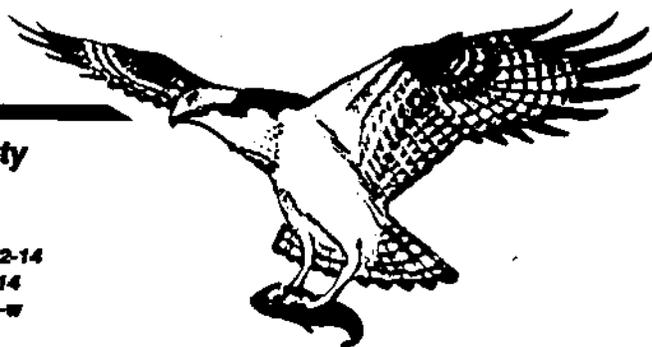


THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society

Pam Gontz, Editor
4301 N. Ramsey Rd., #A2-14
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
765-1115-h 773-4516-w



December 1992

Volume 2, No. 9

CALENDAR CHECK! --

DEC. 15,
1992
5:30 PM

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING! Members of the Conservation Committee will meet on December 15th at 5:30 pm at the Log Cabin Restaurant.

DEC. 15,
1992
7 PM

DECEMBER MEETING! On Tuesday, December 15th, Audubon members will gather to review the bird species likely to be encountered on the 2nd Annual Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Teams and strategies will also be organized and discussed. While the CBC will take place on Dec. 19th, team leaders will decide where and when to meet team participants. If you are unable to attend December's Audubon meeting, but wish to participate in the Christmas Bird Count, please contact a team leader. They are:

Susan Weller
682-3413

Pam Gontz
765-1115 - h
773-4516 - w

Shirley Sturts
664-5318

Gertie Hanson
667-9389

If you wish to be a feeder counter for the CBC, please contact a team leader. **Remember** to dress warm and in layers. Unlike field trips, the Christmas Bird Count will not be cancelled if the weather is severe.

Pam Gontz has again generously offered to host the 2nd Annual CBC potluck. The warmth and hospitality enjoyed at the Gontz home after the 1991 CBC was appreciated by everyone who attended. Please bring a hot dish, salad or dessert. You may show up at the Gontz home starting at 5 pm -- we will have dinner at 5:30 pm and then tally our birds after dinner.

Directions to the Gontz home are as follows: from Hwy 95 and Kathleen (where Super 1 Foods and Atlas Bldg. is) turn west on Kathleen heading towards Ramsey Rd., at Ramsey Rd. turn north, a short distance up Ramsey you will see a mobile home park on the left -- Oakcrest Mobile Home Park, don't turn in the first driveway but continue on up Ramsey past the Oakcrest sign and turn left into the second driveway into the park. As you enter the park you will see three parking areas which are meant for guests. Our mobile (# A2-14) is the fifth mobile facing south on the right-hand side of the road - our number is on the front of the house. You may pull down by the mobile to unload and check out where it's at then you will need to park your cars back in the parking area.

Spokane CBC: January 2, 1993

Indian Mountain CBC: to be announced

DEC. 19,
1992

THE ULTIMATE DECEMBER FIELD TRIP! 2nd Annual Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count -- come to the December 15th meeting to find out the details!!

DEC. 28,
1992

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for submitting articles, etc., for the January newsletter.

Jan. 19,
1993

JANUARY MEETING. If all goes well and he is not travelling, Scott Robinson will present his program on moose in Alaska.



PINE SISKIN DIE-OFF

Anyone who had pine siskins or evening grosbeaks dying en masse at their feeders last summer might be interested in the following information. Millie Pokorny contacted me recently to tell me about a similar die-off in Western Montana. Millie's son-in-law works for the USFS in Trout Creek, Montana, where residents experienced the same problem we faced with finding large numbers of dead siskins in and around their yards. Wildlife biologist Carolyn Barbet Hidy sent five corpses off to the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The birds tested positive for Avian salmonellosis, more commonly known as salmonella.

While salmonella may be more prevalent in the spring and summer, it is still wise to keep your feeders clean in the winter months. Of particular concern are bird baths where flocking birds, like siskins and grosbeaks, tend to congregate and defecate, spreading the disease to other birds.

Fortunately, transient flocking birds are more prone to diseases than are the regulars at our feeders who may be residents. Chickadees and nuthatches often escape outbreaks of diseases such as salmonella. Still, to be on the safe side, be sure to clean feces off of bird feeders on a regular basis. Also, change the water in your bird bath frequently and disinfect it with a wash of boiling water to kill bacteria. [-Susan Weller]



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED --

Volunteers are needed on the following dates --

- Dec. 5th - Volunteer needed to assist Susan Weller at Duncan's Nursery. Auduboners will be on hand to help shoppers with tips on how to attract and feed birds. From 11 am to 2 pm.
- Dec. 26th - Volunteer needed to help Susan Weller conduct a survey on interaction between Bald Eagles and Bald Eagle Watchers at Wolf Lodge Bay. Volunteer may assist for part of the day or all day. For more information contact Susan at 682-3413.

WHAT WAS THAT NAME AGAIN?

American and British ornithologists are slowly reaching an agreement on English (common) names of birds. Details of changes suggested were in a 28-page article in the June 1992 issue of *British Birds*. While these changes are not the final word and some negotiating still remains, it is inevitable that bird watchers on both sides of the Atlantic will have to accept, or at least endure, some changes.

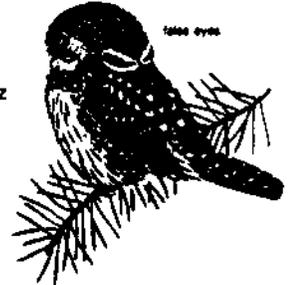
Two groups of birds are causing the greatest disagreement. What we call loons, the British call divers and our jaegers are their skuas. Both sides recognize that total agreement in changing these names seem unlikely because of the special status each has given to their own name.

However, don't be surprised if some of the following changes are adopted: white-winged scoter to velvet scoter; common merganser to goosander; gyrfalcon to gyr falcon; dovekie to little auk; boreal owl to Tengmalm's owl; American pipit to buff-bellied pipit; northern shrike to great gray shrike; hoary redpoll to arctic redpoll; white-winged crossbill to two-barred crossbill.

This effort to find common ground will increase communication among scientists but will cause mild stuttering in bird watchers alike . . . LOOK! There's a Water . . . , no American . . . , no Buff-bellied Pipit ????

BIRD NOTES -

- Surf Scoter - 11/92, [Imm] seen at St. Maries sewage lagoon by Dan Svingen
- Northern Shrike - 11/11/92, seen on Meyer Rd. between Poleline Rd. and Prairie Ave. by Pam Gontz
- Pygmy Owl - 11/14/92, seen on Sportsman's Access Rd. north of Hayden Lake by Pam Gontz
- Rough-legged Hawks - 11/14/92, 2 imm. seen on Burlington Northern Rd. in Rathdrum Prairie, also 3 imm. seen on Lancaster Rd. in Rathdrum Prairie
- Northern Shrike - 11/14/92, seen on Meyer Rd. north of Lancaster Rd. towards Rathdrum by Pam Gontz
- Northern Shrike - 11/15/92, seen on Atlas Rd. south of Prairie Ave., by Shirley Sturta and Pam Gontz
- Mourning Doves - 11/15/92, 51 seen on power lines on Bell Campground Rd. north of Harrison by Pam Gontz
- Tundra Swans - 11/15/92, 35 seen on Cave Lake by Pam Gontz
- Red-breasted Mergansers - 11/15/92, seen of Harlow Point Rd. north of Harrison by Pam Gontz
- Bohemian Waxwings - 11/15/92, approx. 25 seen in Rainey Hill area by Pam Gontz
- Northern Harrier - 11/17/92, seen on Meyer Rd. between Poleline Rd. and Prairie Ave. by Pam Gontz
- Rock Doves - 11/20/92, approx. 65 seen on Poleline Rd. between Idaho and Greensferry Rd. feeding in the fields - Pam Gontz
- Pygmy Owl - 11/22/92, seen on Hwy 95 just south of Farragut turnoff by Pam Gontz. Pygmy Owl was being harassed by a Hairy Woodpecker.

**CUTE LITTLE KILLERS -**

An article in the October/November issue of *National Wildlife* summarizes some recent findings on domestic cat behavior.

- ~ ~ In Wisconsin alone, cats are thought to kill 19 million songbirds in a single year. Cats may be a major threat to some bird populations, especially ground-nesting birds living near farm and suburban areas.
- ~ ~ Cat density in Wisconsin varied between 57 cats per square mile in some rural areas to a staggering 1,295 per square mile in the city of Madison.
- ~ ~ 94% of cat owners wanted songbirds on their property, yet only 42% were willing to reduce the number of cats to benefit wild species. Cat owners demonstrated much denial about what their pets accomplish.
- ~ ~ How well fed a cat is has no influence on how many wild animals it kills each day. Their urge to hunt is independent of their urge to eat.
- ~ ~ More than 35,000 kittens are born in this country every day.

And so, if you are a cat owner who likes to let Felix out "for a little exercise," then the next time you feel like pointing a finger of blame at a large group directly responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of millions of birds annually, then you need go no farther than the nearest mirror.

[Dick Rivers, Spokane Chapter, Audubon Society, reprinted from The Pygmy Owl]



**Nearly all animals make sounds,
but songbirds create music.**

GO NATIVE!

As a member of the local native plant society, we try to encourage people to landscape more with native plants. There are several reasons for this, one of which is to discourage the invasion of non-natives and protect natural native plant communities.

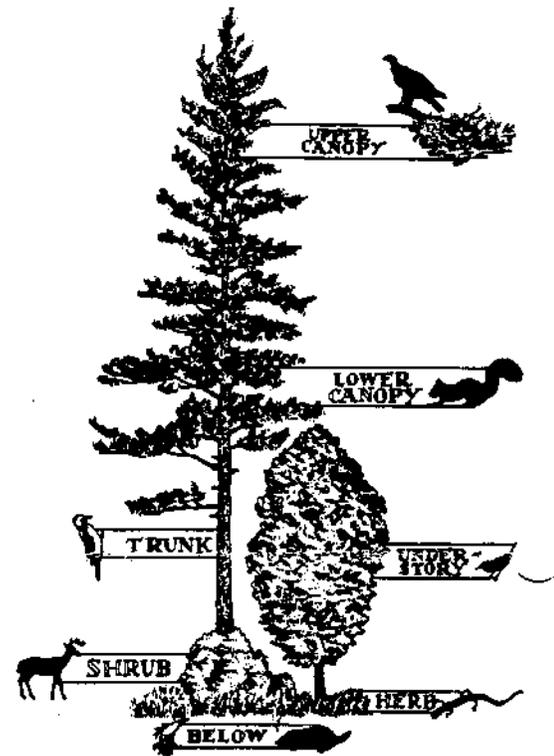
Being an avid birder, I was intrigued when I ran across several articles on using native plants to help other native species, particularly the migrating birds – many of which are rapidly declining. Native plants offer the best overall food source for birds and these avian foragers help to insure a healthy forest community by their dispersal of seeds.

An example of a non-native that was thought to be good for wildlife, but the Division of Wildlife has learned otherwise, is the Russian olive. They have found that the wood of the Russian olive is too hard for woodpeckers to carve nest holes, that it doesn't provide adequate nesting cover because the foliage is too open, and that only a few species utilize their berries.

Another common problem these foreign species have is the fact that they don't attract native insects which breaks down the chain of life. Non-natives lack this essential ingredient and the higher forms of wildlife dependent on insects frequently won't use them because of their lack to entice these food sources. One statistic states that the Russian olive has about 15 insect species associated with it, while a native plant may attract about 150 insect species.

Next time you're considering planting flowers, trees or shrubs, consider **GOING NATIVE!** Native wildflowers, trees and shrubs can be found at certain nurseries and through some catalogs. Protect the plants in the wild and maintain those plant communities – collect only seeds or make selective cuttings. Landscaping with a variety of native plants will make better food and shelter for other native species and continue that chain of life important to species diversity.

[-Pam Gontz]



WHAT IS A NATURALIST?

I have heard many of my friends the past couple years say that I have become quite a naturalist and have always taken it as a compliment. After all, any term which includes the word natural or nature is comfortable to me. But I've never really known what the actual definition of the word naturalist was. I knew it was someone who had something to do with nature and that has always been enough for me. Until this past summer.

It's funny how you carry certain things around with you – you know, those things you are mildly curious about but the curiosity just is not enough to do anything about. Then all of a sudden something happens. That something may be totally obvious when it happens or it could be a very intangible source leaving you wonder why a certain curiosity has come to the top of your mental priorities. Well that "something" started the cogs turning and contemplating – just exactly what is a naturalist?

Of course my first thought is if you need a definition, go to the dictionary, and that I did. Webster's dictionary defines naturalist as "one who studies animals or plants, esp. in the field." I like that "especially in the field" part. This told me what a naturalist was, in cold analytical terms, but I felt a naturalist was more than that so I continued my search.

[cont. on page 5]

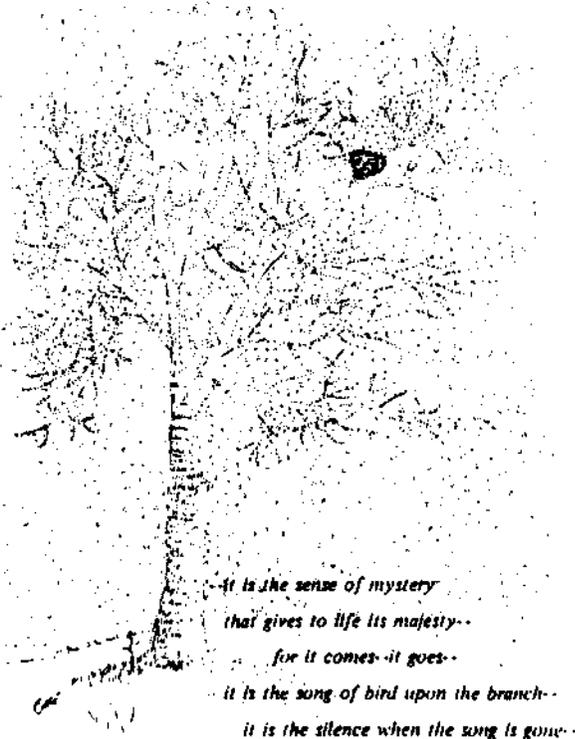
While at the Yellowstone Institute this summer I was looking through their library of books and ran across a book called *Great American Naturalists*, by Ruth Allison Coates (1974). Seeing the title peaked my interest. I started to leaf through a few pages and ran across the author's definition of a naturalist --

'A naturalist is a person so curious about nature that he tries to learn as many of its secrets as he can.'

Now that was more like it. Maybe I'm romanticizing this role a little, but to me, at least, being a naturalist is not just a path in life you choose, it's a path that chooses you. It becomes a quest -- where you begin to see, where earlier you had only looked!

This illuminating book continued to explain the life-blood of a naturalist. That a true naturalist commits a lifetime to studying nature and keeping records of his findings. He is concerned with all living things in nature -- plants and animals, mountains and waterways -- sometimes specializing in one field. A naturalist records the special characteristics of each kind of plant and the behavior of each animal he sees. He also studies where they make a living -- or their habitats such as forests, deserts, grasslands, swamps, lakes, or oceans.

A naturalist's discoveries may be for his own personal use and information but his discoveries may be so important that the whole world hears of them and benefits from them. Naturalists pursue their interest in many ways. Some express their discoveries through sketches, drawings, photos or paintings while others write about their observations in books or essays. Some unlock the secrets of nature through laboratory experiments while others conduct bird surveys or plant inventories in the field.



The first American naturalist was the American Indian -- for his learning the ways of nature was as basic as breathing. He lived in the very heart of nature and was therefore brother to it. He saw in every rock, tree and bird a spirit equal to his own. Nature had great religious meaning to the American Indian. He deeply respected all living things on the earth because they supplied him with food, clothing and shelter.

I think being a naturalist puts you on a path of eternal discovery, not only about nature, but about yourself and how you are linked with the world you are eager to understand. I think being a naturalist brings to the forefront a respect for ourselves as well as nature. Thomas Merton said, "We must be true inside, true to ourselves, before we can know a truth outside ourselves." For me, being a naturalist has made me know myself, what I'm about and what I'm capable of. That knowledge is a catalyst for wanting to further my awareness of the nature that surrounds me, whether it be birds, plants, trees or rocks -- for their secrets intermesh with my existence.

Even though I think I have a good idea what a naturalist truly is, I have this nagging feeling that "class will always be in". There will always be something new to learn and discover. There will always be other curiosities that will surface, leading me down that path of contemplation.

What is a . . . ?

[Pam Gontz]

May the beauty of Nature fill your
heart with peace and joy!
Merry Christmas!
Pam
12/22



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send the Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$20 payable to the National Audubon Society is enclosed.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Send this application and your check to
National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Local Chapter
Coeur d'Alene G08

Local Chapter Code
7XCH8

COEUR D'ALENE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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