

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)

April 2008

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 8

## BIRDING BASICS

### BOARD MEETING

DATE: April 21, Monday

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. West Bank  
125 Ironwood Dr.

### APRIL PROGRAM

DATE: April 21, Monday

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: First Presbyterian Church, 521 E.  
Lakeside, Coeur d'Alene

PROGRAM: "Birding Basics" Part 1 -  
Presented by local Audubon members -  
Free and open to the public - Donations  
to cover costs of handouts appreciated

Visit our Website:

[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)

Have you ever wondered what that bird at your feeder is, or what bird belongs to that beautiful song you hear every year welcoming in the spring?

Come join us for two sessions on how to learn the language of birds! These fun filled meetings will be taught by experienced Audubon members from your local community. Meet new friends and open your eyes to the wonderful world of birds!

#### You'll learn:

- *how to look for birds*
- *where to find different species*
- *how to listen for birds and learn their songs*
- *what equipment to use*
- *where you can practice your new skills!*

These programs are free and open to the public!

Session One: **Regular meeting night - Monday April 21<sup>st</sup>**  
at 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 521 Lakeside  
Coeur d'Alene

Session Two: **Regular meeting night - Monday May 19<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the same location

**If you plan to attend, please call Janet Callen 664-1085 - This will help us plan for the number of handouts we need to prepare. Thank you.**

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## APRIL 19, SATURDAY SCOUTARAMA 2008

Last year we volunteered to help over 100 scouts assemble proper birdhouses. Ladd Livingston, Scout leader, has asked us to do it again, as he received good feedback last year. Ladd has plenty of donated wood, and Roland Craft will help him cut the wood and drill the holes.

We need volunteers to supervise the scouts as they assemble the bird houses. Ladd cut up extra wood to give our chapter 10 or 15 kits to replace some of those on our two bluebird trails and those at Avondale Golf Course. Call me for more information and times to volunteer. Lynn Sheridan 765-2603.

# SPRING MIGRATION

Shirley Sturts

March through May are the months to look for spring arrivals. There is a chart on our webpage that lists the first seen and arrival dates for birds returning from their winter homes.

<http://cdaaudubon.org/Springarrivals1.htm>

## Birds that have arrived already.

Wood Duck - March 7, Lane Marsh, Lisa Hardy

N. Shoveler - March 20, Thompson Lake, Lisa Hardy

Long-tailed Duck - March 11, Hayden Lake, Lisa Hardy

Osprey - March 19, Thompson Lake, Carrie Hugo

Tree Swallow - March 12, Black Lake, Carrie Hugo

Violet Green Swallow - March 11, Mica Bay Survey

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet - March 26, Fernan Creek - Kris Buchler

Spotted Towhee - March 11, Mica Bay Survey (note: we did have one winter in the yard of Doug Ward)

Western Bluebird - March 11, Mica Bay Survey

## Some birds to look for this month are: (date of earliest arrival date between 2001-2007):

Blue-winged Teal - April 24, 2004

Cinnamon Teal - March 17, 2007

Turkey Vulture - March 25, 2007

Mountain Bluebird - March 7, 2005

Western Meadowlark - March 9, 2005 (it has wintered some winters) - Has anyone seen one yet?

Sora - April 17, 2005

Vaux's Swift - April 30, 2006

Black-chinned Hummingbird - April 18, 2005

Calliope Hummingbird - April 5, 2005

Rufous Hummingbird - April 12, 2004

Red-naped Sapsucker - April 1, 2004

Cassin's Vireo - April 24, 2002

Red-eyed Vireo - April 28, 2001

Northern Rough-winged Swallow - March 14, 2003

Bank Swallow - April 27, 2006

Cliff Swallow - April 6, 2001

Barn Swallow - April 2, 2006

House Wren - March 28, 2003? early - all other dates are April and even May

Yellow-rumped Warbler - April 17, 2003

Chipping Sparrow - April 10, 2004

Vesper Sparrow - April 14, 2004

Savannah Sparrow - April 2, 2006

**Report early sightings to Shirley Sturts**

[s.sturts@verizon.net](mailto:s.sturts@verizon.net) or 664-5318



## COEUR D'ALENE AUDUBON CHAPTER GARAGE SALE

Our annual yard sale will be held on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, at the home of Theresa Potts. Please save all your good, used, and clean items for sale, including clothing. Unsold clothing will go to one of the thrift stores. What they don't use, they will give to Green Cross to recycle.

**Also** - As you all start work in your gardens, save extra starter plants and bulbs. If put up fairly early, they'll be sturdy looking come June.

## COEUR D'ALENE AUDUBON BOARD MEETING

MARCH 17, 2008

- The date for our annual yard sale was set for Saturday, June 14th at the home of Theresa Potts.
- There are 3 potential board vacancies: Janet, Lisa and Jan have all offered to step down from the board if new recruits can be found.
- Lynn distributed handouts concerning the State Roadless Plan.
- Janet reported that the Green Cross fund raiser went well. We should receive a \$500 check soon. We will not have a regular opportunity to do this fund raiser - perhaps next year.
- Mike - gives an update on the Fernan Lake road plan.
- Ronn reported we have \$2200 in our checking account.
- The raffle and silent auction were of limited interest. We will not do them at the next 2 meetings.

## NOON TIME BIRDING

March 18th

Lynn Sheridan



At noon, I joined Bill Gundlach, Kathy Erickson, Jan Severtson, Valerie Zagan, and Shirley Sturts, at the west end of Fernan Lake. The ice still covered most of the lake, except around the edges.

On my way along Sherman Avenue, I saw a Rock Pigeon sitting on a nest, with 3 little chick heads peeking out. It is located under the I-90 bridge. After our birding Fernan Lake, I took Shirley, Jan and Kathy to see the nest. (editor's note: Although we know they nest here, this is a first confirmed breeding record for Latilong 2. Thanks, Lynn) See maps at:

[http://www.idahobirds.net/distribution/dist\\_index.html](http://www.idahobirds.net/distribution/dist_index.html)

At the west end boat launch, Bill counted 21 Great Blue Heron on the big snaggy trees where they build their nests. A few Mallard and their hybrid friends paddled in the weeds, and 8 distinctive Bufflehead were watched over by an owl (decoy)! Other species were Red-winged Blackbird, Ring-billed Gull, Song and House Sparrow, Northern Flicker and American Robin.

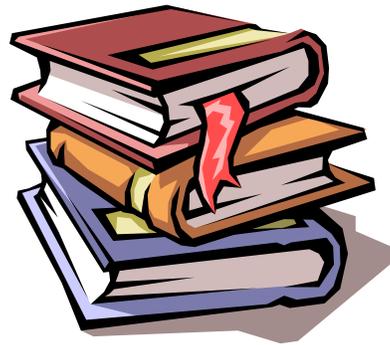
As we drove along the lake, a pair of Common Merganser were swimming in the open water between the ice and shore. Near the east end of the lake we checked the Bald Eagle nest. We could barely see the white head of head of the eagle over the rim of its nest. Above us in a pine, Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatch were busy feeding and we could hear a chickadee nearby.

At the east end, we counted over 30 Common Goldeneye, more Bufflehead, and a pair each of Common Merganser and Wood Duck. Only a few Canada Geese were present. In the trees and bushes, we enjoyed seeing and hearing Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow and a Northern Flicker. Alas, a beaver did not show itself near its lodge.

Thank you friends for sharing this lovely day.

## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

**Birder's Conservation Handbook**  
(Taken from the Inland-nw-Birders List Serve)



Birder's  
Conservation  
Handbook:  
100 North  
American Birds  
at Risk  
Jeffrey V. Wells

A comprehensive guide to North America's one hundred most at-risk birds and how to protect them

- Compact and easy to use, with beautiful illustrations and data organized for convenient, at-a-glance reference
- Detailed species accounts, including distribution maps
- Practical advice on conservation
- Information on leading conservation agencies and resources

"*The Birder's Conservation Handbook* is a gold mine of information on North America's rarest and most vulnerable birds. No other book provides as much information on the threats to each species, the conservation measures that have been taken thus far, and the steps that still need to be taken to ensure the well-being of these birds. I highly recommend it."--David Wilcove, Princeton University

Princeton University Press  
41 William Street  
Princeton, NJ, 08540-5237

[www.press.princeton.edu](http://www.press.princeton.edu)

Read chapter 1 online, click here:

<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8485.html>

## Bird of the Month



Northern Harrier -  
Female  
Photograph by Bill Linn

## NORTHERN HARRIER

Kris Buchler

Older field guides show a bird called a Marsh Hawk which looks identical to our modern Northern Harrier. That is because it is the same bird. The older name tells us more about the bird, particularly, where it might be found. However, this raptor may also be seen coursing over open fields, grasslands or prairies. It has a slow, undulating flight, low over the vegetation, which enables observers to get a good look at this bird of prey.

A physical feature specific to this hawk, is its facial disk. The ring of feathers is owl-like and may serve the same purpose of channeling sound to the ears. This feature may enable the harrier to detect the rustling of small mammals in the tall grasses where it hunts. Northern Harriers exhibit sexual dimorphism, where the males and females may be different in size and or plumage. The male is pale gray above and white below with black wing tips. The larger female is brown above and streaky brown below. Both have a rectangular white rump patch. These birds have long tails and long, slender wings often held in a "V."

Northern Harriers may be seen to hover for extended periods while they detect prey. Inhabitants of marshes and grasslands such as small mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and even insects make up their diet. Low perches may serve as observation posts.

This is a migratory species with northern birds spending winters in southern climes. Reports show that they may roost communally in the winter. However, in the northern third of the western United States, these birds may be found year round and this is true here in North Idaho. Many have been recorded on our Audubon Christmas Bird Counts.

Both the male and female assist in building a platform nest on the ground. It consists of sticks and grasses and is lined with finer grasses. Four to six bluish-white eggs are laid. Occasionally these may have brown marks. Hatching is usually in about 31 days. Both parents may incubate and care for the

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Northern Harrier - Male  
Photograph by Bill Linn

young, feeding insects and small pieces of flesh. After fledging, the young may be fed on the wing. The males may be polygynous and mate with up to three different females.

These birds get mixed reviews on their beneficial role in the environment. Studies show the bulk of their diet is meadow mice and other rodents. Removing these could benefit grasslands and agricultural areas. Detractors will argue that they take young waterfowl and game birds in certain locales. Southern rice farmers find they drive away harmful Bobolinks and blackbirds which cause major losses of this crop.

Lisa Hardy and I had an exciting experience while conducting a shorebird survey at the Boundary Creek Wildlife Management Area in August 2007. Early that morning several of us observed a pair of Peregrine Falcons fly over the wetlands. Each landed on the ground some distance from each other. One was engaged with a small mammal it had in its talons and was observed by a regiment of Canada Geese that slowly marched towards it. The other attracted the attention of a female Northern Harrier. The bird immediately flew towards the falcon and both engaged in spirited combat, twirling around each other, talons extended and while in flight, rising and falling over the marshlands. It was apparent the harrier did not want this competitor around but it was too late in the season to be defending an active nest. Harriers are known for defending their home territory from larger birds and even others of their own species.

My Bent's, "Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey," details many instances of aggressive behavior from this species, both towards humans and other birds of prey. Northern Harriers have been seen robbing falcons of their ducks, and conversely being robbed of theirs by Peregrine Falcons. Master Falconers never use harriers and indicate that they are mostly incapable of being trained. Wildlife photographers have often been struck, and one had the bellows of his camera torn to pieces. However, there is one story of a man who actually raised 3 young harriers and had some success in training them to respond to whistles and calls.

Keep your binoculars trained on this beautiful raptor and enjoy its seemingly effortless flight.

## APRIL FIELD TRIPS

**PLEASE REGISTER:** Watch the website for updates to our field trip schedule. Participants should contact the trip leader at least 24 hours in advance of the field trip to find out if the meeting place/time or destination have been changed.

**COST:** Participants will share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver at a rate of \$0.25/mile, with the trip leader responsible for collection and distribution of the compensation.

**RADIOS:** We will ask participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries as needed.

### MICA BAY SURVEY

*(2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month - 8:00 a.m. September - November and April; 9:00 a.m. December- March: 7:00 a.m. May-August )*

DATE: April 8, Tuesday

TIME: 8:00 a.m. (note change of time)

MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

LEADERS: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739

ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay.

### NOON TIME BIRDING TRIP

*( 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month - 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.)*

DATE: April 15, Tuesday

TIME: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

MEET: 11th street entrance to Tubbs Hill.

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan, 765-2603

ACTIVITY: Take an hour out of your busy day to enjoy the out-of-doors. See how many different species of birds one can find in an hour and get to know people who share your interest in nature. Beginner bird watchers are welcome.

## MALHEUR WILDLIFE REFUGE (southeastern Oregon)

DATE: April 11-14, Friday-Monday TIME and MEET: Contact Leader

LEADER: Eula Hickam at 661-3228 or [ehickam@roadrunner.com](mailto:ehickam@roadrunner.com)

ACTIVITY: The refuge has over 320 species of birds and over 60 species of other mammals. A special feature of the spring is to observe the Sage Grouse in their breeding plumage (on their lek). We would leave early Friday and return on Monday evening, and would stay in mobile homes at the Refuge headquarters. Cost is estimated to be \$200.00 each for the trip – includes transportation, food, lodging, gasoline, a share of hiring a guide for ½ day and miscellaneous costs. There is room for 3 participants plus the driver in one car – if more people want to go, another car and driver will need to be recruited. We should get our reservations in early – this is a popular place in the spring!

## HOO DOO VALLEY "BIRDING BASICS"

DATE: April 26, Saturday

TIME: 7:45 a.m. - 12 Noon

MEET: K-mart parking lot, behind Mexican restaurant at

LEADER: Roland Craft 457-8894 and Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: "Birding Basics" Trip to Hoo Doo Valley - 4 miles north of Athol. Bring water and snacks.

## COMING EVENT - MAY

### ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

On May 3rd we will again tackle our Adopt-a-Highway work on Highway 95, south of Coeur d'Alene. The important "fueling up" on donuts and juice will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Mica Flats Grange. Expect to finish by 10:00 a.m. Long pants and sleeves are recommended. If you haven't tried this before, please join us for a satisfying morning spent tidying up the roadway. Call Judy Waring for more info, 765-5378.

