

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

[www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)

May 2021 - Volume 30 Number 9

## Monthly Meeting

**Date:** May 11, Tuesday

**Place:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Shelly Austin

**Program:** Face masks are strongly encouraged. Seating will be spaced as much as practical. The presenter will be Shelly Austin, the new Executive Director of KEA. So, come out and meet your Audubon friends and get acquainted with Shelly.



## June Picnic

**Date:** June 8, Tuesday

**Place:** Blackwell Island

**Time:** 5 p.m.

Not a Potluck - bring your own picnic - We will catch up on how everyone has spent their year of isolation and share any bird adventures you have had.

## President's Message

Spring is definitely here and our feathered friends are arriving from their incredible 1000 mile journey from Mexico and Central America. As I write this message two pair

of American Goldfinch have presented themselves at our feeder as well as a Calliope Hummingbird, and a couple of days ago two pair of Evening Grosbeak showed up. I've begun checking on the bird houses on Johnson Farm as well as six bird houses at Cougar Bay that Roger Young and I put up years ago.



We are getting out of our doldrums and getting very active. Ted Smith has led members on four field trips in recent weeks; we've picked up the

trash on Mica Hill on Highway 95 after an 18 month hiatus (organized by Ellie Em and Suzie Cross); monitoring the HooDoo Bluebird Trail is underway thanks to Rod and Nancy Kroese; Janet Callen continues to lead the monthly Mica Bay trips; and, for Earth Day, Kathy Kraus, Pam Gomes, and Jenny Taylor put together pine cone bird feeder kits which children can smear with peanut butter and hang outside their homes. Thanks to each of them for their efforts and to all who participated.

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## Earth Week Celebration



CDA chapter of the Audubon Society took part in the mostly virtual Earth Week Celebration put on by Kootenai Environmental Alliance and the Coeur d'Alene library. Thanks to Pam Gomes, Jenny Taylor, Cathy & Laurie Kraus and Dick Cripe, our chapter was able to put together and deliver 100 pine cone bird seed feeder kits to give out to kids participating in the event. The kits also included great information about what kinds of birds locals might attract to their feeder. Included too in the virtual part of the event was an "info-commercial" about the national and local Audubon Societies. Hopefully, this will help spark interest in birding and help to grow more bird enthusiasts-young and old alike!

**Cathy Kraus**

## Field Trip Notes Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

3/27/2021 Ted Smith, Leader

On March 27, Six members from CDA Audubon traveled to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge near Cheney, WA. Attendees were Judy, Ralph, Brian, Shonene, Ted and Heather. We arrived at Turnbull shortly after 9 in the morning and had a fairly productive day. Waterfowl were fairly abundant but passerines were a little scarce. The weather was cold and breezy in the morning but the sun was out and things warmed up as the morning progressed. Brian and Shonene Terrell are new members to CDA Audubon and we thoroughly enjoyed having them. A couple of the species on the list were seen outside Turnbull, notably Canvasback which were seen on a pond near Cheney.

### Species List:

Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey, American Coot, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Eurasian-colored Dove, Northern Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Violet-green Swallow, Pygmy Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Bluebird, American Robin, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird

## Chain of Lakes Field Trip

4/15/1921 Ted Smith, leader

On April 15, Six of us ventured over to the Chain of Lakes.



Turkey Vulture i  
photo by Wayne Tree

We left town at 8 am and arrived on River Road about 8:35. Our group consisted of Ralph, Nancy, Peggy, Dick, Shonene and Ted. Peggy has been doing the Mica Bay trips and had so much fun she came along with us

today. Nancy heard about our trip and decided to join us. I'm not sure if she is a club member or not but both she and Peggy were fun to have along and great participants. Shonene was on her second trip with us. We birded down River Road to its intersection with Highway 3 and then drove out to Killarney Lake Campground. It was a beautiful morning, a little cool to begin with but quite pleasant. There was a fair breeze that came up about mid-morning. Waterfowl were abundant as were Osprey. We did see one sick Trumpeter Swan and another that had died recently - the ongoing legacy of Silver Valley mining.

### Species list:

Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Trumpeter Swan,

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Coot, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Woodpecker sp., Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Marsh Wren, American Robin, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird

## Highway Cleanup - Mica Hill



At 8 am on Saturday 27th April, 17 cheerful volunteers (thanks SO MUCH) arrived the Mica Grange meeting

area. The day was sunny and perfect for the task at hand. Fortified with hot coffee and treats, we set to business signing liability waivers and donning our fashionable, highly-visible work-release vests. Duty posts and working pairs were assigned, and after picking up litter grabbers and sturdy orange garbage bags, everyone set off.

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## Highway Clean-up

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Several travelers honked in appreciation to us as we worked. By 12:30 we left our stretch of 95 far tidier than we found it. Alas, nobody found any unopened, rare, highly-prized single-serving ketchup packets (worth a fortune), but we did collect an impressive amount of jettisoned trash and recyclables. So many beer cans, appears not drinking alcohol a suggestion vs the law...! Thanks again to everyone who gave up their Saturday to help. Extra kudos to Team Cripe who wouldn't clock out until the job was complete. And many thanks to Zagers for helping Ellie and Susie assume organizing this semi-annual task which Mike and Val performed for many years. **Susie Cross**

background on the name and the area. His email follows. Photos are by Jacob



"Wow, it's great to hear that others are discovering this little known hotspot! Several years ago, it used to be a much larger gravel pit (Aptly named by my 6-year-old little sister "The Elephant Graveyard" because it reminded her of a similar looking place from the movie 'The Lion King') but has now mostly been leveled out due to construction. When they first dug it out, a large vernal pond would form which would usually last into June/July where it would dissipate into a mudflat that wouldn't last long. This mudflat (and the pond) would attract a multitude of shorebirds that aren't normally seen in Kootenai County such as Black-necked Stilts, Both Yellowlegs, Solitary and Spotted Sandpiper, a Long-billed Curlew (believe it or not!) and dozens of Wilson's Phalarope- I remember one day counting at least 15-20 of them! I remember watching them spin in circles on the surface of the pond...thinking they were baby ducks,

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## The Elephant Graveyard

A few years ago, I saw a report of some shorebirds at a place called "Elephant Grave Yard." When I checked the eBird map, I saw this location was in the middle of Rathdrum Prairie. I thought the map must be wrong. There is no wetland habitat on Rathdrum Prairie! I emailed the observer, Jacob Elonen. He gave me the location, a gravel pit at the southeast corner of Prairie Avenue and Highway 41. I went out there and sure enough here was this hidden wetland unknown to the birding community. Since then Doug Ward, myself and others have been stopping by there on occasion.

Doug Ward dropped by there on April 21<sup>st</sup> and found a pair of Black-necked Stilt. He reported it on Inland-nw-Birders. Jacob responded by email, giving us some

## The Elephant Graveyard

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### Black-necked Stilt

I looked up what they were and they quickly became my favorite bird. This was my SPARK bird and the hotspot that got me into birding so it's great to hear others share their experience with "The Elephant Graveyard"! Unfortunately, in recent years the place has been so bulldozed over that little remains in terms of habitat and available pits for water to gather. I have seen a single pair of Black-necked Stilts show up there every April so maybe I'm thinking yours is the same pair! Regardless, it brings back a lot of memories to hear this place mentioned in a birding email, and to hear it called by the nickname we gave it

years ago is another thing entirely! I wish I could have got the word out for my initial sightings years ago, but alas, I wasn't on ebird yet. I will attach a photo of what the pond used to look like. It's exactly where that little puddle stands today. I'm assuming that's where you saw the stilts too. There used to be quite a few Vesper Sparrows there in the spring as well (which I've heard are rare for Kootenai Co.) but I haven't checked recently and I'm afraid the construction work might not be doing a good job at keeping them there. It's still a funky place to check out regardless of what's going on, and my sister and I have convinced ourselves that some kind of magic has to be drawing the rare birds there somehow! Haha."

We thank you Jacob for your discovery of this hidden wetland and to your sister for the unique name. It would be great if this wetland could be restored and preserved. There is so little of our Prairie being saved from development. Who could we contact? Is it too late? Could our Audubon Chapter and maybe KEA save the area?

*Shirley Sturts*



## Recent Sightings

**Snow Goose** - April 3 - Hauser Lake - Kailan Bergstrom

**Turkey Vulture** - April 2 - Athol - Sally Jones

**Black-necked Stilt** - a pair - April 21 - "Elephant Graveyard" Doug Ward

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## Recent Sightings

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**Greater Yellowlegs** - April 10 - Hauser Lake  
- Larry and Patty Marsh

**Lesser Yellowlegs** - April 21 - Hauser Lake -  
Doug Ward

**Wilson's Snipe** - April 10 - Hauser Lake -  
Larry and Patty Marsh

**Sora** - April 21 - Hauser Lake - Doug Ward

**Calliope Hummingbird** - April 18 - there  
home Spokane River - Bob and Terri Farr

**Rufous Hummingbird** - April 21 - their home  
Fairmont Loop Rd.- Jan and Herb Severtson

**Say's Phoebe** - April 3 - Hauser Lake -  
Kailan Bergstom

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** - April 11 -  
Bull Run Lake, south of - Shelly Hicks

**Barn and Cliff Swallows** - April 21 - Hauser  
Lake - Doug Ward

**Savannah Sparrow** - April 10 - Hauser Lake  
area - Larry ad Patty Marsh

**Mica Bay Survey** April 13, 2021b- Leader

Janet Callen -Participants: Darlene Carlton;  
Karen Williams; Jan Severtson; Peggy Schnell

Common Raven: 30 +\*  
Turkey Vultures: 3  
Tree Swallows: 25  
House Finch: 5  
Black-cap Chickadees: 3  
Northern Flicker: 4  
Red-wing Blackbird: 3+  
Canada Geese: 20  
American Robin: 8  
Song Sparrow: 3  
Starlings: 5  
Wood Ducks: 2  
Mallard: 34  
Osprey-1  
Downy Woodpecker: 1  
Wild Turkey: 1  
American Widgeon 22

Bufflehead:7  
Great blue Heron:1  
Red-breasted Nuthatch-1  
Killdeer:1  
Gull species 5+

\*The Ravens were circling overhead,  
quite high, maybe some crows. If that is  
possible.. It was windy in some  
locations.

## President's Message

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Bill and Sally Gundlach Little Guard Lookout  
Hike led by Dick Cripe

The spring migration and the arrival of the  
songbirds always gives me joy, but this  
spring I'm thinking of the strong birders  
who were leaders in the club but are no  
longer with us. Recently Bill Gundlach died,  
others have left the area, or have retreated  
from activities due to physical limitations.  
The organization was created about thirty  
years ago by Susan Weller and is now  
undergoing a generational shift. I'm  
encouraged by our new board members who  
bring talent and energy. If we could find a  
couple more I'd be confident the club will  
move ahead and **not miss a beat**.

See you at our first in-person meeting at  
the church on May 11.

## The Work Of John James Audubon



An Audubon "American Original" exhibit is going to be at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, in Spokane starting May 15- September 19, 2021 Here is the link for it.

<https://www.northwestmuseum.org/exhibitions/upcoming-exhibitions/>



## Field Trips

On all trips folks should plan on bringing a lunch, dress appropriately for the weather and plan on

enjoying some time outside. Covid safety is still an issue. Masking and social distancing are encouraged though I have no problems with folks carpooling with friends if everyone has been vaccinated. Beginner birders are encouraged to attend and those of us that have been at it a while are more than happy to help folks learn. **Ted Smith - Field Trip Leader**

### Mica Bay Survey

**Date:** May 11, Tuesday (Held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on the month)

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Meet:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

**Leader:** Janet Callen (208) 664-1085

**Activity:** We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome.

### Mid-Week Outing

**Date:** May 12, Wednesday

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Meet:** At Home parking lot

**Leader:** Ted Smith - (406) 540-2673

**Activity:** Welcome our neo-tropical migrants home - Destination to be determined

### Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge

**Date:** May 22, Saturday

**Time:** 7:00 a.m.

**Meet:** At Home parking lot

**Leader:** Ted Smith - (406) 540-2673

**Activity:** This will be a full day of birding so bring a lunch and dress for the weather (Note:the April trip to this location was cancelled due to rain)

**Check our Field Trips on our Website for any additional field trips.**

**Local Membership Dues**

- Individual \$10.00*
- Family \$15.00*
- Individual \$25.00 - with hard copy of the newsletter*
- Family \$30.00 - with hard copy of the newsletter*
- Additional donation\_\_\_\_\_*

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Mail this form and your check payable to: *Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter c/o Membership P.O. Box 361 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816*

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