



THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society
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NEOTROPICAL MIGRANTS ON THE DECLINE

March through May are exciting months. The migratory birds are returning to their summer homes in the north while our year around residents join them in song. There are some 250 species of birds that migrate from their breeding territories in North America to Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America.

Sue Weller, in the Coeur d'Alene District Bird Guide published by BLM in cooperation with Partners in Flight, has listed 86 bird species from North Idaho to be among this group. Another 65 winter in the more temperate zones such as southern United States, Mexico and a few in North Idaho in milder winters. (This checklist is available at the BLM office).

These birds are known as the neotropical migrants and their numbers are declining. This global migratory system has taken thousands of years to develop and is quickly being destroyed. The loss of suitable habitat in both their summer and winter homes is a major factor in this decline. National groups such as Partners in Flight and more recently the National Audubon Society's version of the program called Birds in Balance have launched an international effort to conserve migratory songbirds. Partners in Flight unites and efforts of concerned people, government agencies, industries and many countries in the Western Hemisphere.

The 280+ members who read this newsletter could make a big difference if they really want to help the birds. As Gertie Hanson says, "We don't need to do anything nationally, we've got a plate-full right here" Please read her article in this issue as she has an important message for all of us.



CALENDAR CHECK

APRIL 19 TUESDAY
REGULAR MEETING
Time: 7 PM
Place: Iron Horse
Program: Tracy Betts, Soil Conservation Service, will talk on conservation issues and farming.

APRIL 10 SUNDAY
FIELD TRIP: PEND OREILLE LAKE, SUNNYSIDE TO CLARK FORK
Time: 7 AM
Place: Ward's Parking Lot S.E. corner
Leader: Shirley Sturts
664-5318 (please register)
This will be an all day trip to check on spring arrivals. Bring a lunch (see arrival dates in this issue).

Calendar Check Continued...

APRIL 24 SUNDAY

FIELD TRIP: COEUR D'ALENE RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Time: 7:30 AM

Place: Cove Bowl Parking lot

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

(Please Register) We will take I-90 to the Rose Lake Junction and then travel south on Highway 3 to Harrison and Thompson Lake. Our return trip will be by way of Highway 97 around Coeur d'Alene Lake. We should return around 2 PM. We will be looking for returning migrants (see arrival dates in this issue)

APRIL 30 SATURDAY

FIELD TRIP: TUBBS HILL AND BREAKFAST.

Time: 7 AM

Place: City Parking lot near the tennis courts.

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

(Please Register)

We will look for returning song birds as we walk around the hill and then go to breakfast in a downtown restaurant of the groups choice.

May 14 SATURDAY

MIGRATORY BIRD DAY FIELD TRIP: BIRDING BY EAR FOR NOVICES

Time: 7:30 A.M.

Place: I-90 and Rose Lake Jct. in the Country Chef Parking Lot

Leader: Susan Weller 1 208 682-3413 call Shirley 664-5318 if you are interested in a car pool.

We will drive to Wallace and then turn on a dirt road going toward Moon Pass. This will be a great opportunity to learn to know the birds by their song.

OBSERVATION POST

Observers: Jene Badraun (JB), Dan Svingen (DNS), Gertie Hanson (GH), Ron Jurcevich (RJ Scott Robinson (SR) Shirley Sturts (SHS), Judy Waring (JW) Phil Waring (PW) Judy Wicks (JW)



Red-necked Grebe 1 pr Thompson Lake 3/30/94 SHS, PW, JW. Great Blue Heron 5 with at least 3 sitting in nests in Mica Bay 3/13/94 SHS. Tundra Swan 52 Cougar Bay 3/13/94 JDW and 25+

3/11/94 SR. Northern Shoveler 8 (1st seen this year) Thompson Lake 3/30/94 PW. Wood Duck several pair on Thompson Lake 3/30/94 SHS, JW, PW. Common Merganser 14+ on Fernan Lake all spring SHS. Prairie Falcon 1 Rathdrum Prairie mid-Feb. RJ. Killdeer 3 Fernan Creek 3/5/94 SHS. Violet-Green Swallow Fernan Lake 3/5/94 SHS and Blackwell Hill and Rathdrum Prairie 3/14 GH, JB. Rough-winged Swallow 1st seen about 4/1/94 (DNS) Clark's Nutcracker 7-8 Harrison 3/23 & 3/30/94 PW, JW, SHS. Western Bluebird 1st seen 3/2/94 Rathdrum Prairie JB and 50 Kelso Lake area 3/14 PW, JW. Mountain Bluebird 2 Kelso Lake area 3/14/94 PW, JW. Rufous-sided Towhee 1st Rathdrum Prairie 3/2/94 and 2 3/14/94 Kelso Lake JW, PH, and 2 Blackwell hill 3/13/94 GH. Red Crossbill 17 Kelso Lake 3/14 PW, JW.

BOSQUE

Bosque means "Wood" in Spanish. In New Mexico it refers to the greenbelt of riparian woodlands that border rivers and streams such as the Rio Grande River. In a dry landscape where all of the Pueblo Indian cultures share a common deity -- Kokopelli, the water-sprinkler--a bosque is like an oasis to birds and other desert wildlife (Susan Weller see her article Bosque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge in this issue)

**UPLAND SANDPIPERS ---
AND ALL THE REST**
By Gertie Hanson

Educating our children about the importance of providing diverse habitat for wildlife species in north Idaho is of value. But we need to do something faster than that. If the overcutting of private forest land to get top dollar and the destruction of wildlife habitat



for development continues, the children are going to have few species to make decisions about when they grow up. The wholesale destruction is happening all around

us and its in our backyards. Some of us, our friends and our neighbors are responsible for it. Ignorance and greed are prime culprits. A biologist from Idaho Fish and Game says that he and his colleagues refer to what's happening as the "buy, butcher and sell" mentality.

It seems clear that we Audubon members and bird lovers need to do some educating. And it's not the children first! We who know at least something about birds, need to take the responsibility of educating those around us who are ignorant of the needs of wildlife. If the birds are going to survive, it means right here, right now. The birds will pay with their lives for our silence or our allowing false statements to go unchallenged.

Recently, there was a very good example of what is happening here. Thank goodness Audubon and Idaho Fish and game had some input, but there should have been a lot more "educating" going on by every one of us members. A race track on historic upland Sandpiper nesting territory on Rathdrum Prairie near the Washington border was constructed without proper permits. Joe Doellefeld, the owner said in a newspaper account that he had researched the needs of the upland sandpiper and that they migrate from Alaska to Montana, via Canada, missing Idaho. Consequently, there was no need

for him to be concerned about impact of his race track. At the Public Hearing two other race track supporters insisted that sandpipers were found only along shorelines, not in inland prairie grasses, so had no relevance to this race track project. Now that was false testimony. Maybe it was based on ignorance. Nevertheless, a decision was arrived at including those false assertions in that process. It will have a lasting affect on nesting pairs of upland sandpipers.

Sadly, Mr. Doellefeld must not have researched very hard. Historical written records kept by Merrill show that upland sandpipers nested on the prairie in 1897. No doubt, Native Americans would have recollections much earlier than that. A small breeding colony was still there, near Hauser, in 1950 (Levy). Thomas Burleigh recorded them as nesting and rearing young in the early 1950s as well. They were listed as being present on into the 1980s by Larrison and Sonneberg along with the pairs listed for the Spokane Valley. Tom Rogers of Spokane Audubon Society has also kept records on the Valley population. But Dr. Earl Larrison spoke prophetic words concerning the threatened habitat on the Spokane Valley/Rathdrum Prairie upland sandpipers when he concluded with "...where the habitat may yield to the bulldozer."

What about this bird that Joe Doellefeld says isn't there but that written records show that it is. The upland sandpiper also has been know as the upland plover. In comparison to the sandpipers you see running along shorelines of lakes and rivers it is quite a good size bird. On the Rathdrum Prairie it was commonly seen perched on a fence post or telephone pole. It is here on its breeding ground of 1 1/2- 15 acres only for a short time. That would mean that requirements for getting its young raised for a long migration journey must be intense. Human disturbance would make that very difficult. In my own mind, I've compared it to the families in Bosnia, trying to keep food and water on the table while having to face life-threatening situations every time you tried to provide it, with the enemy always lurking near.

Upland Sandpiper ---and all the rest continues....

Sometime in mid summer this resident of the prairie grasslands heads back to the wintering grounds of South America. It flies at high altitudes and ultimately faces loss of habitat when it arrives on the pampas, too.

It seems evident that maintaining breeding habitat on the Rathdrum Prairie and the Spokane Valley is critical to survival of each pair and the 4 young that may possibly survive.

The upland sandpiper's struggle is only one example of what is happening here at record pace due to the ignorance of landowners and decision-makers and greed of those who develop property at the cost to the surrounding and the future. The upland sandpiper and other species we say we value can only survive if we adult humans act responsibly.

The bulldozer of developer Jack Dodge is ripping through the woods on Blackwell Hill. The sloughs and wetland that have provided habitat for so many species are falling to that blade. Hillsides along Cougar Bay and other areas of Coeur d'Alene are slated for large subdivisions. It is happening all over north Idaho and it is all in our backyard. It is the wildlife who call this home who will be destroyed because there is no "someplace else to go." It is our ignorance and greed that will destroy species like the upland sandpiper and others which have less than maximum ability to adapt. It seems like such a little thing to do for the birds we enjoy so much to actively work at educating our friends, neighbors and decision-makers. If we don't do it, no one else will. And you might as well hang up your binoculars!

BOSQUE DEL APACHE WILDLIFE REFUGE

By Susan Weller

Dawn Boy had just begun to paint morning across the eastern sky of the Bosque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico. Greg

and I stood in silent appreciation as the crowning sun gilded the sage-brushed hills, drawing out the shadowy pastels of the desert. Suddenly, a trio of huge creatures wing toward us from the refuge. They are backlit, and could be sandhill cranes. Approaching until nearly upon us, we recognize the birds are white, not gray, their primary flight-feathers rimmed with black--whooping cranes! The whoopers fly low over the car, their enormous image completely filling the frame of my binoculars. Yes! The birds are inaccessible once they leave the refuge in the morning to feed on farmer's fields to the north. After so fortuitous a beginning, we have high hopes for a great day!

We were not disappointed. About 21,000 waterfowl of varying species were present on the refuge. Socorro is home to a festival of cranes each October, and it is easy to see why. We saw most of the wintering population of 12,000 sandhill cranes on a February day when winds were gusting up to 50 miles per hour. It seemed strange to observe birds as tall as I am struggling with the wind. Adding to the general din was a group of nearly 10,000 snow geese. The birds had been disturbed somehow and rose en masse, headed straight for us. The sound of their cries raised as one voice made the hair stand up on the back of our necks

By the end of the afternoon I had added a few birds to my life list: olivaceous cormorant, chihuahuan raven, black-shouldered kite, brown towhee, and of course, whooping crane. If the winds had died down we might have seen a few more song birds. Not only do birds stay hunkered down, but the wind is a deterrent because you cannot hear song birds, which is most helpful in letting you know what is out there-- even if you can't see it.

At about noon we headed toward the OWL Bar and Cafe. There we lunched with our birding companions, Marcie Greenburg of Phoenix, Arizona, and her brother Andy, from Albuquerque. Andy told us the OWL is famous among birders everywhere. After a green chile burger that left a pleasant glow in our mouths and bellies, Greg and I headed off into the dust and wind, toward the Sandia Mountains.

ARRIVAL DATES

This is continued from the March 1994 Newsletter. Sightings from Potlatch north to the Canadian border. I would appreciate records of the first arrival dates for this year. Shirley Sturts 664-5318.

	Median Date	Earliest Date	Location	Observer
Savanna Sparrow	April 12	March 27,1993	Deep Creek	Z.Porga
Yellow-Rumped Warbler	April 21	March 15,1988	Kootenai NWR	L.Napier
White-Crowned Sparrow	April 21	April 12,1989	Cataldo area	S.Weller
Calliope Hummingbird	April 26	April 16,1985	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Nashville Warbler	April 28	April 12,1980	Moscow	E.Larrison
Townsend's Warbler	April 28	April 16,1988	Pend Oreille Lake	R. Burwell
Yellow Warbler	April 30	April 15,1992/3	Spokane R./Kootenai Co.	R.Beeks/S.Robinson
Orange-crowned Warbler	April 30	April 7,1988	Kootenai NWR	J.Reynolds
Brown-headed cowbird	April 30	April 11,1989	Cataldo area	S.Weller
American Bittern	May 2	April 5,1980	Kootenai NWR	P.Sieracki
Bank Swallow	May 2	April 1,1989	Careywood	D.Downs
Rufous Hummingbird	May 3	April 10,1992	Coeur d'Alene	B.Finne
Hammond's Flycatcher	May 3	April 25,1986	Kootenai NWR	L.Napier
Solitary Vireo	May 3	April 21,1980	Selkirk Mts.	P.Sieraki
Willow Flycatcher	May 5	April 28,1981	Hayden Lake	P.Hughes
Sora	May 5	April 15,1985/86	Kootenai NWR	L.Napier
Vaux's Swift	May 5	March 28,1987	CDA River WMA	B.Howard
Common Yellowthroat	May 8	May 1,1985	McArthur Lake	S.Sturts
Dusky Flycatcher	May 10	April 30,1983	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Western Tanager	May 12	April 28,1988	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Black Tern	May 13	May 7,1980	Thompson Lake	A.Bruner
MacGillivray's Warbler	May 13	April 15,1987	Hayden Lake	P.Hughes
Black-chinned Hummingbird	May 14	April 21,1993	Shepherd Lake	P.Cole 1
Spotted Sandpiper	May 14	May 1,1929	Rathdrum Prairie	A.Bent
Cordilleran Flycatcher	May 14	April 27,1992	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Black-headed Grosbeak	May 15	May 7,1992	Spokane River	R.Beeks
Eastern Kingbird	May 17	April 27,1982	Kootenai NWR	L.Napier
Wilson's Warbler	May 17	April 20,1993	Kootenai County	S.Robinson
Lazuli Bunting	May 18	April 26,1992	Clarkfork Field Sta.	G.Hanson
Western Wood-Pewee	May 18	May 3,1978	Moscow	F.Fiske
Red Eyed Vireo	May 18	April 16,1987	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Western Kingbird	May 20	May 14,1988	Potlatch	Z.Porga
Warbling Vireo	May 22	April 16,1987	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
Gray Catbird	May 24	April 20,1992	Squaw Bay, CDA Lake	B.Dorrell
Northern Oriole	May 24	May 12,1993	Thompson Lake	J.Nigh
Swainson's Thrush	May 25	May 2,1987	Blackwell Hill	G.Hanson
American Redstart	May 25	May 16,1987	Hauser Lake	Spokane Audubon Soc.
Olive-sided Flycatcher	May 27	May 13,1992	St. Maries	D.Svingen
Bobolink	May 27	April 15,1988	Kootenai NWR	A.Banks
Nighthawk	June 4	March 30,1993	Rathdrum Prairie	P.Gontz

**COEUR D'ALENE
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: A membership in the National Audubon Society also entitles you to chapter membership in the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society and receipt of the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the chapter newsletter, The Fish Hawk Herald. First time members should make their checks payable to the National Audubon Society and send them to our membership chairman (see address below) if you send your membership check direct to the National Audubon Society data center, please mention you wish to be affiliated with the Coeur d'Alene Chapter and give them the chapter code 7SCH8
New Membership \$20, Regular Membership \$30.

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