

BIRDMAN

Magnificent Montana

BY TED GLOVER



Nothing could be more beautiful than Montana in the fall. We had a great trip there in October and the colors were magnificent. Going through Idaho, we had a chance to take the "Lolo Trail," an old wagon trail constructed in the late 1800s to link Lewiston, Idaho to Missoula, Montana. When the automobile came along, the "road" was improved several times until the Civilian Conservation Corps in conjunction with the Forest Service completed work in 1934, making the Lolo Motorway a reality. Today, it winds along ridges above the Lochsa River for nearly 100 miles, roughly following the trail the Lewis and Clark expedition took in 1805 and 1806. What a trip!

The bird-watching at Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in the Bitte Root River Valley near Missoula was spectacular. A tree full of cedar waxwings greeted us at our first stop along the road. Near a small lake, a pileated woodpecker put on quite a show flying back and forth over our heads. Red-winged blackbirds sang from the reeds along the shore while mallards, teals and wood ducks floated along the surface. In the forest nearby we spotted red- and white-breasted nuthatches, ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets and black-capped chickadees.

While driving the scenic back roads of Montana, we saw three different species of grouse: the spruce, the ruffed and the sharp-tailed. We also came across a flock of gray partridge, a European game bird introduced into America.

One final note—we had a chance to study the northern shrike, a rather scarce visitor in the winter. It's slightly larger than the more common loggerhead shrike, with a more obvious hooked bill and a narrower facemask.

In all, we recorded 98 species.

Ted A. Glover
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Photos, clockwise from top left:

- Ruby-crowned kinglet**, *Regulus calendula*—one of north America's smallest birds;
- Northern shrike**, *Lanius excubitor*—a predatory songbird with a stout bill that has a noticable hook at the end;
- Red-winged blackbird**, *Agelaius phoeniceus*—one of the most abundant birds in North America, the black male has brilliant red shoulder patches;
- Black-capped chickadee**, *Poecile atricapilla*—this familiar backyard bird hides seeds and other food items for later recovery. Each item is placed in a different spot and a bird can remember thousands of hiding places.

All photos by Craig Johnson, www.whidbeyaudubon.org

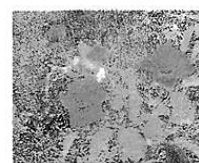
Welcome to the Pack

Applegate Lake Cub Scouts Pack #18 (Ruch Region) usually has an outdoor activity (fishing, rafting, hikes, etc.) the 1st Friday of each month and a regular meeting with activities the 3rd Friday of each month at the Upper Applegate Grange from 10 am to 1 pm. Our 17 current Scouts welcome all boys in Grades First through Fifth including Homeschoolers, Ruch Students, and Non-Ruch Students. For additional information, please contact Cub Leader (Cub Master) Vic Agnifili at 899-1717.

Thank You in Advance.
Vic Agnifili, Cub Master
Applegate Lake Cub Scouts Pack #18
Any questions, please call me at 899-1717

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