

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

February 2006

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 6

BOARD MEETING

DATE: February 20, Monday

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. West Bank
125 Ironwood Dr.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

DATE: February 20, Monday

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

SPEAKER: Ivan Lines, Regional
Biologist for Ducks Unlimited

PROGRAM: Cooperative Wetland
Protection in North Idaho

THE WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL

The Post Falls Library will show this movie on Friday, February 17 at 7:30 p.m.. It tells the story of one man's obsession with a flock of Red-masked Parakeets that live in a San Francisco neighborhood.

PHOTOGRAPH REQUEST

Sara Focht, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, is looking for photographs of birds or landscapes from Idaho birders to illustrate the upcoming Idaho Birding Trail brochure. The resolution for digital photos must be 300 dpi or greater for a 2"x2" photo size. (No feeder shots or birds in hand)

Contact Sara for more information
work (208)287-2750
cell (208)921-6933
sfocht@idfg.idaho.gov

Visit our website:

www.cdaaudubon.org

COUNT BIRDS WITH A BUDDY!

*February's Great Backyard Bird Count
Encourages First-Timers*



From the
Fuentes' Bird
Collection

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) returns for its ninth season February 17-20, 2006. The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology encourage everyone to COUNT BIRDS WITH A BUDDY! Bird enthusiasts of all ages can share their love of birds with a friend, a child, a scout troop, a class, or a co-worker opening new eyes to the joy of birding and the fun of creating a unique snapshot of winter bird abundance and distribution across the continent. Every pair of eyes is needed and every bird counts, whether in a backyard, on a high-rise balcony, in a park, or on any of the 730 million acres of public lands.

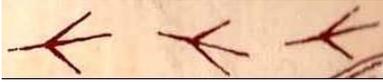
In 2005, participants sent in more than 52,000 checklists, with a record-breaking 613 species and more than 6 million birds counted. These millions of sightings generate what would be otherwise impossible, continent-wide information about where the birds are and how their numbers compare with those of previous years. Anyone with Internet access can see the results in maps and charts as the sightings pour in.

.. "The level of energy created each February by Great Backyard Bird counters is phenomenal," said Dr. Paul Green, director of Citizen Science for Audubon. "What always amazes me are the new discoveries made by people across North America. Some bird watchers even send digital photos to back up their reports. Last year participants sent in more than 1,000 photos and many are now part of the GBBC website gallery."

For nearly a decade, the GBBC has kept tabs on the ever-changing patterns of birds in winter. How far north will American Robins be reported this year? Will Sandhill Cranes migrate early or late? Introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves have been turning up in new states. Where will they be this year? Native Red-bellied Woodpeckers have been spreading to the northeast. Will the trend continue? Scientists also want more information on declining species, such as Rusty Blackbirds and Painted Buntings.

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BIRD TRACKS



AUDUBON MEMBERS MAKE A
DIFFERENCE



GREEN TIPS

Green tips will be a monthly feature in our newsletter. It is designed to give you ideas for taking personal conservation action to improve the environmental health and habitat quality of our yards and neighborhoods. (*Members are encouraged to send tips to the editor for inclusion in future newsletters.*)

DRY-CLEANING

Lisa Hardy

That distinctive smell given off by newly dry-cleaned clothes is perchlorethylene, a hydrocarbon solvent effective at removing soil and stains from fabric. But perchloroethylene, or "perc", is also a known endocrine disruptor, meaning that it interferes with hormone function in the body. Perc is also a known animal carcinogen, and a probable human carcinogen. Perc residues on dry-cleaned clothes may be a problem for those with chemical sensitivities, and many people hang newly cleaned clothes in a garage or other non-lived-in area until the odor has dissipated. But perc is a more serious health problem for those exposed to the higher levels found in a dry-cleaning establishment. This includes employees of the business and people who live in apartments in the same building. The EPA considers perc to be a toxic air pollutant. California has legislated that perc be phased out of

dry-cleaning operations by 2020, but you can start phasing perc out of your life right now.

The simplest option is to avoid buying clothes that require dry-cleaning. The other option is to have your clothes cleaned using a perc-free method.

Several alternatives to perc have been developed in recent years. These include silicon-based solvents, hydrocarbon solvents other than perc, carbon dioxide, and "wet-cleaning" using water-soluble detergents. In our area, the only dry cleaning business that uses a perc alternative is "Sonja's Cleaner by Nature". Sonja's uses a hydrocarbon solvent, DF 2000, that is considered more benign than perchloroethylene. One of our members reports that she was pleased with the results when she had a number of heirloom baby clothes cleaned by Sonja's.

A link to alternative dry-cleaning methods:

<http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc.mhtml?i=ask&s=wetclean>

2005 YARDLIST CHALLENGE

Lisa Hardy

Nine yard watchers reported a total 136 species. Forty of these (29%) were reported by only a single yard. Eight species were reported by all 9 yards: California Quail, Rufous Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch. An additional 8 species were seen by 8 of the 9 yards.

Highlights were the White-breasted Nuthatch seen by Dick Cripe, the Wilson's Warbler that visited Janet Callen, the hybrid Steller's X Blue Jay spotted by the Warings, and the Red-tailed Hawk seen by Lynn Sheridan. Dick thought he might have had a Red-tailed Hawk in his

neighborhood too, but he concluded it was the Steller's Jays doing their excellent imitation of a hawk cry. Lynn had to rescue two House Finches in distress during the year.

Highlights from yards with



Photograph by Wayne Tree
water views include the Buchlers' American

White Pelican and Double-crested Cormorant, and Robert Hanson's Black Tern. The Hansons also reported the only Clark's Nutcracker and Pine Grosbeak, and their resident Bewick's Wrens are a new species to the yard list total. Shirley Sturts had the only American Wigeon and Brown Creeper. The biggest highlight for me was a Northern Waterthrush that came to forage on the front lawn several days in a row.

The Hansons also noted the absence of bluebirds and Townsend's Solitaires for the second year in a row.

Stephen Johnson gets a category all to himself living out on the Rathdrum Prairie. His yard list added many new species (7) to the all-time yardlist total, such as Long-eared Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, Horned Lark and Snow Bunting.

All together, we had 9 new species added to the list this year, bringing our 6-year total to 169 species.

A big Thank You to all participants!

Complete results available on the webpage.

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

1. **PLEASE REGISTER:** Dates and trips could change.
2. **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.
3. **RADIOS:** We will ask participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries as needed.
4. **UNSCHEDULED TRIPS :** Sign up to be on the group email list for unscheduled trips with Shirley Sturts: s.sturts@verizon.net, or get on a call list by calling Shirley at 664-5318.

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: February 14, Tuesday

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

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 in the Mica Bay area. Beginner birders are welcome.

SANDPOINT AREA

DATE: Sunday, February 19

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

MEET: K-Mart parking lot, south end

LEADER: Dick Cripe, 665-0010

ACTIVITY: Look for winter waterfowl and unusual gulls. (Full day. Bring lunch and water)

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: February 21, Tuesday

MEET: Independence Point, Coeur d'Alene City Park

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 that share your interest in nature. Beginner bird watchers are welcome

START PLANNING FOR THE FIELD TRIP TO OTHELLO, WA APRIL 8 & 9

We will visit the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge a couple of weeks after their big Sandhill Crane festival. We will leave Saturday at 9:00 a.m. and drive to the refuge and spend the afternoon birding. We have reserved some rooms at Mardon's Resort outside of Othello where we will spend the night. We'll spend the next morning birding until after lunch, then return home in time for supper. We should see lots of waterfowl and shore birds in this important way station as they migrate north. Don't miss it!

It will be important to make reservations ahead of time to secure a ride and lodging. If you have your own transportation and lodging please let me know anyway that you are coming. Deadline March 15. Please call Dick Cripe: 665-0010.

START PLANNING FOR THE PELAGIC TRIP TO WESTPORT, WA JUNE 23-25

A pelagic (ocean) field trip out of Westport, WA will be held on June 24th. We will drive over on June 23rd and return home on June 25th. The cost of the Outer Slope boat trip is \$125 per person, plus costs for transportation to Westport and lodging. We will carpool to reduce costs. Contact Dick Cripe (665-0010) or Roland Craft (457-8894) so that we know how many reservations to make. This is a fantastic trip to view many unique birds. Deadline, March 15.

7TH IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES
ABOUT LAWN CARE

Next month: Lawn-care services that provide organic alternatives

THE BEAUTIFUL LAWN, PART VII

Judy Waring, Janet Callen



This month's article is a summary of organic garden techniques and sources of products and information. On January 26, 2006, Pat Munts wrote an article for the Spokesman Review titled "Organic gardening a must." In it she wrote: "Using environmentally sound gardening and lawn care practices is quickly becoming a matter of necessity instead of a lifestyle choice. The recent debate about reducing the use of phosphorus, a key ingredient in fertilizers, to improve local water quality is just the beginning of a long-needed conversation about our environment in the Inland Northwest. Moving to environmentally sound gardening practices isn't just about pulling out your wallet to buy environmentally friendly products. It is about how we plant, water, mow, weed and trim."

Lawns:
A healthy lawn is more resistant to weeds, insects and disease problems.

An Idaho lawn needs between 1 inch to 1 ½ inches of water a week.

Mow at a height of 2 ½ to 3 inches.

Do not pick up grass clippings.

Minimize fertilization, and use an organic when you do.

Never use a combination fertilizer and weed killer.

Core aeration is recommended for heavy soils.

Organic Fertilizers:

1) Steer manure, chicken manure, peat moss, bone meal and fish meal.

2) Ringer All Natural

Lawn Restore at Home Depot

3) Worry Free Lilly-Miller Spring and Summer Lawn Food at Lowes.

4) Nitro Cal at Greenacres Plant Food Center in Post Falls.

5) Lawn clippings can provide up to 25% of a lawn's fertilizer needs.

Unfortunately, even some organic fertilizers contain phosphates. It is found in poultry manure, rock phosphate and bone meal. Ringer's product contains 2% phosphate in a 25# bag. Phosphate does not move through the soil readily and is therefore more susceptible to erosion. Nitro Cal is not an entirely organic fertilizer, but it contains no phosphate.

Weeds:

Hand pull where possible

Fill in holes with a mix of compost and grass seed.

Spot spray with white vinegar and water.

If a chemical is used, spot spray only.

Try the following Corn Gluten Meal products as pre-emergent weed control:

Orland's Safe-T-Weed Corn Gluten Herbicide at Cenex-Coop Supply, 5831 N Govt. Way. This product is also a fertilizer
Uncle Malcolm's Weed Whompin' Mulch at Northland Nursery, 8092 W. Prairie Ave. for use on flower and shrub beds.

c. Concern
Weed Prevention Plus at Petal Pushers Nursery, 1842 N. Govt. Way.

Moss: Eliminate the cause: excessive shade; excessive water; soil acidity or compaction.

Lawn Insects: Let the birds have them

Fairy Rings: Will grow out of the lawn and eventually disappear.

Sources of information:

Rodale Books:

www.rodale.com

Organic Gardening Magazine: www.organicgardening.com

Organic lawn care for the cheap and

lazy: www.richsoil.com

Organic Fertilizer Guide: www.extremelygreen.com

Audubon at Home: www.audubon.org

Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides:

www.pesticide.org

National Pesticide Information Center:

www.npic.orst.edu

Grassroots

Environmental Education:

www.grassrootsinfo.org

University of Idaho
Extension: 100 W. Hubbard,
Ste. 140 CdA, (208) 664-1085.

A Spokane County Commissioner, Todd Mielke is working to remove phosphate-containing dishwasher detergent and fertilizers from the market in order to reduce phosphorus inputs into the sewage treatment plants and outputs into the Spokane River. Phosphate-free dishwasher detergent is sold by Fred Meyer. Seventh Generation dishwashing detergent which is absent phosphates costs \$2.00 more per 45 oz box than a similar Cascade. It will be given a test run.

Our final article, which will identify local area lawn services that provide organic lawn-care, will appear in either the April, or May newsletter.

BROWN BAG BIRDING

January 17, 2006

Lynn Sheridan

BIRD QUOTE CORNER

"To a man , ornithologists are tall, slender, and bearded so they can stand motionless for hours, imitating kindly trees, as they watch for birds"

- Gore Vidal, *Armageddon? Essays 1983-1987, "Mongolia!"* -
"I think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird and not enough the bad luck of the early worm."

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt -