COMING EVENTS
BOARD MEETING
DATE: February 10, Tuesday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mountain West Bank
125 Ironwood Dr.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM
DATE: February 16, Monday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: First Presbyterian Church, 521 Lakeside
PROGRAM: "Bluebird Trails and Loon Legends". Join us for an evening of programs created by our Education Committee and other Audubon members. "The Gertie Hanson Memorial Bluebird Trail" is a slide presentation and "The Loon, the Owl and the Snipe" is a loon legend told as an interactive felt board story. These programs have been presented to libraries, schools, clubs and Elderhostel classes.

Great Backyard Bird Count
February 13-16, 2004 - - see page 2

Visit our website: www.cdaaudubon.org

REARDAN POND ENDANGERED

Susan Eastman held out her hands to indicate the vast sweep of water that makes up Reardan Pond. “The number of birds that stop here each year is incredible,” she said. “You should see the white swans gliding through the water.”

Susan and her husband, Rod, purchased the property years ago as an investment for their retirement. Living in Reardan, Susan came to love the property for its scenic beauty and the birds that frequent the 80-acre pond. Now a widow, Susan must sell the land, but she wants the pond to remain undisturbed. She pointed out the reedy marshland, the shallow flats near the shoreline, and the grassy banks. “There’s so much food and nesting ground for them here. I couldn’t bear to see that destroyed. It means too much to the birds and to Reardan,” Susan said.

The 240 acres are already platted for a dozen houses and a new road, “Audubon Lane.” If developed, several of the new home sites would own a sliver of the pond. Fences, dogs, boats, and people would break up the peace and tranquility currently enjoyed by the birds. Lawn fertilizers and driveway runoff could contaminate the pond and alter its flora and fauna. Reardan Pond would be just another sliced up private pond instead of an outstanding oasis for migratory birds.

After a site visit and unanimous endorsement by its board, Inland Northwest Land Trust recently purchased an option to buy Reardan Pond from Susan Eastman. INLT has until March 15, 2004, to come up with $50,000 in order to extend the option for two more years. That will give INLT time to raise the rest of the money to purchase the property or find an appropriate conservation buyer. “A generous donor gave INLT the $1,000 we offered Susan for the option,” said INLT Executive Director Chris DeForest. “Susan has agreed to keep her land off the market until March while we look for funds, have the land appraised, and negotiate the deal.”

INLT is seeking contributions from individuals and organizations, including the local Audubon Society. INLT is looking for grants from businesses and foundations as well as working with government agencies that might be interested in acquiring the property. “We haven’t yet decided who will own Reardan Pond in the end. One thing we do know is that it has to be and will be permanently protected,” Chris said.

See page 2 (Bird Tracks) to see how you can help.
**BIRD TRACKS**

Audubon Members make a difference

**January Board Meeting Decisions**

$200 was donated to Reardan Pond Restoration Fund (see article on page one)

A Susan Weller Memorial Scholarship was established. An initial gift of $500 (to be split between semesters) will cover a portion of tuition and fees for one North Idaho College recipient. This will be awarded for the 2004-05 school year. The scholarship is to go to a student interested in pursuing a degree in 1) Environmental Science, 2) Biology, Botany, Zoology, or 3) Forestry/Wildlife/Range/Wildland Recreational Management.

An honorarium of $250 was presented to Denver Holt of the Owl Research Institute in Montana, for doing the Snowy Owl Program for our January meeting.

**SAVE REARDAN POND**

You may send tax-deductible contributions to help purchase Reardan Pond to Inland Northwest Land Trust, 35 W. Main Ave., Suite 210, Spokane, WA 99201. Please make your check payable to INLT and write “Reardan” in the memo section of the check. Money raised for the Reardan project will go into the INLT Special Projects Fund. Any money not used to acquire the Reardan Pond will be restricted to projects that permanently protect the foremost open spaces, waters, and vital habitats in eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

**THE BIG SIT! REPORT**

The Big Sit! 2004

Mark your new calendar with the date for the 2004 Big Sit! It's going to be held on Sunday, October 10, 2004.

A Record-Setting Big Sit!

It was a record-setting Big Sit in 2003! We had a record number of Big Sit circles--a total of 159 were registered prior to the Sit. At least 105 of these circles actually sat, but every circle did not send in results. See the results on: (http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bigsit.html).

**WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED**

(A REMINDER)

Wild Birds Unlimited at 296 W. Sunset Ave. #22, Coeur d'Alene, is donating 10% of their sales from Audubon members to our Audubon Chapter. When you go there be sure to identify yourself as an Audubon member so that our chapter gets credit.

Thank you Irv and Helen Stephenson, owners of Wild Birds Unlimited, for your contribution to our chapter and for providing quality bird products and friendly service.

"If I were to make a study of the tracks of animals and represent them by plates, I should conclude with the tracks of man"

Henry David Thoreau
FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION
1. Please register with the leader ahead of time.
   a. It helps the leader plan the trip.
   b. You will be informed if the trip time or location is changed or if the trip is canceled.
2. Fees: (to be paid to the driver of the car) $5.00 - all day trips $3.00 - 1/2 day trips.
3. We sometimes use radios to communicate between cars. If the radios are used we are asking participants to contribute $1.00 toward batteries.

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: February 11 and 25, Wednesdays
TIME: 8:00 a.m.
MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95
LEADERS: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739
ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours twice a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area. Beginner birders are encouraged and welcome to join us.

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: February 17, Tuesday
TIME: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.
MEET: Independence Point
LEADER: Lynn Sheridan (leave messages for Lynn with Kris Buchler (664-4739)
ACTIVITY: This is the time of the year we start looking for unusual gulls. Common year round are Ring-billed and California Gull. The Herring Gull is commonly seen during the winter. We will be looking for the uncommon and rare gulls e.g. Mew, Thayer's, Glaucous, and Glaucous-winged. A variety of waterfowl are often seen. We will walk along the beach as far as time permits.

RATHDRUM PRAIRIE

DATE: February 8, Sunday
TIME: 12 Noon
MEET: carpool @ K-mart parking lot, behind Fast Burger
LEADER: Lisa Hardy, 682-4808
ACTIVITY: 1/2 day of birding - Our main focus will be looking for winter visitors such as the Snowy Owl, Snow Bunting, Northern Rough-legged Hawk and American Tree Sparrow.

SANDPOINT

DATE: February 28, Saturday
TIME: 7:30 a.m.
MEET: carpool @ K-mart parking lot, behind Fast Burger
LEADER: Lisa Hardy, 682-4808
ACTIVITY: Full day trip. Look for rare gulls, unusual ducks and early migrants. We will stop for coffee, bring lunch, water and dress for the weather.

To volunteer to lead a trip or to suggest places to go, call or email Lisa Hardy 682-4808 or basalt@earthlink.net
GULL TRIP DETOUR

Shirley Sturts

It was the possible sighting of a Snowy Owl on the junction of Huetter Road and Hayden Avenue by Eula Hickam that turned our advertised gull field trip into an owl search. The Snowy Owl and the flock of Snow Bunting that Eula found on January 22nd were not located. However, the sun came out and the prairie with its newly fallen blanket of snow was alive with birds.

Our first bird stop on Huetter Road between Prairie and Hayden Avenue produced a Western Meadowlark. Then Janet noticed some interesting sparrows in the nearby bushes. These turned out to be three American Tree Sparrow, a bird of the far north that spends the winter in southern Canada and as far south as Central United States. The American Tree Sparrow is considered scarce in North Idaho. It is found most winters but usually just a single bird is found. While Janet was tracking the sparrow, a life bird for her, others were training their scopes on some Gallinaceous birds seen moving around in a nearby field. The final count came out 7 Gray Partridge, 40+ California Quail and 3 Ring-necked Pheasant. What a way to start a field trip!

After checking out the airport for the Snowy Owl, we headed for Lancaster Road hoping to find Eula’s flock of Snow Bunting. On our way, we spotted a Northern Rough-legged Hawk having a problem with two Common Raven over who should get to eat the hawk’s prey he had just taken. We were distracted from this drama by the sight of a Peregrine Falcon flying over the field ahead of us. A few minutes later we were admiring this same magnificent falcon on the arm of its owner. It was eating a pigeon provided by Jim Cook, a long time falconer. Jim told us his bird was a 14-year-old female, which he had raised from "chickhood" and was imprinted on him. We continued to bird adding 7 Red-tailed Hawk, 1 American Kestrel, 14 Mourning Dove, 3 Northern Flicker and the usual assortment passerines.

For four of us the half-day birding trip turned into a full day. We had lunch at Mike's Coeur d'Alene Café on Sherman and then headed for Independence Point to look for unusual gulls. A Thayer's Gull had been seen there on Tuesday during the Brown Bag Birding outing. This time we puzzled over a small gull that we eventually identified as a 2nd year Mew Gull. Immature gulls are especially difficult to identify, some not reaching their adult plumage for 3 or 4 years. Their plumage during these successive stages can vary depending on age, molt, feather wear and individual variation. Our bird looked very similar to the Ring-billed Gull that it was feeding with. It was slightly smaller in body size and the bill appeared to be slightly slimmer. What convinced us that it was a Mew Gull and not a Ring-billed Gull was its darker mantle, blue-gray bill with a solid black tip, blue-gray legs, dark brown eye and wings with no white primary tips. The tail was white with just a few black marks on the outer edges. The first winter bird has a black band on the end of the tail and in the adult plumage the tail is all white. It also sounded different than its Ring-billed companions. All the other gulls we found here and along the beach at NIC were Ring-billed, California and Herring Gulls. The Herring are here only in the wintertime. Ring-billed and California Gulls are found in North Idaho year around. However, none of the North Idaho gulls nest here.

There were many Mallard and Canada Goose feeding in the water and on shore. A few Bufflehead and Common Merganser were busy diving for food. Eleven Double-crested Cormorant adorned a favorite piling of theirs off the NIC Beach. As we headed for home, not to be out done by the larger birds, twelve or so Pygmy Nuthatch flew back and forth across the road, feeding in the Ponderosa Pine trees that line Rosenberry Drive.

Thank you for joining me: Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Lisa Hardy, and Lynn Sheridan

"Commonly we stride through the out-of-doors too swiftly to see more than the most obvious and prominent things. The best pace is a snail's pace"

Edwin Way Teale (1899-1980)
American Naturalist, Photographer and Writer
EINSTEIN, A VERY SPECIAL MAGPIE

Judy Hoy, Bitterroot Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

I run a wildlife rehabilitation center and often care for injured or orphaned Black-billed Magpies. Many people dislike magpies, but I find them to be not only one of the most intelligent, but also one of the prettiest Montana birds. When their feathers are in good condition, the black shines turquoise blue. When the sun hits the blue-black feathers, they shine with rainbow colors, caused by the oil the birds spread on their feathers to make them waterproof. Magpies are always doing something, usually something interesting to anyone intrigued with bird behavior. This is a true story of a magpie, which exhibited many traits that are commonly referred to as “human traits”, including a high level of intelligence, even for a magpie.

The hero of this story is a young Black-billed Magpie which I named Einstein. I do not know whether juvenile magpies are male or female, so I usually give masculine names to all magpies which are brought to me for care. Einstein was exceptional from the beginning of our relationship because he brought himself for care. He was newly fledged from one of the magpie nests on our property in the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana. Soon after he learned to fly, he became ill.

I first noticed Einstein sitting on the roof of our front porch looking bedraggled and fluffed up. These were sure signs that he was ill. He may have become ill from eating a steady diet of sour cherries. In retrospect, I guess I should have named him Cherry Pie. His parents had taken cherries from our trees to feed their babies while they were still in the nest. After the young magpies learned to fly, they would fly to the tree and eat cherries until they were full. After a brief rest, they would fly around the yard talking magpie talk to each other and harassing other birds, especially the robins that also enjoyed feasting on cherries.

Hoping that more nutritious food was what Einstein needed, I began to throw small mice and chunks of dog food up on the roof for him. He ate the food I gave him, but still, he became weaker and weaker. After several days, I found him in the early morning sitting on the porch steps looking more bedraggled than ever and too weak to fly. I picked him up, deloused him, gave him some antibiotics and put him in a box where he would be warm and comfortable. I gave him all the mice and dog food that he would eat plus vitamins every day. In two or three days, he looked much better and was eating well. Assuming that he had internal parasites, which most birds do, I dewormed Einstein with Ivermectin. After that he began gaining weight and strength even faster. A bath and a few good preenings returned his black feathers to their rainbow sheen and his white feathers to their immaculately clean white. He proved that he was feeling much better by poking holes in the sides of the cardboard box which had served as his recovery room, apparently hoping to escape. While Einstein was recovering, two more starving fledgling magpies were brought to me for care and rehabilitation. Although they were siblings, one was somewhat larger and healthier than the other. I called the larger one, Magnum Pie and the smaller one, Little Pie.

When Einstein began taking his recovery box apart, I concluded that he was trying to tell me that he was well enough to be placed in an outdoor flight pen. By this time, the little magpies were healthy enough to join him, since all that they had needed for recovery were a few good meals and deworming. I hoped that by watching Einstein pick up food and eat it, the little ones would learn to pick up and eat their food rather than waiting for me to feed them. At regular intervals all day, they would make loud insistent food calls and open their mouths for me. I still had to put the food in their mouths since they had not yet learned how to close their beaks on the food and eat it by themselves, a feat which takes a bit of practice.

After two or three days in the flight pen, Einstein and Magnum Pie were becoming a bit rambunctious. Einstein especially indicated that he had had enough of captivity by flying against the side of the pen looking for a way out. I didn’t want either of them to damage their feathers so I released Einstein. He quickly learned to come when I called him. I placed his food and water on the top of the pen and he flew right to it without any coaxing.

Continued on page 6
Magpie-Continued

Magnum Pie settled down with only Little Pie for company, so I waited for two more days before his release. Magnum Pie would come to me to be fed in the pen and he could fly well so I took him out of the pen and placed him in the tree where Einstein was perched. Magnum Pie and Einstein were ecstatic at being reunited and celebrated by playing follow the leader around most of the pine trees in the immediate area, with Einstein being the leader.

When it came time to feed them, as evidenced by Magnum Pie food calling at extreme decibel levels, he and Einstein flew to the top of the cottonwood tree closest to the pen. Magnum Pie perched there looking down and screeching insistently, but absolutely refused to come down close enough for me to feed him. He appeared to assume that I would fly up into the treetop to feed him. Or possibly his taste of freedom had rekindled his natural fear of humans. Either way, it was apparent that Magnum Pie was going to have to be very hungry before he would come down low enough for me to feed him. Einstein, as usual, flew down without hesitation to the top of the pen and began to eat.

While I was trying to talk Magnum Pie into coming to a lower branch, Einstein, who was busy eating, stopped, looked up at Magnum Pie and suddenly picked up a large chunk of dog food. I thought he was going to take it and hide it like magpies do. You can imagine my surprise and delight when he flew up to Magnum Pie and put the dog food into Magnum Pie’s gaping mouth. Magnum Pie ate the food and began squawking for more, so Einstein flew down, picked up another chunk of food and fed that to Magnum Pie also. This was repeated several more times until Magnum Pie was full, or at least stopped food calling. Einstein then flew to the food dish, ate a few more bites himself and they both flew off to the pine trees in the creek bottom to rest and digest their full crops.

Every feeding time for over a week, Einstein would eat a few bites, then feed Magnum Pie. After that he would eat until his crop was full. When they were both satisfied, off they would go to amuse themselves in the creek bottom. Finally, Magnum Pie learned to go down and pick up his or possibly her own food. I released Little Pie several days after I released Magnum Pie. He flew down to a branch right beside me when I called him to be fed and learned in only two days of observing the other two, to pick up food and eat by himself. Consequently, Einstein was not presented with the opportunity to repeat his parenting performance with Little Pie.

Immediately after release, Little Pie joined the other two magpies in their games of chase, tag and tease the robins. The three magpies remained friends and stayed together all fall and winter. By spring, I could no longer tell them apart. Two of the magpies which allowed me to come closer than other magpies and expected food to appear when I approached, built a big covered basket-like nest and fledged a new generation of six beautiful young, thus proving that at least one of the original trio was a female. I do not know what happened to the odd magpie out, but the pair lived happily ever after, like a real live fairy tale.

I have been unable to find any other documented occurrence of juvenile magpies feeding other magpies. How special this behavior is, I do not know. I do know that Einstein was caring, compassionate and intelligent. He was very special magpie.

BROWN BAG BIRDING
January 20, 2004

Lynn Sheridan

Five of us gathered at Independence Point on a cool, damp winter day: Shirley Sturts, Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Dan Davis (recently moved from Orofino) and I, scanned the gulls. Among the 30+ Ring-billed Gull we easily found 8 California Gull. One gull had pink legs: Thayer's or Herring? A dark eye "nailed" it as a Thayer's, in these 2 similar birds.

A couple of limping Mallard, one with a silvery leg band were among the horde, which included 6 Rock Pigeon. Afloat, 6 Bufflehead, a Red-necked Grebe and a Lesser Scaup were added to our list.

Further along, a small flock of Canada Goose flew off and gulls were splashing about. Out on the lake were a Common Goldeneye female, 6 Double-crested Cormorant on piling #37, a row of Common Merganser, and 9 Great Blue Heron hunched down on logs.

The college beach had nothing unusual but 6 more Common Merganser. A tree search produced: Pygmy Nuthatch, Common Crow, Northern Flicker and European Starling. Back at the parking lot Bill spotted 2 small diving bodies: Pied-bill Grebe.

Good show, friends!!
OBSERVATION POST

2004 Kootenai County Big Year. The chapter website list will be updated weekly with the new birds being seen. Our total to date is 75.

Observers: Janet Allen (JALL), Kris Buchler (KBUC), Janet Callen (JCAL), Corinne Cameron (CCAM), Leslie Covey (LCOV), Roland Craft (RCRA), Bill Gundlach (BGUN), LHar, Kathryn Henderson (KHEn), Eula Hickam (EHIC), Cindy Langlitz (CLAN), Nancy Mertz (NMER), Jan and Herb Severtson (JSTU), Shirley Sturts SSTU.

Common Loon Jan. 26, Lake Shore Drive, CCAM
Pied-billed Grebe Jan. 20 City Beach, Brown Bag Birding
Horned Grebe Jan. 28 Mica Bay, CDA Lake, Mica Bay Survey
Red-necked Grebe Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
Double-crested Cormorant Jan. 20 off of NIC Beach on a piling, Brown Bag Birding
Great Blue Heron Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
Canada Goose Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
Tundra Swan Jan. 10 Turner Bay, CDA Lake, (LCOV)
Mallard Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay/Lake Shore Drive, CDA Lake, (KBUC, JCAL)
Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal Jan. 5 Beauty Bay, CDA Lake, (CCAM)

Ring-necked Duck Jan. 28 Mica Bay, CDA Lake, Mica Bay Survey
Lesser Scaup Jan. 19 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC, LHar)
Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
Barrow’s Goldeneye Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC (KBUC, RCRA, BGUN)
Hooded Merganser Jan. 12 Mica Bay, CDA Lake, Mica Bay Survey
Common Merganser Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC (KBUC), RCRA, BGUN)
Red-breasted Merganser Jan. 19 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC, LHar)
Lesser Scaup Jan. 19 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC, LHar)

Bald Eagle and Sharp-shinned Hawk Jan. 1 Lake Shore Drive and Ocean Ave., (JCAL)
Cooper’s Hawk Jan. 22 Atlas Road, (CCAM)
Northern Goshawk Jan. 8 Hauser Lake area, (JALL)
Red-tailed Hawk Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC, (CLAN, KHEN)
Northern Rough-winged Hawk and American Kestrel and Gray Partridge Jan. 25 Rathdrum Prairie, Chapter Field Trip
Ring-necked Pheasant Jan. 1 Ocean Drive, (JCAL)

Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey Jan. 1 Armstrong Hill, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
California Quail Jan. 1 Fernan Lake, (SSTU)
Mew Gull and Herring Gull Jan. 25 CDA City Beach, Chapter Field Trip
Ring-billed Gull and Thayer’s Gull Jan. 20 City Beach, Brown Bag Birding
California Gull Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)
Rock Pigeon Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC, (JCAL, EHIC)
Mourning Dove Jan. 1 Fernan Lake, (SSTU)

Belted Kingfisher Jan. 5 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (CCAM)
California Quail Jan. 1 Fernan Lake, (SSTU)
Downy Woodpecker Jan. 3, Spirit Lake CBC, (JCAL, EHIC)
Hairy Woodpecker Jan. 1 Fernan Lake, (SSTU)
Northern Shrike Jan. 28 Mica Bay, CDA Lake, Mica Bay Survey
Gray Jay, Steller’s Jay Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC, (CLAN, KHEN)
Steller’s Jay, Blue Jay Jan. 3 Pine Ave. CDA, (NMER) and Hybrid Jan. 12
Black-billed Magpie and American Crow Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC, (CLAN, KHEN, JCAL, EHIC)
Common Raven Jan. 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (KBUC)

Black-capped, Mountain, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatch Jan. 1 Armstrong Hill and Fernan Lake, (KBUC, SSTU)

Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet Jan. 3 Spirit Lake CBC, (CLAN, KHEN)
American Dipper Jan. 19 Wolf Lodge Creek, (KBUC, LHar)
Townsend’s Solitaire Jan. 5 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, (CCAM)
American Robin Jan. 16 S.E. CDA, (BGUN)

Varied Thrush Jan. 1 Fernan Lake, (SSTU)
European Starling Jan. 1 Ocean Ave., (JCAL)
American Tree Sparrow and Western Meadowlark Jan. 25 Rathdrum Prairie, Chapter Field Trip
Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco Jan. 1 Fernan Lake and Ocean Ave., (SSTU, JCAL-sparrow)
Snow Bunting Jan. 22 Rathdrum Prairie, (EHIC)
Cassin’s Finch Jan. 29 Armstrong Hill (KBUC)

House Finch and American Redpoll and Pine Siskin Jan. 1 Armstrong Hill, Fernan Hill, Ocean Ave., (KBUC, SSTU-siskin, JCAL-finch)
Evening Grosbeak Jan. 29 Armstrong Hill (KBUC)

House Sparrow Jan. 1 Ocean Ave., (JCAL)

Photograph by Jerry Hanson

THE FISH HAWK HERALD