

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

January 2004

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 5

COMING EVENTS

BOARD MEETING

DATE: January 13, Tuesday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mountain West Bank
125 Ironwood Dr.

JANUARY PROGRAM

DATE: January 19, Monday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Spokesman Review Building
608 Northwest Blvd.
SPEAKER: Denver Holt, researcher with Owl
Research Institute in Montana
PROGRAM: "The Breeding Ecology of
Snowy Owls" Denver's work on Snowy Owls
was featured in the December 2002 issue of
National Geographic

NORTHERN IDAHO BIRDING TRAIL MEETING

Jan. 14th - IDFG regional office, 2750
Kathleen Ave., CDA 5 p.m. - 8 (?) p.m.
Jan. 15th meeting continues from previous
evening. 9 a.m. - Noon.

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Visit our website: www.cdaudubon.org

2004 YARD LIST CHALLENGE

Lisa Hardy

As the calendar year turns over, it is time to make a new list of the bird species you see (and hear) in or from your yard. Then, at the end of the year 2004, submit your list to be judged in categories to be decided at the whim of the judging panel. And don't worry about your list being small – every list adds to the big picture.

For those of you who find the lister approach a bit too "serious", think of it instead as a motivation to hone your observational skills. You may, for example, have to spend a little time with the book in order to sort out the Cassin's and House Finches so that you can tally both on your list. Also, many people add notes to their lists of odd and interesting bird behavior.



Brown Creeper
Fuertes' Eastern Bird
Collection

TIME TO TURN IN YOUR 2003 YARD LIST

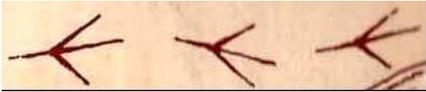
Turn your list into:

Lisa Hardy basalt@earthlink.net
2153B Old River Road, Kingston, Idaho 83839

You will need to submit a list of species and information about your location. Note whether you are in city limits, urban, suburban or rural, whether you have a water view, type of vegetation and cover available, feeders provided etc. Remember, your list should include all birds seen or heard *from* your yard, so you can include, for example, the geese that flew over at 3000', or the owl you heard one night in the neighbor's yard. What was your favorite bird? Share any interesting bird behavior you noted while observing birds in your yard.

Look for the results in the February *Fish Hawk Herald*

BIRD TRACKS



Audubon Members make a difference

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 13-16, 2004

The "Great Backyard Bird Count" GBBC is a fun, citizen science joint project of the National Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology and sponsored by Birds Unlimited. To participate and learn more, go to: www.birdsource.org, where you can enter your own bird counts and view maps and data from past years. Statistics from 2003: 48,346 checklists reported, 512 species counted and 2,233,327 individual birds were reported.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Shirley Sturts, compiler

COEUR D'ALENE

On December 14, nineteen birders on seven teams and watchers at eight feeders participated in the 13th year of the Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count. Total party miles driven was 352.5 and 6 miles of walking. Total party hours spent birding was 53 1/4.

Temperatures ranged in the low 30's with 2-4 inches of snow on the ground. It was cloudy most of the day with light rain part of the day. We counted a total of 73 species, beating last year's total of 66 species. The record is 80 species in 2001. Our total of 8690 individual birds set a new record. The previous record was 7897 in 2001.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Several new records were set for individual species.

Pied-billed Grebe 31 (24 in '00)
 Horned Grebe 44 (40 in '95)
 Double-c Cormorant 17 (8 in '02)
 Great Blue Heron 30 (10 in '84)
 Can. Goose 1930 (1905 in '99)
 Mallard 828 (759 in '00)
 Sharp-shin. Hawk 4 (3 in '92'99)
 Black-b Magpie 79 (77 in '01)
 Mourning Dove 107 (42 in '92)
 Northern Flicker 55 (53 in '00)
 Steller's Jay 21 (15 in '98)
 Black-c Chick. 225 (224 in '01)
 White-b. Nuthatch 3 (2 in '93'96)
 Cedar Waxwing 53 (18 '95)
 E. Startling 1313(1158 in '93)
 Song Sparrow 57 (43 in '92)
 Red Crossbill 53 (52 in '01)
 House Sparrow 195 (151 in '93)

New to our count were: 1 Northern Goshawk and a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk observed on Rathdrum Prairie by Steve Lindsay. A Yellow-shafted variety of the Northern Flicker was found by Corinne and Cliff Cameron near Atlas Road. Unexpected was an immature Golden Eagle on the Hayden Lake route observed by Lisa Hardy, Roland Craft, Nancy Mertz and Bill Gundlach. Steve Lindsay gave us our 18 Horned Lark and 13 Western Meadowlark on Rathdrum Prairie. Feeder watchers added 1 Common Redpoll (Ed Buchler) and 3 White-breasted Nuthatch (Dick and Elaine Codding). See the total list on our website: www.cdaudubon.org

Thank you participants: (in the field) Ed and Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Corinne and Cliff Cameron, Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Lisa Hardy, Nancy Mertz, Steve Lindsay, Maribel Mogillefsky, Theresa Potts, Sarah Reed, Ron Rich, Ellen Scriven, Herb and Jan Severtson, Lynn Sheridan, Shirley Sturts.. (at feeders) Jack and Zella Bloxom, Ed Buchler, Dick and Elaine Codding, Ed Haglund, Cindy Langlitz, Jim and Mickey McKahan, ,

Mary Vanderbilt. Dave and Barb Zimmer.

SPIRIT LAKE

A big thank you for those dedicated birders who came out on January 3rd, a very snowy and cold day. Snow fell most of the day and temperatures went from 24 degrees in the morning to 14 degrees by 4:00 p.m.. To make up for this the sun did peep out behind the clouds for a short time in the afternoon.

Our count was the lowest in species and individual birds in the seven years we have been doing this count. The snow kept the little birds under cover and the amount of snow on the ground made it difficult to check for water birds along the shoreline of Farragut State Park. We counted 37 species and 601 individual birds. Our record high for this count is 57 species and 1555 individual birds in January, 2002. Our previous low record was 44 species in January of 1998 and 1425 individual birds in Dec. of 1997.

However, even with the low numbers, we had some new records set: Red-necked Grebe 10 (4 in '01), Wild Turkey 109 (63 in '01), 14 California Quail (5 in '91), American Crow 18 (14 in '01), Song Sparrow 8 (7 in '98) A Merlin, new to the count, was found by Theresa and Saba Potts and myself along the Kelso Lake Road. *Participants included: Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Eula Hickman, Kathryn Henderson, Cindi Langlitz, Theresa and Saba Potts, Jan and Herb Severtson.* A thank you also to those who let us count birds at their feeders

Bird Tracks Continued on Page 4

JANUARY 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: January 12 Monday, January 28 Wednesday

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: January 13, 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.

GULL IDENTIFICATION, COEUR D'ALENE AREA

DATE: January 25, Sunday

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

MEET: carpool @ K-mart parking lot, behind Fast Burger

LEADER: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318

ACTIVITY: 1/2 day of birding - Our main focus will be looking for rare gulls, e.g. Mew, Glaucous, Glaucous-winged. We will bird the Spokane River along the NIC dike road (Rosenberry Drive, City Beach and Independence Point. We may check other locations if time permits. Optional lunch at a nearby restaurant.

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

Tonia Wolf, Idaho Birding Trail
Coordinator



Birders and More Birders

Birdwatchers, across the country, 46 million of them, spent \$32 billion in 2001 and supported more than 863,000 jobs according to a recent Fish & Wildlife Service study, "Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis."

To be counted as a birder, an individual must take a trip a mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds. Or, closely observing and trying to identify birds around the home. Sixty-nine percent (40 million) of birders are backyard birders while thirty-one percent (18 million) travel to see birds. The growing interest in birds comes at a time when one in four bird species shows "significant negative trend estimates" (Sauer et al. 2003). This decline is attributed primarily to the degradation and destruction of habitat resulting from human population growth and short-sighted environmental practices such as the razing of wetlands needed by migrating birds.

On the flip side, the growing interest in birding is being utilized by tourism and rural economic development through highly publicized birding trails and festivals. And no wonder. Last January, at Bald Eagle Day, held at the Shakespeare Festival in Boise, 1,200 people turn out to see hawks, falcons, owls, a Golden Eagle, and of course, Morley Nelson's Bald Eagle

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

"Pearl". Across the country birding trails and festivals are the force behind driving billions of dollars in spending. On a local level, these economic impacts can be the life-blood of an economy. Hopefully, the enthusiasm for birding will encourage resource managers and policy makers to make protection and restoration of bird habitat a priority.

Where Idaho fits in

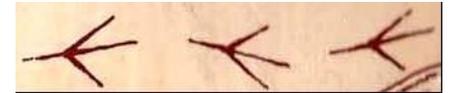
Throughout Idaho people are working on the Idaho Birding Trail: Audubon chapter members, state and federal non-game biologists, recreation planners, environmental educators, economic development interests, etc. It is a pretty diverse group with one common concern: the birds in Idaho and the rapidly disappearing habitats they depend upon.

Currently there are more than twenty states with birding trails bringing both local and out-of-state tourists into highlighted areas. However, we see the Idaho Birding Trail as more than just a tourism project. We envision Idaho's birding trail as an opportunity to engage the public with the real stories behind the birds and the landscape. We hope to come up with a product that can meet our initial mission statement: "Introduce people to Idaho's birds and their habitats".

Since many of Idaho's best birding sites are already identified in one or more publications, identifying the trail sites is more a process of winnowing down those that do not meet the criteria and adding the few new ones that have been identified. The IBT Steering Committee is holding workshops throughout the state

to allow everyone to participate in this process.

Jenny Taylor, Kris Buchler, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Janet Callen and Jennifer Souls have been working on trail plans for trails in Benewah, Kootenai, Shoshobne, Bonner and Boundary Counties. Anyone interested in working on this project should contact one of them or come to the North ID meeting on January 14th and 15th (see page 1)



"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

ORIGINS OF BIRD NAMES

Taken from: *Words for Birds: A Lexicon of North American Birds with Biographical Notes*

Wilson's Storm Petrel, *Oceanites oceanicus*

Oceanites: Greek for "son of the sea" or "son of the sea-god Oceanus.

oceanicus: Greek for "oceanic". Thought to be the original "Mother Carey's Chicken," since it is considered to be the most abundant storm petrel and perhaps the species of bird having the largest population.

Wilson's Plover, *Charadrius wilsonia*

Charadrius: From the Greek *Kharadrios*, which was used by Aristotle to refer to an inconspicuous water-bird that nests in ravines. The word in Greek is from *kharadra*, "ravine" or "cleft"

Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla*

pusilla: Latin for "small," descriptive of the size of the bird. Wilson (*Wilsonia*): Alexander Wilson.



Photographed by Wayne Tree

Alexander Wilson, before emigrating to the United States, was a weaver and romantic radical poet. He was born near Paisley, Scotland, in 1766. His father was a part-time weaver and part-time smuggler.

He followed one of his father's trades, that of weaver, and then became an itinerant peddler and a poet in the Robert Burns tradition. In 1792 he was accused of libel and blackmail by the owner of a mill about whom he had written a poem alleging false measures in determining the week's output of cloth. In an unsigned handwritten note, Wilson asked for five guineas to keep from publishing the poem. He was jailed for several months and fined. In addition, the hangman publicly burned the offending manuscript in front of the courthouse. In January, 1794, he was again arrested and accused of participating in a political conspiracy. These charges appear to have been false but served to keep Wilson aware that he was marked for harassment and finally made him decide to emigrate to the United States.

Wilson's life in the New World was never easy. Although he had little formal education, he quickly managed to teach himself enough mathematics and German to gain employment, first as a surveyor and then as a schoolteacher in

Milestown, near Philadelphia. While in Milestown and reasonably happy, Wilson underwent a traumatic emotional experience by falling in love with the wife of a neighbor. He fled the region to escape this entanglement, returning only after finding another teaching position, this time in Gray's Ferry, Pennsylvania. There he met William Bartram, a naturalist, who introduced him to the ornithological literature of the day.

At some time during 1802, Wilson conceived of the idea of producing a series of illustrated volumes on the ornithology of the eastern United States. He was then educated in neither art nor science, but from the very beginning, fully intended to paint the portraits himself and write the authoritative notes that were to accompany them. It was a wild idea for a work of hitherto unprecedented scale. With Bartram's help, he practiced drawing as well as writing. As his drawings became increasingly relaxed and attractive, he developed a writing style that avoided both the coyness of much nature writing and the dullness of most scientific writing.

After two years, he wrote to Alexander Lawson, the émigré Scots engraver, describing the work he had in mind and soliciting Lawson's help in preparing engravings from Wilson's drawings. Lawson, in a gloomy response, analyzed the economics of the enterprise and warned him that the project was unsound.

In 1807 Wilson left teaching to work as an editor for Samuel Bradford, the publisher of Rees's Cyclopedia. Bradford became intrigued with Wilson's idea for an American ornithology and offered financial support to the

venture. In 1808, the first of the projected 10 volumes was published. By the time of Wilson's death in 1813, the 8th volume was at the printer's. A 9th volume was assembled and written by Wilson's friend and champion, George Ord.

MT. SPOKANE SUNDAY

Lisa Hardy

The Mt. Spokane trip was rescheduled to Sunday, November 30. Four Auduboners made the drive to the top of the mountain and birded their way back down. The first birds of the trip were gallinaceous birds spotted in the semi-rural area between Spokane and the ski area - first a covey of California Quail, and second a Ring-necked Pheasant that made a low pass a few feet in front of our windshield. Halfway to the top of the mountain we climbed out of the fog into sunlight.

The ski area was busy, and we hiked up a road into the trees by the groomer barn. A thick crust had formed on the snow. We encountered a mixed flock of Brown Creeper, chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Back at the parking lot, we found the expected crossbills, which all proved to be reds.

On the way down the mountain, we stopped at pullouts, and remarked at the variety of conifers visible in a single spot - as many as 8 species. We resolved to return for a hike next fall before the snow flies.

Back down on the flat, Roland spotted a Sharp-shinned Hawk to round out our day.

Trip participants: Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Lisa Hardy

HOW CROSSBILLS MAKE THEIR BILLS CROSS

Judy Hoy, Bitterroot Wildlife
Rehabilitation Center



Painting by Walter Alois Weber, 1930

I have raised several hatchling Red Crossbills and so have had the opportunity to observe them closely as they matured. As hatchlings, their bills are wide, similar to other hatchlings of the Fringillidae Family. As fledglings, their bills are quite cone-shaped somewhat like a small Grosbeak bill, with the top and bottom bills coming to a point. The bills are nearly even in length, with the upper bill being very slightly longer than the lower. Fledgling crossbills retain this shape and length through the period when they are following, and are still being fed by the parents, after fledging from the nest. During this time period of several days, the fledglings learn by observing the parent birds and each other, how to find and procure food for themselves.

The fledgling birds then reach a developmental stage at which they are attempting to extract pine seeds from conifer cones for themselves. At this time, the tips of both the top and bottom bills begin to grow dramatically. This appears to happen as a result of stimulation of certain hormones which trigger the growth spurt at the anterior of the ramphotheca.

Birds in this developmental stage, which are in captivity, have been observed by wildlife rehabilitators to exhibit the following behavior. The birds select a protruding knot or the butt of a small broken branch on the long branches which serve as perches in the flight room in which the birds are kept prior to release. While the tips of the bills are growing, the young crossbills twist the top bill to one side and the bottom bill to the other, using the selected protuberance on the branch to pry against. As the tips of the bills lengthen, the birds pry and twist several times per minute, except when they are eating or sleeping. Once the bird begins to pry the top bill sideways, it always twists the bills the same way each time. After two or three days, the bills are fully grown and remain crossed. The fledglings can then use their newly reformed bills to force open the conifer cone scales and hold them apart while they extract the seeds with their dexterous tongues. The young crossbills usually twist the mandibles in such a way as to cause the top bill to go to the right and the bottom bill to go to the left. A smaller percent twist the top bill to the left.

This fascinating phenomena in the life of a fledgling Red or White-winged Crossbill does not appear to be well documented. I could not find this mentioned in bird behavior discussions in books or on in literature searches on the web. If anyone has, I would appreciate knowing the source.

BROWN BAG BIRDING

Lynn Sheridan

Nov. 18

Roland Craft and I waited at Independence Point at noon, while gusts of wind churned up

the lake and held the gulls aloft, which they seemed to enjoy. A few Rock Pigeon huddled on the sand, but we sought steadier viewing around the college.

Along the Spokane River, among the myriad Mallard and Canada Goose, a pair of Bufflehead popped up and down. Only Ring-billed Gull were noted. Oddly, most of the Mallard were sheltering from the wind behind the larger geese.

As we moved along to scan the pilings for Double-crested Cormorant, we and our hats were nearly blown away.

Thanks for the valiant effort, Roland.

December 16

Roland Craft and Bill Gundlach joined me at noon on a cool breezy day, at Independence Point. Just 2 Rock Pigeon were found amongst the gulls. A lot of California Gull were among the Ring-billed. Many gulls were sitting on the white splattered dock.

Along the beach towards the river were many groups of Canada Geese and Mallard. Out on the lake were 10 Double-crested Cormorant on pilings and in the water. Roland noticed a touch of orange on one throat, and I saw a couple with whitish upper chest areas (? juveniles).

A row of 16 Bufflehead floated downstream and Bill spotted a Northern Flicker pecking in the wet grass. The trees were quiet, and no unusual bodies were amongst the dozens of resident Mallard and geese.

Beside the roads and the noisy sawmill a flock of bold, busy Pygmy Nuthatch foraged on and under a small Ponderosa pine. Through the residential area about 100 starling swirled overhead.

Back near the parking lot, behind the museum, the bushes were alive with House Finch, House Sparrow, and rooting in the leaf debris, a Song Sparrow. Two American Crow kept watch above. We found: 13 species. Thank you, friends.

A GREBE IN THE BATHTUB

By Kris Buchler



Photographed by Jenny Taylor

How do you keep a grebe happy? Put it in your bathtub. This is a story of a rescue that turned out well.

I received a call from Sandra Hall in Rathdrum about a bird she had found on the side of the road. She thought it was a loon but after some discussion of size and plumage, it sounded more like one of the grebes. She said it appeared uninjured but helpless as it scooted in the snow. Grebes and loons are made for water and literally cannot walk. With legs positioned at the back of the body, the lobed feet act as a propeller making the bird an excellent and swift swimmer. We'll never know why the bird landed on the prairie but we can speculate. These birds sometimes mistake wet or shiny surfaces for water and have even landed on wet parking lots. Needing large expanses of water in order to take flight, they are helpless and stranded on a solid surface. Our bird may have been inexperienced or just tired.

I met Sandra in Coeur d'Alene to pick up the bird. She had placed it in a dog carrier and made it as comfortable as possible with a towel in the bottom. It appeared feisty as I transferred it to my pet carrier. Our bird turned out to be a first year Red-necked Grebe. Since I could not have it examined by Dr. Steve Lindsay until the next morning, I took it home and attempted to feed it.

My main concern was dehydration and Dr. Lindsay had suggested Ensure or other nutritional supplement as it supplies liquids and energy to a stressed animal. This turned out to be an extremely difficult task for one person. The primary obstacle was the grebe's desire to defend itself from the huge creature that only had good intentions. It was amazingly quick with its sharp bill as it tried to spear me and bite in the process. Gloves helped but were awkward. I wrapped it in a towel to protect its wings while its snakelike neck could stretch and swivel in all directions. I managed to get some water and Ensure into it but I felt the process was stressing the bird.

Still concerned about dehydration, my husband Ed and I decided to try the bathtub. We filled it with about six inches of cool water and plopped the bird into its element. We were expecting a protest or perhaps a bird fluttering and thrashing around the bathroom. Instead, the grebe alleviated one of our concerns and drank. It then ruffled its feathers and preened, cleaning itself after being confined in the carrier. It seemed happy as a clam and made no attempt to leave the tub. Our next concern was food. Ed made a run to the store and came back with sardines and herring packed in water. The

experiment failed. The grebe floated, extremely still as it scrutinized the hunk of fish in the tub. That's all it did. A non-swimming hunk of fish just didn't stimulate a feeding response. After cleaning out the tub and refilling it with clean water, the grebe spent a peaceful night floating comfortably.

The next morning Steve Lindsay examined the bird and found no injuries. It appeared to have plenty of body fat so we planned its release. Jenny Taylor, Wildlife Biologist for the Forest Service, photographed our grebe and released into Lake Coeur d'Alene while I videotaped. We had planned to release it in Fernan Lake but 2/3 of the lake had ice so we decided Lake Coeur d'Alene might be better. We picked Silver Beach because I have seen grebes there and the docks provide shelter and are a haven for small fish.

If you want to meet our Red-necked Grebe, a short video will be shown at our January meeting. You can watch him happily swim into the lake and dive, and then explore his new surroundings. Some rescues actually turn out well.

OBSERVATION POST

Kootenai County Big Year Additions since the December 2003 Newsletter (see February-December Newsletters or go to our Website to see bird species seen this year in Kootenai County . The final total was 193.

Northern Goshawk 1 Dec. 14 CBC Rathdrum Prairie, Steve Lindsay

Western Screech Owl 1 and **Northern Saw-whet Owl** 1 found injured in the county (no details yet), Beth Paragamian

American Dipper 1 Wolf Lodge Creek Dec. 6, Ed and Kris Buchler

Common Redpoll 1+ Nov. 11 and 1 Nov. 27 Rathdrum and Armstrong Hill, CDA, Sarah Reed and Kris Buchler

