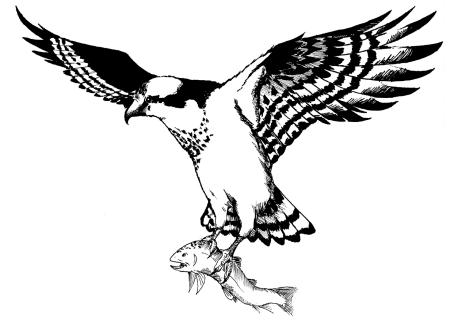


THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaaudubon.org

January 2023 / Volume 32 Number 5



Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting January 10;
Birding Trip to Skagit Valley on
Feb. 17-20

The regular monthly chapter meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 10, at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road in Coeur d'Alene. The program for the meeting is to be determined.

At the December meeting Ted Smith distributed a sign-up sheet for a birding trip to the Skagit Valley planned for the President's Day Weekend. Participants will drive there on Friday, Feb. 17, bird on Feb. 18-19 and return Feb. 20. Ted reported that a local birding group there has offered to direct participants to good observation spots in the area. If you are interested in going but haven't signed up please contact Ted.

Christmas Bird Count Held December 17; Preliminary Results Being Reviewed

The annual chapter Christmas Bird Count December 17 was handled by Doug Ward, who organized teams as follows:

Prairie West—Nancy Mertz; Prairie East—Doug Ward; Coeur d'Alene—Ted Smith; Hayden Lake—Roger Doucet; Cougar Bay—Ryan Bart; Spokane River—Mike Blackburn and Theresa Potts.

Participants enjoyed a pre-count breakfast gathering at Michael D's and held a potluck dinner

hosted by Theresa Potts to report their findings that evening.

Ward has completed a preliminary report of bird sightings. When it's finalized it will be sent to INW Birders for their listserv. A complete final report will be published in the February *Fish Hawk Herald*.

According to Ward's preliminary data, it appears that two reported species are new to the Chapter Count—an immature Harris's Sparrow (Harvest Road) and two Brown-Headed Cowbirds (Rathdrum Prairie). Five Spotted Towhees were reported at various locations; if this number holds, it would be an all-time high for Spotted Towhee CBC sightings here.

On the other hand, it may be that an all-time low CBC count of just one individual was logged for the Golden-Crowned Kinglet, and that for only the second time in 32 years, the CBC did not record a single sighting of a Steller's Jay.

Ward said that 22 participants on six teams were in the field for the CBC, and six people watched their bird feeders.

"We had a few surprises which keep these counts fun," Ward said. "While the snow cover was still fairly deep—6 to 16 inches—the weather was reasonably nice and water was mostly open."

Ward indicated that the species and numbers for the 2022 CBC appear to be "fairly average" compared to previous years' data.

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President's Message

Greetings, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society birders,

Happy New Year! By the time this newsletter is published, the excitement of Christmas will be lingering in the rear-view mirror, so to speak. I hope you are enjoying pleasant memories of delicious food, Christmas goodies, a special gift, a useful gift, time with family and/or friends and maybe a special surprise or two. Perhaps you spent the day providing for others in need. Kudos to you. Oh yes, and a white Christmas in North Idaho.

As I write this, I am still looking forward to Christmas Day and all of the excitement and joy that goes with it. I am sure there are those who think I am crazy for making a trip to North Dakota this time of year, but I want to visit family. I have hopes of seeing a Snowy Owl or two while there. Here in North Idaho, there will definitely be a white Christmas.

As we look back at events of 2022, birding activity and adventures come to mind. Each of you has your own "special birding moment" that may be a first-time species sighting, a birding trip to a new location or simply enjoying the routine bird activity in your own yard. Isn't it great that our feathered friends provide unique opportunities?

Speaking of looking back, I want to call your attention to "Audubon Hatched 2022." I assume many of you have received an email about this from National Audubon. Now I admit I am technically challenged and don't use "Apps" as much as many of you, and I will say, up front, that I have not used the "Audubon Bird Guide app." If you have not used this app, I encourage you to go to the Audubon web site and search for "Audubon Hatched 2022." It looks like a great place to keep track of your bird sightings and you can look back at the end of a year. Since I have not used this app, I can only refer it to you based

upon the email I received. This may be one of my 2023 birding exploration events. If some of you have experience using the app, I am interested in your response.

December usually means Bald Eagles visiting Lake Coeur d'Alene to feast on spawned out Kokanee Salmon. As a photographer, I spend as many days as I can taking yet another photograph of the "Baldies." If you are a photographer, you know there is always one more attempt to get that special image of the Bald Eagle so you, like me, probably have a "plethora" of photos and continue to take more. December 4 was a beautiful day at the lake because there was freezing fog the night before resulting trees being flocked with heavy frost. I have seen some great photo postings of Bald Eagles in the frosted trees. I hope you had an opportunity to enjoy viewing these majestic birds.

There seems to be fewer eagles at the lake this December than in some past years, which is a bit of a mystery because reports from divers indicate there is an abundance of Kokanee. Reports from Lake Pend Oreille also indicate fewer eagles. The question is always why. I have not heard a conclusive answer.

I guess I should tell you about the results of my baking experience after I accepted the challenge to bake my own cookies for the December meeting cookie exchange. I can only say that my chocolate chip cookies must have been a hit because there were less than a half-dozen left in my container when I went home. (I took three dozen to the meeting.) I guess I even surprised myself.

As of this writing, I do not have a program scheduled for our January meeting. I think the holiday season slows down responses. However, we will have a program. I'll keep working on that, so please refer to the web site for program information.

Once again, Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you at the January meeting.

In the meantime, Good Birding.

Ralph

A. Kiwi B. Ostrich C. Penguin D. Emu

Test Your Avian Awareness: Bird Migration Facts

Below are questions about migratory birds and their amazing annual air (mostly!) travels. (Answers on Page 4.)

1. Approximately how many bird species are migratory?
A. 2,000 B. 4,000 C. 1,000 D. 750
2. Which species reaches the greatest migration altitude?
A. Canada Geese B. Northern Wheatear
C. Bar-Headed Goose D. Arctic Tern
3. Which species is the fastest migrator?
A. Great Snipe B. Bar-tailed Godwit
C. Canada Goose D. Blackpoll Warbler
4. Name the process birds use to "bulk up" for Migration.
A. Carbo-loading B. Hyperphagia
C. Glucose Storage D. Corporosus
5. What species has the longest migration, more than 49,000 miles in a year?
A. Hummingbird B. Artic Tern C. Northern wheatear D. Tundra Swan
6. What species can go the longest (almost 7,000 miles) without stopping?
A. Bar-tailed Godwit B. Great Snipe
C. Sandhill Crane D. Canada Goose
7. Migratory birds navigate by
A. The stars B. The sun C. Earth's magnetic field D. Their sense of smell E. All of the above
8. 80 percent of all Sandhill Cranes in North America land near what river during spring migration?
A. The Snake B. The Platte C. The Rio Grande D. The Colorado
9. The songbird with the longest migration range:
A. Northern wheatear B. Meadowlark
C. Black-capped Chickadee D. Pine Siskin
10. What bird migrates on foot?



Bar-Headed Goose



Bar-Tailed Godwit



Northern Wheatear

to Quiz: 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B, 6-A, 7-E, 8-B, 9-A, 10-D.

Oriti Presents Remarkable Raptor Slide Show

Ron Oriti, a retired astronomer and accomplished bird photographer, presented a beautiful slide show on raptors at the December Chapter meeting. Oriti moved to Idaho from the Bishop, CA area five years ago. He said there were approximately 450 species of birds in that area, and that he has seen 45 raptors on "telephone poles, fence posts—everywhere" in just a six-mile stretch of highway near Bishop.

Oriti has taken thousands of photographs of birds and other wildlife in California and elsewhere. He provided detailed commentary about remarkably sharp photos of raptors caught in mid-flight. His pictures revealed the complex and intricate shapes and colors of their wings.

Oriti had a story worthy of a Steve Hartman segment from the program "Sunday Morning" (remember Hartman's story about the Canada Goose who visited her mate during his extended stay in a bird hospital?). Ron showed photos of a pair of magnificent golden eagles and related how the male was injured and had to be taken to a "raptor clinic" to mend. After a few weeks there the eagle was taken to another location to re-learn how to fly. The whole process took several weeks. When the male was reintroduced to his home territory, the female suddenly appeared—literally within seconds—to greet her mate.

Oriti's photos included a wide variety of hawks, owls, falcons, eagles, ospreys, and vultures. His close-ups clearly showed the differences in their talons, wing feather patterns and even their eyes.

Ron also provided hard copy examples of his photos at the meeting and made a gift of a photo

of Ferruginous Hawk to a young man who's doing a school report on this species.

Cornell Birders Rediscover Species Last Seen in 1882

Scientists have photographic evidence of the elusive Black-naped Pheasant Pigeon in Papua, New Guinea, marking the first time this species has been documented in the past 140 years.

A researcher who was able to photograph and video the bird with camera traps, said getting images of this rarest of species "was like finding a unicorn."

The pheasant lives only on Fergusson Island, off the coast of New Guinea. The large ground-dwelling pheasant was reported to have been seen over the years by local hunters, but the new images of the bird mark the first time it's been documented by scientists.

Jordan Boersma, a postdoctoral researcher at Cornell University, said he thought his team had "less than a one-percent chance" of getting pictures of the pheasant. Boersma's team had been on Fergusson Island since September 2022. They interviewed local community members and set up camera traps where the "Auwo," the local name for the bird, had been spotted. The images were captured in the final hours of the expedition. The rugged forest habitat where the pheasant was found is likely the last stronghold of the species, and local people as well as ornithologists hope to protect the pheasant-pigeon from extinction. An artist's rendering of the bird is



This report is the first overall assessment of the nation's birds since a 2019 Science study found the US and Canada have lost more than 3 billion birds in the past five decades. The study's co-author Peter Marra, of the Georgetown University Institute for Environment and Sustainability, says that we are now witnessing "the process of the sixth mass extinction" on the planet. Expanding agriculture, unsustainable forest management practices, and introduced species are negatively impacting bird species. Climate change is increasingly becoming "a major, major threat to bird populations," according to Nicole Michel, National Audubon's director of quantitative science. Michel notes that successful conservation efforts to preserve and increase waterfowl habitat "gives us hope that we can similarly take action to reverse declines of other species." More proactive conservation efforts across habitats and species are needed to save what are known as "Tipping Point" species such as Bobolinks and Rufous Hummingbirds.

Some Bird Numbers At "Edge of Disaster," 2022 Report Warns

The numbers of Rufous Hummingbirds, Greater Sage-Grouse, Pinyon Jays and 67 other bird species in the US have lost at least half their populations in the past 50 years, and will lose another 50% if efforts to change these trends don't succeed. This is the conclusion of the 2022 US State of the Birds report, released in November.

According to the report, grassland birds like Bobolinks and Mountain Plovers are in the fastest decline, followed by decreases in shorebird numbers. By contrast, due to 40 years of concerted wetland conservation, waterfowl and waterbird numbers have increased by 34 percent and 18 per cent, respectively. The causes of population declines, according to the report, are more frequent and deadly "natural" disasters caused by climate change and continued large-scale habitat loss. This year 33 organizations and agencies contributed to the report, using data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the Christmas Bird Count, the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey, International Shorebird Surveys and the American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey.

Western Bobolink



Greater Sage-Grouse



Rufous Hummingbird



Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter
PO Box 361
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83816

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