

The Fish Hawk Herald



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society

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CALENDAR CHECK! --

Sept. 17, 1991 7 pm September meeting -- location, basement of the Security Pacific Bank in Hayden Lake. Jack McNeel with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game will present a program on "Operation Osprey", a cooperative project between the State of Idaho and Colorado.

Note to Board Members: A board meeting will follow the above program and all board members are urged to attend. Our burgeoning membership has prompted some interested topics for discussion. Also, our chapter has finally received a tax exempt status from the federal government.

Sept. 21, 1991 **Field Trip Leader: Shirley Sturts** Meet: Rustler's Roost Parking Lot, 819 Sherman Ave. Time: 7 am for breakfast (optional) -- 8 am we're on our way Route: Cd'A Lake between the city and Wolf Lodge, Cataldo Mission Marsh, Cd'A River between Cataldo and Rose Lake, Bull Lake, Porter Lake and if time and interest permit we will continue on to Lane Marsh and Killarney Lake. Birds: Of special interest will be migrating shorebirds. We will be looking especially for Semipalmated Plover, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary, Baird's, Western, Pectoral and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Long and Short-billed Dowitchers. Please call Shirley 664-5318 and register for the trip. If there is a change in plans I can then call you.

Sept. 29, 1991 [Tentative] **Field Trip Leader: Shirley Sturts** Meet: Rustler's Roost Parking Lot, 819 Sherman Ave. Time: 7 am for breakfast (optional) -- 8 am we're on our way Come look for birds in the mountains. Route: We will drive from the town of Cataldo up Latour Creek and over to the St. Joe River and return to Cd'A via St. Maries. This trip will include about 30 miles of mountain driving on dirt roads and about a 2 mile hike into Crystal Lake. Register: Please call Shirley 664-5418 and register as this trip will go only if the weather is good and if there is interest in this type of trip so the date and time may change.

Oct. 1, 1991 **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** for submitting articles, etc.

Oct. 12-13, 1991 **MONTANA AND IDAHO AUDUBON MEETING - JOIN US!** Mark your calendars now! Audubon members from Montana and Idaho are invited to a weekend full of learning, socializing and birdwatching October 12-13 in Hamilton, Montana. This special meeting is designed to bring Audubon members from these two states together to form new friendships, exchange ideas, and learn about areas of common interest.

Lots of good fun is already planned. We will learn about wolves, visit the local wildlife refuge, and watch artist Joe Thornbrugh create a drawing in front of us. Events start Friday evening. On Saturday, we will have field trips, workshops, speakers and a banquet. The program ends with a field trip on Sunday morning. The meeting is hosted by the Montana and Idaho Audubon Councils and the Bitterroot Audubon Chapter. For registration information contact the President of your local Chapter or Bitterroot Audubon, P.O. Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840-0326.

Oct. 15, 1991 7 pm **October Meeting --** A video from The Peregrine Fund and World Center for Birds of Prey will begin the program in October. Then, Jim Cook, a veterinarian and falconer from Post Falls, Idaho, will introduce us to one of his birds, and talk about the sport of falconry.

Oct. 19, 1991 **Field Trip Leader: Susan Weller** Location: Rainey Hill area. More details in October newsletter.

COEUR d'ALENE CHAPTER MEMBER RECEIVES AWARD --

Coeur d'Alene resident Shirley Sturts was honored at the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society's first annual potluck at Farragut State Park. Shirley was awarded with Audubon's Meritorious Service Award for over twenty years of service in the documenting and recording of bird species in Northern Idaho.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT --

Neotropical migrants. That intimidating mouthful of words translates--most simply-- into many of the bird species that inhabit our yards and properties during the summer months. More broadly, the term describes about 300 of the 650 bird species that nest in North America's forests, fields, and riparian areas.



Yellow Warbler

Each spring, who among we birders does not await with much anticipation, the first flash of brilliant yellow feathers amidst the newly budded leaves on the trees and shrubbery in our yards? And who does not delight to those first notes of sweetly warbled music spilling down upon us that confirms the area's warbler species have returned? In short, the return of songbirds each year to our yards, and the forested and meadowed areas around our homes, signals an end to the long and colorless winter months. Songbirds herald the rebirth of life and activity, and reward our patience at having survived another winter--just when we thought we could not endure another day of grey and white.

Perhaps we have taken this yearly ritual, and the joys that songbirds bring to our lives, for granted. It would seem the most severe of earthly punishments to welcome in another spring only to discover that our colorful and musical friends were absent. In fact, a season without birds could hardly be called spring. Indeed, many of the songbirds that grace our yards with their presence are Neotropical migrants: birds that breed and rear young here in the U.S. and then migrate in the fall to Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In North Idaho, Neotropical migrant species include warblers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, shorebirds, and some raptors.

While these bird species utilizes a variety of habitat types in North Idaho, they are all suffering from the increasing population of humans and the resultant boom of urban expansion. These trends of population and expansion add insults to the injuries of over one century of exploitation of the area's natural resources by logging and mining. This is true not only in North Idaho, but in the entirety of the United States. And while all species of Neotropical migrants are disappearing at an alarming rate, it is the forest dwellers that are most rapidly declining.

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The major reasons for the decline in Neotropical migrants are the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of their habitat--both on breeding, and wintering grounds. To be certain, irresponsible logging in the Northwest is

causing the decline of many Neotropical migrant species. Where forests are destroyed or severely fragmented, Neotropical migrants become easy targets for parasitic species like the Brown-headed Cowbird. Also, Neotropical migrants prefer to nest in trees or shrubs, or often construct nests on or near the ground. These sites create an easy meal for skunks and feral cats, or invite predation by ravens and jays. Since the aforementioned predators prefer to hunt forest edges and margins, fragmented forests can spell disaster for Neotropical migrants that normally prefer to nest in a forest's interior. Since these species of birds must conserve energy for a lengthy fall migration, if their nests are destroyed they cannot afford to attempt a second brood like many resident species.



Northern Oriole

Information provided by volunteers conducting Breeding Bird Surveys for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revealed declines in many of the bird species we consider common here in North Idaho. The Olive-sided Flycatcher, the Veery, the Tennessee, Nashville, and Yellow Warblers, the Northern Waterthrush, the Common Yellowthroat, the Yellow-breasted Chat, and the Northern Oriole, are just some of the species found to be declining by population trend surveys for 1966-1978 and 1978-1987.

In the 1960's, Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring warned of the effect of pesticides--DDT in particular--on bird populations. Ms. Carlson wrote "Over increasingly large areas of the United States, spring now comes unheralded by the return of the birds, and the early mornings are strangely silent where once they were filled with the beauty of bird song." Thankfully, DDT was banned in the U.S. in the mid-1970's, and songbird and raptor populations have recovered accordingly. Now we are faced with a different sort of silent spring, this time brought about by the destruction of habitat. In a recent article in Birder's World entitled "Silent Chorus" Jim Clark stated there is something we can do to stop, and reverse, this terrible trend that is causing the decline of Neotropical migrant bird species--we can "curb forest fragmentation, and alter timber cutting to favour longer rotation cycles, providing migration corridors, and protect migratory staging areas..." For Auduboners, this means relentlessly urging cooperation between our state and federal agencies in managing public lands for the benefit of the greatest number of wildlife species.

If we do not act now, we may lose many of the forest birds that for a hundred years or more have been a part of our heritage here in North Idaho. We may indeed lose many of the creatures that help to define our humanity through the joy and wonderment they bring to us. I for one could not know a greater sorrow than to lose sight of that first flash of yellow in my leafing maple tree, or to lose the sound of that first six-note chorus of the Yellow Warbler's "sweet, sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet," pouring down out of the trees to fill my heart with song, and the contentment of knowing we have both survived another year on planet earth.



Northern Waterthrush

[Susan Weller, Note: For a list of the references used here please contact the author. Illustrations from Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society.]

IDAHO AUDUBON COUNCIL ELECT'S NEW PRESIDENT--

Auduboners from around the state of Idaho convened for the 6th Annual Spring Meeting of the Audubon Idaho Council the weekend of June 14-16 at the University of Idaho's Clark Fork Field Station. Bob Turner, National Audubon's Rocky Mountain Regional vice president, was on hand to kick-off the meeting with a message from Audubon headquarters in Colorado.

Out-going Council president Al Larson chaired discussions on a variety of subjects--from the 1872 Mining Law--to wolf reintroduction.

All seven Audubon chapters throughout the state of Idaho were represented at the meeting and participated in electing a new IAC president. Dave Siebanthaler, president of the North Idaho Chapter, was unanimously voted in as IAC President, and was asked to represent Idaho at Audubon's National Convention in Estes Park, Colorado this last July.

FEATHERED FACTS --Lewis' Woodpecker [Melanerpes lewis]

I particularly became fascinated with this bird after one of my trips to Yellowstone National Park (YNP) this summer. After finding and observing an active nest, I couldn't resist digging up all the information I could find on this beautiful bird.

The Lewis' Woodpecker was named for Captain Meriwether Lewis, one of the leaders of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Captain Lewis crossed the West in 1804-1806 and paused long enough on July 20, 1805 to collect this woodpecker near Helena, Montana.

Melanerpes is taken from the Greek melas meaning "black" and herpes meaning "a creeper". The species name Lewis, of course, is for Captain Meriwether Lewis.

Characteristics of the Lewis' Woodpecker --

- greenish-black head and back with gray collar and breast
- dark red face patch
- pink-red (almost raspberry) belly
- generally silent, has an occasional harsh churr or cheer-ur



Lewis' Woodpecker

The Lewis' Woodpecker is a large woodpecker (10-11") of pine and other forests, woodland edges, streamside trees, and recent forest "burns". It is unlike other woodpeckers in that its flight is direct rather than undulating and frequently flycatches from a perch. Open areas is a prerequisite for aerial foraging of insects.

The cavity nest of the Lewis' Woodpecker is found 5 to 170 feet above ground in dead or live trees. The preference for dead snags or stubs is evident in one survey of 64 nesting sites. Out of the 64 sites, 47 were in dead stubs and 17 in live trees. The male selects the nest site and may do most of the excavating. It is noted, however, that the Lewis' tend to use old nest sites rather than dig new ones and favors natural cavities or dead stubs. The selection of old nest sites over making new ones suggests that the Lewis' is probably not as well adapted for digging as other forest-dwelling woodpeckers.

The eggs of the Lewis' are white, mostly oval to short-oval with variations. Both sexes incubate, the male incubates at night while both birds alternate during the day. Pairs mate for life. Lewis' nest in loose colonies where food supply is abundant.

The diet of the Lewis' Woodpecker consists of insects, acorns, pine seeds and fruit. It will cache acorns and nuts for use only in the nonbreeding season, tailoring the food to fit natural crevices rather than drilling holes. During the many hours I watched the nest this summer, I observed the adults taking turns in flycatching and storing their catches in natural cracks in a dead tree. Time and time again the adult would take his/her catch to the same tree and the same crevice. I was also able to watch the retrieval of this stored food being taken back to the nest. Being able to observe these magnificent birds in their day-to-day life was a real treat -- plus it was one for the life list for me! [Sources: A Field Guide to Western Birds, Nests, Hal H. Harrison; Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, No. 2, Gulls to Dippers; Field Guide to Birds of North America, National Geographic Society.]

From: Living Forests by Heinrich Gohl and Dr. E. Krebs, Oxford University Press, New York, 1975.

The Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century brought with it an intensive analysis of Nature. It led to the discovery of the Alps and finally to the discovery of the forest. Under the influence of eminent research scientists and Nature-lovers, the public began to take an increasing interest in the forest and to realize its possibilities.

The vast green area of the forest with its enormous columns of trees is like a church interior that instills into us a reverence in which nothing disturbs the thoughts that pass through the mind. Stillness, growth and permanence prevail here. The development of the forest is symbolic of the rise and fall of great empires; the growth of the tree symbolizes human life. But only he can have true empathy with the forest who carries within him the inner will to do so, to absorb this beauty and magnificence. In our attitude towards the forest, or towards Nature generally, it is necessary that we should have an inner ethical harmony, a respect for life, a respect for creation and for the Creator, and finally a religion. The more we surrender ourselves in Nature, the more we sense the complex, indissoluble ties which we shall probably never be able to penetrate to their full extent, and of which we also form part. In our intercourse with the forest, we must learn to look, observe, think and enjoy silently. It is not so much the individual shapes or sounds that we perceive; it is the entirety of the infinitely varied impressions, the interplay of all we see, hear and sense that impresses us. As well as all this there is the exhilarating feeling of security, of being part of the community. We are challenged to stop and ponder on those of our actions that are in one way or another questionable. Especially today, when we are running the ever-increasing risk of alienating ourselves from ethics and ideals, such hours of self-reflection are more necessary than ever before. In such silent meditation we question the meaning of life; "that I may see what holds the world together at its very soul".

The observer whose attitude towards the forest is one of great love for all that lives will enjoy innumerable wonders. Here there moves, crowds and lives a thousand-fold life in a thousand-fold forms. The forest is one of Nature's most mysterious creations. To be one with the forest there is no need to know all the plants and countless animals and insects, although we may be encouraged to learn more about the many things we see. If we check our steps, our feet coming to a halt in the rustling foliage, we shall hear that the forest is never quite still. Somewhere over there something murmurs, perhaps a little brook; there is a quiet humming in the air; a leaf rustles; in the mossy carpet or among the weeds something is busily crawling; somewhere a woodpecker hammers away; a jay gives its warning cry; a dead branch falls; a quiet breeze whispers through the tree-tops. All this makes up the voice of the forest; a varied, gentle harmony. Only rarely is the stillness penetrated by a weak sound from the outer world, whose faraway roar only enhances the sense of quiet and solitude. A little time spent in the forest, whatever the season or time of day, presents people seeking relaxation with an experience of unequalled richness. Compared with technology and commerce, Nature offers us values that are as important to our well-being as material goods, but whose final disappearance is threatened. It is therefore one of the most honourable duties of parents, teachers and older people to arouse in the young an appreciation of the magnificent, the unique and the wonderful that is inherent in every tiny creature, in a beautiful flower, in a tree, in a stretch of countryside, in a forest; a thing that we cannot ourselves create but can only destroy.

THE OBSERVATION POST --

Red Crossbills [4 adults and 1 juvenile]

feeder of Pam Gontz - 7/30/91 thru the following week

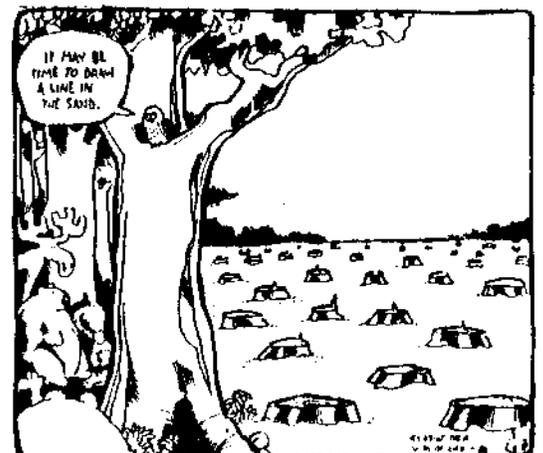
BIRD BEHAVIOR --

Do birds eat their own feathers? Yes! In fact, Grebes routinely eat their own feathers, sometimes in large quantities, and may also feed their chicks feathers. Why? The probable reason would be to act as a protectant for the stomach against the sharp bones of fish, which makes up the major part of a grebe's diet.

[The Birder's Miscellany, by Scott Weidensaul]

"Any fool can destroy trees. During a man's life only saplings can be grown, in the place of the old trees - tens of centuries old - that have been destroyed. It took more than three thousand years to make some of the trees in these Western woods - trees that are still standing in perfect strength and beauty, waving and singing. Through all the wonderful, eventful centuries since Christ's time - and long before that - God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanche, and a thousand straining, leveling tempests and floods; but he cannot save them from fools."

- John Muir





NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send the Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$20 payable to the National Audubon Society is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send this application and your check to

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Local Chapter
Coeur d'Alene 606

Local Chapter Code
7XCH8

Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society

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