

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)  
November 2022 / Volume 31 Number 12

## Upcoming Events

Regular Chapter Meeting  
November 8; Christmas Cookie  
Exchange in December

The regular monthly chapter meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 8, at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road in Coeur d'Alene. The program for November's meeting is "Dragonflies and Damselflies, presented by Jim Johnson.

December's meeting (also on the 8<sup>th</sup>) will feature a program on raptors by Ron Oriti and also will feature a Christmas cookie exchange. Members are asked to bring a dozen cookies to trade.

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## Mica Bay Field Trip—Skagit Valley/Sandpoint Tours Possible

The standing Mica Bay field trip, on the second Tuesday of the month, will begin at 8 a.m. on November 8. Ted Smith leads this outing, and asks that participants gather at the Fairmont Loop parking lot at 8 a.m.

Ted suggested that a four-day outing to the Skagit Valley may be held over the President's Day weekend in February, and possibly a shorter field trip to the Sandpoint area as well. These outings will be scheduled at a later time, depending on chapter member availability.

## Ted Smith Presents Slide Show on Several Southwest Birding Sites

Ted Smith provided a photographic tour of various birding locales in Arizona and Texas at the October meeting, including close-up pictures of exotic Peach-faced Lovebirds, Mexican Jays, an Acorn Woodpecker and Purple Martins.

His tour began in the Phoenix area and eventually ended up in Kerrville, Texas, an area known for its bird- (and birder-) friendly sanctuaries. The slideshow included shots of local lizards and even a few alligators he encountered along the way.

## Christmas Bird Count Likely To Happen on December 17

The annual chapter Christmas Bird Count has been tentatively scheduled for December 17, with Doug Ward organizing the event. Please "pencil in" the date and watch for complete details in the December issue of this newsletter.

## Inside This Issue

President's Message. . . . .	P. 2
Avian Awareness Quiz-Trumpeter Swans. . .	P. 2
Rare Herons Move out of Chicago Park. . . . .	P. 3
Highway Cleanup Recap w/photos. . . . .	P. 4
Magpie Saboteurs Remove Monitors. . . . .	P. 5
Unlocking the Mystery of Gull Flight. . . . .	P. 5

## President's Message

By Ralph Kerr

Last month I started my message by saying "welcome to Fall." Then Fall decided to be different this year from last and we enjoyed some very nice Fall weather. It seems like the leaves didn't change color as quickly as they usually do. Hiking, Bicycling and other outdoor activities continued longer, together with many remarks from people saying things like "can you believe this weather!"

The pleasant Fall weather had different impacts on others. Hunters come to mind. Hunters were heard to comment on how difficult it was to find elk this year compared to prior years. Not being an Elk hunter, I can only go by the comments of those who say the weather wasn't cool enough and the Elk had not moved to lower elevations. I'll leave it to you and your hunting friends to determine the degree of success and whether the weather had a significant impact.

I am happy to report that the Mica Bay Viewing Platform has a fresh look, thanks in large part to Ted Smith. I helped a little but was sidelined with a positive Covid test. While we were working on the platform, two ladies and a two-year old boy came down the path and we had a delightful visit with them about, would you believe, birds. They were interested in all things outdoors but apparently had never been introduced to Audubon. We were pleased to tell them about the organization and its purposes along with introducing them to the birding backpacks available for check out at the library. There were several gulls in the bay that were easily visible for the young man to enjoy. I expect those folks will be repeat visitors to the platform, especially in the Spring during the migration.

You may have grown weary of hearing about the Kris Buchler memorial project since, due to unforeseen obstacles, it has dragged on longer than any of us had hoped. At our October meeting, I was happy to tell the attendees that the memorial signs are now at the printer. I do not have specific dates about when the signs will be installed but we expect it to take approximately a month for the printing to be completed. Stay tuned.

President's Message Continued on Page 3

## Test Your Avian Awareness: Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter Swans, graceful and beautiful birds, follow a migration flyway over North Idaho. How much do you know about these avians?

Answers on page 3.

1. Trumpeter swans incubate their eggs  
A. Under their wings B. With their feet  
C. In other birds' nests
2. Their chicks are called  
A. Hatchies B. Poults C. Cygnets
3. Trumpeter Swans  
A. Mate for life B. Are both migratory and resident in Idaho C. Both A and B
4. In the 1920s the Trumpeter Swan population in the US was  
A. Two million B. Two hundred thousand  
C. Two hundred
5. What percentage of the swan's Rocky Mountain Population winters in Idaho every year?  
A. 50 percent B. 80 percent C. 10 percent
6. Controlled swan hunting is legal  
A. Throughout Idaho B. Only in the four north Idaho counties C. Only in southern Idaho
7. Trumpeter Swans, when intermixed with Tundra Swans on the same body of water  
A. Attack Tundras B. Encircle Tundras  
C. Remain at one end of the flock and wait for the Tundras to take off before flying
8. Juvenile Trumpeter Swans  
A. May have partially orange feet B. Fold their wings differently from adults C. Are mute until they mature

If you would like to report trumpeter swan sightings, see [www.trumpeterswansociety.org](http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org) for more info.



Trumpeters Taking Off

## Chicago Museum Renovation Drives Night Herons Away

Renovations at the Chicago History Museum are believed to have disrupted the habitat of a flock of Black-Crowned Night Herons, causing the birds to abandon their breeding grounds on Museum property.

The renovation, begun in 2021, included construction of a walking trail and new signs, native plantings, and reinforcement of the ceiling in an underground archives room.

Near the construction area was a long-standing breeding ground for at least 45 pairs of these herons, listed as endangered in the state of Illinois. The project was approved by the state Department of Natural Resources after an environmental review. Crews operated noisy equipment which at times was only a few yards from the heron rookery.

After the birds abandoned their nests, crows were observed scavenging on dead nestlings. A handful of male herons returned to the rookery in 2022, but left after no females appeared at the site, they left.

Ornithologists believe that many of the birds may have relocated to Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo property. A record number of 750 adults and 400 fledglings were reported in Lincoln Park this year. This rookery may be the species' last remaining breeding ground in Illinois.

-- National Geographic, Sept. 27, 2022.



Black Crowned Night Heron

## President's Message Continued. . .

Let's talk about conservation. As all of you know, our community has long been concerned about the water quality of Lake Coeur d'Alene and its future. The October 23, 2022 edition of the Coeur d'Alene Press has an article titled "Our Gem: The future of water quality in Lake Coeur d'Alene." I refer you to the newspaper rather than trying to summarize it here. However, I'll include the note that the "Our Gem Collaborative" is hosting an event, "In Focus: The Coeur d'Alene Lake Report" at the Hagadone Event Center November 15 from 8 AM until noon. The cost is \$10 per person. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) will be presenting its report. You can register at [tinyurl.com/ourgem](http://tinyurl.com/ourgem). Questions may be submitted prior to the event by emailing them to [sbosley@uidaho.edu](mailto:sbosley@uidaho.edu).

This month (October) was my first participation in the Mica Bay monthly field trip. I know, why did I wait so long to participate? While it is the time of year when most song birds have left on their migratory journey there are still a few species lurking in the shrubbery and trees. Waterfowl are visible in the bay with the aforementioned gulls being the most numerous. The Canada Geese were flying about to and from the Bay as well.

Many of you speak of flocks of Wild Turkeys being present in or around your home. Our neighborhood is no exception. As I was driving into our development a few days ago, I saw a Cooper's Hawk drop from one of the pine trees for what I didn't know. As I got closer, I realized it must have been focused on the neighborhood flock of Wild Turkeys. I was surprised the Cooper's Hawk would be interested in birds as large as the turkeys. Perhaps the Cooper's Hawk had enjoyed a turkey meal earlier when the Polts were small and was just checking to see if there was an available meal. Our monthly meeting programs for the next two months are as follows:

November: "ODONATA" - (Dragonflies & Damselflies) - By Jim Johnson

December: Raptors by Ron Oriti, one of our members

Enjoy the fall colors during this changing season. Who knows, there may be an avian species resting in one of those colorful trees. I hope to see you at our regular monthly meeting.

Good Birding!  
Ralph

## Chapter Members Meet for Highway 95 Cleanup

A fine sunny fall morning greeted Audubon Chapter members on October 15 for their semi-annual highway cleanup along the Chapter's "Adopt a Highway" segment in Kootenai County.

Chapter members gather up trash on a two-mile stretch of the highway every fall and spring.

The cleanup was organized by Ellie Emm, who provided trash bags, bright orange vests, grippers, and even muffins and coffee for participants.

Ellie also directed members to the parts of the highway where they were to do the cleanup.



Participants receive their route assignments from event organizer Ellie Emm



Peggy Albertson, at left, with Rob and Nancy Kroese



The cleanup crew inspects their equipment

## "Project Feederwatch" Program Begins

The 36<sup>th</sup> season of Cornell University's "Feederwatch" program starts Nov. 1, running through April 30. Volunteer participants select a count site and monitor the same area for every count. Counts are made on two consecutive days each week with a five-day break.

Participants keep track of the maximum number of individual birds visible simultaneously and may use the Project mobile app or a piece of paper to keep count tallies. The tallied counts are then entered in the Project website. These reports are used to identify trends in bird populations and migrations.

## Volunteer Needed to Monitor Cataldo "Reel-in and Recycle" Bin

Jim McFeeley, a Chapter member in Cataldo, is looking for someone to take over monitoring of the Cataldo Boat Launch "Reel-in and Recycle Bin." The volunteer monitor checks the bin from time to time and removes trash and fishing lines and recycles the lines. Anyone who would like more information can contact him 208-682-5652. Applications may be submitted to Ralph Kerr, Chapter President, for approval by the board. Ralph's email address is [kerrphoto48@gmail.com](mailto:kerrphoto48@gmail.com).

## Magpies Sabotage Monitors

Researchers “Down Under” spent six months developing a special leg-band tracking device to monitor magpies—only to have their study sabotaged by the crafty birds. In 2019, Australian scientists banded five birds, then watched as their ingenious devices were disabled by these particularly intelligent avians.

Banded magpies stood patiently while a helpful buddy pecked away at the device until it fell off.

The scientists thought their invention was foolproof and could be removed only by a magnet, but the co-conspirator bird located a tiny clasp on the band and went to work.

Dr. Dominique Potvin, leading the study at the University of Sunshine Coast, says it took about 20 minutes for a shrewd magpie to remove a monitor.

“The first tracker was off half an hour after we put it on,” Potvin said. Within three days, all five of the trackers that scientists had attached to magpies were gone.

She said the magpie behavior was “a special combination of helping, but also problem solving – of being really social and having this cognitive ability to solve puzzles.” The thwarted researchers were forced to discontinue their original study—Now they need to find a different way to study this clever bird.

“What else are magpies capable of?” she asked.



Australian Magpie

## Gull Flight Strategies Provide Clues for Drone Designers

A recent study on how gulls adjust to wind gusts and other disturbances “on the fly” may help inventors of uncrewed aerial vehicles, aka drones, according to an article in the September issue of the National Academy of Sciences.

Christina Harvey, an assistant professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at UC/Davis, found that gulls respond to wind changes by “morphing the shape of their wings” in mid-flight.

Harvey’s researchers found that gulls adjust the joints in their wings to recover from sudden changes in airflows.

Her team was able to predict how rapidly a gull could recover from a wind gust by this “morphing” strategy, a technique she believes could apply to drones.

“If you build an aircraft exactly like a gull, would a human be able to fly it?” she asks.

Drones—like gulls—need to be able to navigate in complex urban environments, responding quickly to stay aloft.

Researchers used 3-D printed models of gulls and gull wings in a wind tunnel, with computer modeling of flights, to better understand how the birds manage to maintain stability while falling or rising.

There are basically two types of aircraft—stable and unstable. A stable aircraft tends to return to steady flight when affected by an air disturbance. Unstable aircraft, such as jet fighters, are highly maneuverable.

Apparently, birds combine both stable and unstable flight modes and use their wing movements to shift between the two.

“Birds easily perform challenging maneuvers and they’re adaptable,” Harvey says.

“What exactly about their flight is most useful to implement in future aircraft?”

Harvey plans to expand her studies by collaborating with other researchers, including those at the California Raptor Center.

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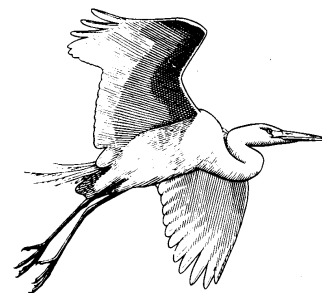
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