joining virtually, when you use the link, 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), and this is the preferred way to join. You can also get an audio connection to the meeting without the Zoom visual capability by using your phone.

For information on how to attend by Zoom, or how to get an audio connection by phone, contact jake@flatheadaudubon.org.

Videos of previous FAS meeting programs
are available at
<https://flatheadaudubon.org/videos>.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Monday, Jan. 5, 5:30pm. FAS Board of Directors Meeting. Gateway Community Center, Room 26, US Hwy. 2 West, Kalispell. You may bring your dinner.

Archived board minutes from monthly Board of Directors' meetings can be found at flatheadaudubon.org/about-us.

Monday, Jan 12, 7pm. Flathead Audubon General Meeting. Gateway Community Center, US Hwy. 2 West, Kalispell. East side of Gateway Mall, along Glenwood Dr. All are welcome. For presentation information and/or to join remotely, see above.

Saturday, Jan 3, full day. Troy Christmas Bird Count.

Sunday, Jan 4, full day. Kalispell Christmas Bird Count.



Saturday, Jan 17, 11am-1pm. Owen Sowerwine Winter Walk. See page 6.

Wednesday, Jan 21, 3-5pm. Audubon Winter Gathering: Collage Event. See page 3.

Saturday & Sunday, March 28 & 29. Snow Goose Migration Field Trip to Freezout Lake. See page 6.

Conservation Corner: A Holiday Reminder

By Carole Jorgensen and Gael Bissell

Remember the birds and other critters this holiday season by following these simple tips!

Close your blinds and put timers on any outdoor lights to ensure nighttime's protective darkness. You'll be helping wildlife while enhancing your view of the stars, and maybe more northern lights!

When cleaning up branches or blowdown, use them to make a brush pile near a feeder. Leave dead wood and native plants to provide both bird cover and food. These piles and native brush are really important for the security of ground feeding birds, such as juncos and doves, and possible wild turkeys.

If you put out bird feeders, please remember to clean and disinfect them regularly. As gathering places for birds, dirty feeders have the potential to spread avian flu and other diseases if not maintained.

Provide water, or as some call it, a bird hot tub! A small heater or heated bowl will keep water from freezing and allow you to enjoy watching winter bird bathing!

Consider putting your holiday tree and wreaths (no tinsel, please) out for birds, decorated with suet. The greenery



Photo by Julie Oswald

could also become part of that important brush pile mentioned above.

Finally, keep your cat warm and inside—and your birds safe outside.

Happy Holidays from all of us at Flathead Audubon!

AUDUBON WINTER GATHERING: COLLAGE EVENT

Wednesday, January 21 • 3-5pm

The Gathering Room



Join Flathead Audubon Society for a cozy, creative winter gathering! Instead of braving the cold and snow for our usual winter field trips, we're heading indoors for an afternoon of nature-inspired collage-making. Using a variety of bird- and nature-themed magazines, we'll create unique artwork while enjoying warm company and conversation.

Whether you're an experienced artist or simply curious to try something new, all are welcome. Materials will be provided, but feel free to bring any additional images or supplies you'd like to incorporate.

Come for the creativity, stay for the community. Let's celebrate the beauty of nature together, indoors at The Gathering Room (where FAS holds its monthly meetings).

No sign-up necessary. For more information, email Jess@flatheadaudubon.org.

Collage by Jess Garby

A Not-So-Common Loon

By Julie Oswald

In the spring of 2025, avid bird photographer Tony Gangemi looked forward to Common Loons returning to nest on NW Montana's alpine lakes. Tony knew the loons were highly photogenic, with striking black-and-white plumage, territorial displays, and intimate family interactions. What he didn't anticipate was the birth of a rare white loon chick that would come to define his summer as he chronicled its young life in more than 10,000 images over 300+ hours.

Tony learned of the white loonlet in May, when it was approximately a week old. Initially the young "cottonball," as he called it, was thought to be albino. However, as the chick grew, subtle gray markings became visible that mirrored an adult loon's more typical feather patterns. This condition of partial pigmentation loss, known as *leucism*, is quite rare, occurring in roughly one in 30,000 birds or less.

Photos courtesy of Tony Gangemi
(gangemigraphics@gmail.com)



The young chick's coloration made it highly visible as it floated across the lake, heightening the fear it would fall prey to an eagle or other predator. Yet, as the months went on, the young bird and its sibling survived and thrived under the constant care and feeding provided by both parents.

Throughout the summer months, Tony dedicated three to four hours every other day to photographing the white loon and its family. He spent his evenings culling hundreds of images. The results of his efforts were recently recognized in feature stories by both the [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Flathead Beacon](#).

As the season came to a close, first one loon parent departed, followed a week later by the other parent and sibling. The white loon remained alone on the lake for two more weeks, until Tony arrived on August 20 to find that it, too, had answered the call and left on its migratory journey.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks banded the unique bird in an effort to learn more about its movements, life span, and survival. Loons are known to return to breed near their birthplace. In coming years, this uncommonly beautiful white loon may find its way back to the Flathead Valley to raise a family of its own.



Meet FAS Board Member Ken Fielder

I grew up on Puget Sound, roaming the cobbled beaches amidst a cacophony of gulls. A family camping trip to Glacier National Park set in motion my move to Montana in the early 1970s. In the ensuing years I have lived in East Glacier, Whitefish, St. Mary, Babb, Cut Bank, Columbia Heights, Columbia Falls, and, since 1991, in Kalispell.

Some fifteen years ago, I was walking along the shore of Redrock Lake, returning from a hike up to Swiftcurrent Pass. I heard, but could not spot, several small birds twittering in the lodgepole. Thinking back over the glorious day, I realized one thing had been missing. I hadn't seen any animals. No deer, elk, sheep, bear, or moose. Not even a chipmunk or a squirrel. But wait, what about the birds? I'd seen and heard many birds throughout the day. That realization inspired me to start learning more about birds. I always see or hear birds, no matter where I go or how long I am out.

A few years back, I began attending Flathead Audubon Society meetings in order to enjoy the wonderful presentations. Auks living in underground burrows in Scotland? Wow. Over time I have become more involved, most recently joining the board in 2025. I've discovered that as much fun as it is to learn about birds, getting to know all the wonderful people has been even more significant for me.

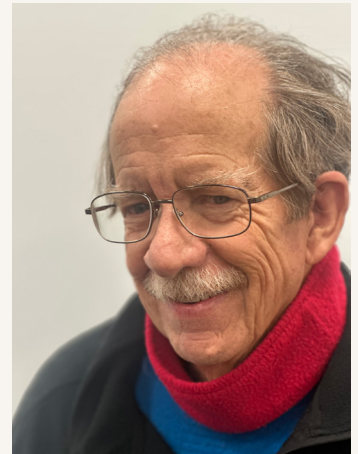


Photo by Darcy Thomas

Save the Date for the 25th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

Montana's premier birding festival is headed to Kalispell! From June 12-14, 2026, Montana Audubon and Flathead Audubon Society will host the *Wings Across the Big Sky* Birding Festival. This year, we're pleased to announce that Glacier Bank is our lead sponsor!

Join birders and wildlife enthusiasts from across Montana and beyond for a weekend of local field trips, engaging presentations, and a riveting keynote speaker. We're already planning a great lineup of field trips, so stay tuned for more details coming soon.

Registration brochures will be available in March 2026.

wings  across the big sky
2026



Sharp-shinned Hawk | Elliott Res

Montana Audubon Wildlife Fund Grants



Since 1996, Montana Audubon has awarded small grants to individuals or organizations in support of research and education projects that directly benefit wildlife in Montana. In 2025, they awarded seven grants to support research, habitat clean-up, a hawk watch station, and raptor rehabilitation centers. Visit the grant website (linked below) to see updates from each recipient.

Applications for the 2026 cycle are now available. All proposals must be received no later than Friday, January 16, 2026. Winners will be announced in March 2026.

See grant guidelines, download the application form, and read updates from 2025 recipients here: <https://mtaudubon.org/wildlifegrants/>.

JANUARY & MARCH FIELD TRIPS

OWEN SOWERWINE WINTER WALK, Saturday, January 17, 11am-1-pm

Join Jess Garby, FAS Conservation and Education Coordinator, and Pam Willison, FAS Owen Sowerwine Chairperson, for a winter walk or snowshoe (depending on conditions) at Owen Sowerwine. This is a good location for woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, Bald Eagles, Pine Grosbeaks, American Robins, and mixed flocks of Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings. We will be looking up, down, and all around to see what other critters have been in the area and leaving “sign” in the form of tracks, scat, digging, foraging, rubbing, and beds. We will also see what the plants and the river are doing for the winter.



Dress in layers to accommodate the weather and wear sturdy/warm footwear. Bring binoculars and a daypack for water, a snack, and extra layers in case of changing temperatures. If we encounter deep snow, snowshoes or ice cleats and/or hiking poles will be helpful. This is a family-friendly outing (ages 5+).

We will meet in the Kalispell Montessori parking lot, 349 Willow Glen Drive, and walk from there. Sign up is required by emailing Jess Garby at jess@flatheadaudubon.org. Limited to 15 participants. The outing will be rescheduled if weather conditions are poor.

SNOW GOOSE MIGRATION: FREEZOUT LAKE, Saturday-Sunday, March 28 & 29

In a wildlife spectacle not to be missed, each spring vast numbers of migrating Snow Geese and other waterfowl stop at Freezout Lake WMA near Choteau, Montana, to rest and rejuvenate before continuing on to breeding grounds in the far north. Flathead Audubon Society is pleased to once again offer our annual weekend field trip to experience this phenomenon.

We will meet at 10am on Saturday morning, March 28, at the Burger King and Tractor Supply parking lot in Evergreen, located on the corner of Highways 2 and 35. Bob Lee will provide a suggested schedule and route for proceeding to Choteau, with birding along the way. An afternoon arrival should allow time for goose watching. After a night in Choteau, we'll head back to Freezout Lake just before daybreak on Sunday to watch the “mass ascension” of Snow Geese from the WMA ponds as they head to agricultural fields to feed. We'll then search the fields for closer observations of the birds. Participants are welcome to return to Kalispell at their own pace.

In recent years this has become a popular destination, making early lodging reservations essential as the limited options will fill up quickly. Please make your own arrangements as soon as possible. Local motel options include the Stage Stop Inn (406-466-5900), Gunther Motel (406-466-5444), and Big Sky Motel (406-466-5318). An Airbnb cabin is available a few miles away in Bowman's Corner (andrewgertge@gmail.com). Freezout WMA has primitive camping sites as well, which also may fill up quickly.

FWP requires anyone recreating on state lands to hold a current Montana conservation license. Licenses are available through the FWP website at <https://fwp.mt.gov/buyandapply/conservation-license>, or through any authorized license dealer. The cost is \$8 for residents, \$4 for youths and seniors, and \$10 for nonresidents. Note that the license year runs from March 1 through February 28 each year, so you are advised to wait until after March 1 to purchase your license for it to be valid for use on future 2026 FAS trips.

To sign up and for more information, please contact Bob at RML3@centurytel.net. Allow time for him to respond, as he will be traveling at times.



*Look for Redpolls feeding in birches
and at your thistle feeders.*

Photo courtesy of Dick Walker, walkerphotography.smugmug.com

Flathead Valley Bird Report

By Dan Casey

Rare and Notables – November/December 2025

See also: <https://ebird.org/region/US-MT-029?yr=all>.

Real winter weather arrived just before Thanksgiving, bringing birds back to some of the feeders, where they had been noticeably absent over the abnormally mild fall. There were several reports of **White-winged Crossbills** and **Northern Shrikes**, yet **Redpolls**, **Bohemian Waxwings**, and even **Rough-legged Hawks** were less widespread than is typical for the period. Most outstanding were Flathead Lake's fourth ever **RED-THROATED LOON** and a **SCARLET TANAGER** in Eureka, well out of range and well out of season! **Scoters** were noticeably absent from some expected locations (e.g., Foy's Lake), while the **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** south of Creston survived the first real winter conditions.

11/12 – **Surf Scoter** (2) Ducharme Pt, Polson (Braydon L, Dan S)

11/15 – **Spotted Towhee** (1, late) Polson (Dan S)

11/17 – **Bonaparte's Gull** (1, late) Lake Five (Shannon D)

11/20 – **RED-THROATED LOON** (1) Wayfarer's SP (Roy M), present thru 12/01 (Pam W)

11/21 – **White-winged Crossbill** (25) Swan Lake area (Dan S)

11/29 – **Western Bluebird** (1, late) S Columbia Falls (George S)

12/01 – **Northern Saw-whet Owl** (1) Eureka (Patrick B)

12/01 – **Spotted Towhee** (3, late) Wayfarer's SP (Pam W)

12/03 – **SCARLET TANAGER** (imm male) Eureka (Patrick B)

12/03 – **Lewis's Woodpecker** (4) Wild Horse Island (James M)

12/05 – **Long-tailed Duck** (1) Wayfarer's SP (Roy M)

12/06 – **Yellow-headed Blackbird** (1, late) Ronan (Thomas K)

12/07 – **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (1 still present) S of Creston (Michell T)

What to Expect - December 2025/January 2026

As we truly enter winter, local birders are best advised to look for raptors in the open country, waterfowl on whatever open water remains, and birds attracted to feeders and fruiting shrubs and trees. It remains to be seen if "winter finch" (e.g., **Redpoll**) numbers will pick up. There have been relatively small numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings** reported prior to the first CBC weekend, but we would expect those to increase, as there appears to be no shortage of mountain ash fruit for them to find. Watch for **Merlins** attending the flocks!



Scarlet Tanager, Photo by Patrick Broom

New Series Starting Next Month

By Linda Fine Hunt

In 1969, I applied to the Department of Forestry at the University of Missouri, Columbia. I hoped my future work environment included trees and birds. However, my application was denied because I did not weigh enough! Back then, many institutions viewed forestry and ornithology as all-male professions, often discouraging women from pursuing these fields. Before the 1960s, women may have assisted men in research but were usually not the chief investigators.

Beginning next month, *Pileated Post* will introduce "Soaring Beyond Boundaries," a three-part series about women scientists who have advanced our knowledge of birds. The series begins with Len Howard, who founded the field of avian ecology, studying birds in their natural environments rather than as lab specimens.

Join me in the coming months to learn about pioneering female ornithologists!



Photo by Will Laurie

Nest Notes January 2025

By Jess Garby, FAS Conservation and Education Coordinator



December has been all about spreading Christmas Bird Count (CBC) cheer! I visited the Conservation Clubs at Glacier High School and Columbia Falls High School to share the

CBC history, highlight some of the data that has been collected, and show students how they can participate. For the Kalispell CBC on January 4, I'll be guiding a handful of students on my route! I can't wait to watch them fall in love with birding, or at least enjoy counting the number of Mallards on a pond.

I also had the opportunity recently to offer a lesson at the UpSchool Education co-op on bird beak adaptations, using our Bird Beak Lab Education Trunk. An excited group of young students could barely sit still as I quizzed them on local species. One student shared a personal experience she had in her neighborhood woods, describing how the forest had been full of birds. She then asked if I knew of the forest called "Owen Sowerwine." I exclaimed, "I LOVE Owen Sowerwine! Did you know that the Audubon Society helps take care of those woods?" We both squealed in excitement. I plan to take this school group to Owen Sowerwine in the spring for a birding adventure.



This time of year always puts me in a crafty mood, and what better way to educate others on birds than a crafting project?

That is what the nationwide "Bird Collisions in the Anthropocene" project is all about. FAS hosted two of these Crafting for Conservation workshops in December at Flathead County Libraries. The project goal is to raise awareness about bird collisions and teach folks how to make their windows bird safe. Each participant crafted a bird, representing an individual bird that had been killed by a window strike. All completed birds will be sent to the project's headquarters where they will be combined with other handcrafted birds from similar workshops around the country to form a 300-foot-long art installation. For more information on the project, visit <https://www.hollygreenberg.com/homepage>.



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Cedar Waxwing

If you would like to participate in another crafting opportunity, join me for an upcoming afternoon of collaging, using bird-themed magazines! See details on page 3.

Thank you to those who came to the Flathead Audubon Society's open house party in our new office. For those of you who haven't seen it yet, the walls are decorated with original Tom Robert paintings, fun bird posters, and all the bird books you can hope for. If you would like to visit our office, contact me at jess@flatheadaudubon.org.

All Photos by Jess Garby

Taking Flight

By Kai Allen Harry, Birder and Photographer, Age 9

Articulating what birds mean to me feels strange. For me, birding is something that just happens. Birds are these incredible flying feather things. I love them! I love how smart and intelligent they are. I love the way they look. Their colors are so vibrant. They are amazing living things.

I chose the photo of the House Sparrow because it is an everyday reminder of the magic of birds. I captured this image while climbing a shed in Memphis, Tennessee. I was watching the bird gather pieces for its nest.

I have the unique experience of observing birds in yards, lakes, mountains, rivers, and oceans. My family has made a home in many places, now here in Montana. I was a Kingfisher for Halloween.

Birds inspire me. If I were a bird, I would fly.



House Sparrow, Photo by Kai Allen Harry

Project FeederWatch Reports from Around the Valley

Creston Report by Jess Garby



Photo by Jess Garby

Nestled among agricultural fields is a ten-acre bird oasis carefully crafted by Craig Hohenberger over the years that he has lived in Creston. By planting native grasses, forbs, and trees, Craig has created habitat that invites birds back to the landscape. I'm fortunate to rent a small cabin on this property, where Craig has been feeding birds for more than a decade, long enough that many species know this spot well.

At my station, a single suet block has attracted three individual Northern Flickers and a Downy Woodpecker. I also maintain three seed feeders stocked with a variety of mixes. They are routinely emptied by Red-winged Blackbirds, House Finches, and American Goldfinches. This month's excitement was a visit from an American Robin!

Kalispell Report by Darcy Thomas

My personal Project FeederWatch site is at my home, Ballymurray. So far this year, I have completed two counts with a total of 12 birds. My feeding setup includes peanuts in the shell, black oil sunflower seeds, suet, and mealworms. The highlight has been watching a pair of Downy Woodpeckers chase each other around before deciding which feeder to visit. Their antics bring wonderful energy to the yard on otherwise quiet winter days.



Photo by Darcy Thomas

Whitefish Report by Molly Miller



Photo by Molly Miller

My feeding station includes four feeders (two hopper feeders and two large tube feeders), each filled with a different seed mix. This year, I've also added a heated dog bowl as a winter bird bath. Throughout November, I recorded almost no visits, but after temperatures dropped and snow blanketed my yard in early December, activity picked up. I began to see solitary Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees and a pair of Dark-eyed Juncos. The juncos prefer to dominate the hopper feeders, while the chickadees opt for the tubes. So far, no one has tried the bird bath.

Because of bear concerns, the tube feeders are hung high under the porch roof, out of reach. Until colder temperatures settle in for good, I still bring in the hopper feeders each night.

I'm hopeful that more feathered visitors will appear in the coming weeks, so please stay tuned for next month's report!

MONTANA AUDUBON

ACTION ALERT

Sign up for action alerts at mtaudubon.org/conservation-policy/montana-legislature/

GO GREEN! with *Pileated Post!*

Receive our newsletter directly in your inbox! You'll get the same great content with beautiful color photos and clickable links, all while helping us dedicate more of our resources to bird conservation and reduce our environmental footprint.

To switch to the email version, simply contact us at info@flatheadaudubon.org.

Thank you!

The History Corner: Field Trips Throughout the Years

By Linda Du Lac and Ben Long



Education and conservation are the primary missions of Flathead Audubon Society (FAS), and field trips are a tried-and-true method for achieving both.

Over the course of 50 years, FAS volunteers have led 1,121 field trips to show people the birds and bird habitat we are dedicated to protecting. On average, that's about two per month for a half century. These would not have happened without the dedication of leaders who spend their time and effort putting the tours together. More than 100 FAS field trip leaders have contributed their time and expertise so that others can experience the beauty of birdwatching.



Dan Casey holds the record for leading the greatest number of FAS field trips, with 163 to his credit. Dan is followed by fellow field trip leaders Leslie Kehoe with 45, Darcy Thomas with 40, and Kathy Ross with 32.

Since its inception, FAS field trips have served a critical role in building support for habitat and ecosystem protection. Rick Trembath and others led early canoe trips down the lower Flathead River to not only inventory birds, but also to show decision makers, journalists, and other influential individuals what would be lost should four proposed dams be built. Those trips helped generate statewide and local resistance that ultimately led to the plans for the dams being abandoned.

Rod Ash and Bud Moore led trips to inventory birds in the Swan Valley, where several logging operations were planned. These trips fostered public input regarding the proposed timber sales. More recent conservation victories include those won at Owen Sowerwine and West

Valley Viewing Ponds, both of which benefited greatly from awareness built by FAS field trips to these locations.

In the early years, FAS offered unique field trips, such as canoe trips to Wild Horse Island and backpack trips in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. For several years, Neal Brown and Anne Morley led weekly birding and plant identification walks along Bigfork's Wild Mile Corridor. On her birthday, Ruth White led birding walks along the Swan River.

Many FAS field trip destinations have been popular for decades, including Smith Lake, Creston Fish Hatchery, Lower Flathead Valley, the CSKT Bison Range, and Glacier National Park, to name a few. A standout since 1981 has been the FAS road trip across the mountains to watch migrating Snow Geese at Freezout WMA, which was first led by Elly Jones. Elly's tradition has continued almost every year since, due to the dedication of Dan Casey and Bob Lee.

Fortunate Audubon members will remember Dan and Susannah Casey's annual Father's Day canoe birding trips along the Stillwater River. Each year, the Caseys led a flotilla of about five canoes from the Old Steel Bridge or the Stillwater River Bridge to Leisure Island. They would bring picnics, stop at good swimming holes, and sometimes hike the islands along the way. June could bring high, fast water and swarms of mosquitoes. One hike had Dan turning the group back when he counted over 100 mosquitoes biting through the shirt of the person in front of him.

Dan and Susannah never knew what, if any, river experience participants had before setting off. They had to trust their knowledge of this dynamic and braided stretch of river. As Dan said, "We never killed anyone." Eventually, they stopped offering this annual event to keep that record intact.



Photos by Linda Du Lac



In Memory of Bob Smith

From Paula Smith

FAS Endowment Fund

Are you estate planning, looking to leave a legacy, or just want to make a contribution towards conservation? FAS has a permanent endowment fund through the Whitefish Community Foundation. Donating to the endowment fund will qualify you for part or all of the Montana Qualified Endowment Credit. For more information, contact Alan Davis at the Whitefish Community Foundation or visit their website at whitefishcommunityfoundation.org.

A SPECIAL GIFT is a way to honor or commemorate someone special to you by supporting Flathead Audubon's local projects in their name. Special gifts are acknowledged in this space each month with the name of the donor and the person honored.

SPECIAL GIFT DONATION FORM

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

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Donor's Name _____

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Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Post

Please make checks payable to:

Flathead Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9173

Kalispell, MT 59904

Your gift is tax deductible.

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

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