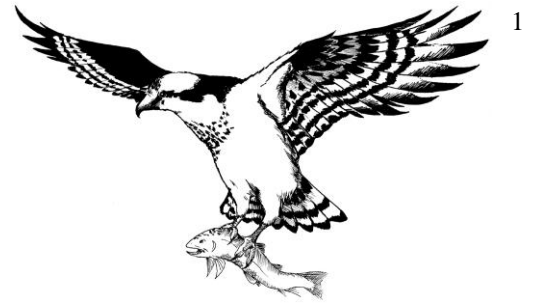


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)

April 2012

Volume 21 Number 8

## THE AGE OF AUDUBON

Kris Buchler

Those of you who attend our regular monthly Audubon meetings may notice that most attendees are in the age bracket of 50 and up. Some may wonder why this is so.



Many of these adults are now empty-nesters or have retired and have more time. Some are new here and are exploring local activities in our community while others are experiencing a reawakening of desires to reconnect with our natural world.

Our chapter has had a faithful core of volunteers who have supported educational activities, conservation and bird monitoring. We have welcomed new members and recently have had renewed interest in field trips and support of our bluebird trails and monitoring.

In the past we have had a few excellent young birders who do what all teenagers do. They eventually discover girls, boys, cars or other passions. We hope that they will renew their birding skills and interests as they mature into adults and remember the nurturing they received from our members.

We have been blessed the last four years with the commitment of Carrie Hugo, who is not in the earlier mentioned age-range and is not retired, an empty-nester or unemployed. What Carrie does have is the interest and professional experience that has injected energy into our organization. As a wildlife biologist, she has a wealth of education and the background to complement all of our endeavors. She enjoys educating and speaking to the public, and has the latest knowledge in the new

technologies that may leave some of us scrambling to understand. These new birding aids change monthly and have greatly enhanced the abilities of all birders to see and hear what nature has to offer. Carrie has also connected us to the various agencies that serve Idaho and educated us in their current projects. We hope that more young adults will join our ranks.

We value all of you who show an interest in our natural world. We hope that you will always encourage any young people who show a similar interest, whether they be your student, a neighbor or a grandchild. They are our future.

In the meantime, we value and appreciate all of you, the time you give and the friendships forged through our Audubon chapter.

### APRIL PROGRAM

**Date:** April 10, Tuesday

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

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

**Speaker:** Dave Leptich

**Program:** "Wildlife Habitat Fundamentals"

Dave has planned a highly interactive discussion where he will ask the audience a series of questions and their answers will guide and fill in the details.

People should come away with a more complex view of wildlife habitat and a framework from which to understand and interpret management decisions and actions.

Dave is a Regional Habitat Biologist with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Resources from the University of Idaho, and a Master of Science Degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine.

## MARCH SWAN TRIP

Lisa Hardy



### Tundra Swan – Photographed by Bill Linn

The swan field trip on March 10 tallied 3000 Tundra Swans, more or less, from Canyon Marsh to Swan Lake. It was difficult to pin an exact number down. The birds were seen to be moving from one marsh to another, in drifts of fluttering white. We started at Canyon Marsh, where we found large numbers of waterfowl in addition to 680 swans, mostly Northern Pintail and American Widgeon. Barrow's Goldeneye and Canvasback were much admired there in the excellent light with the sun at our backs.

At Lane Marsh, we noted the low water level for this time of year. About 600 swans were present on our morning stop; later in the day, there were only about 50 swans present.

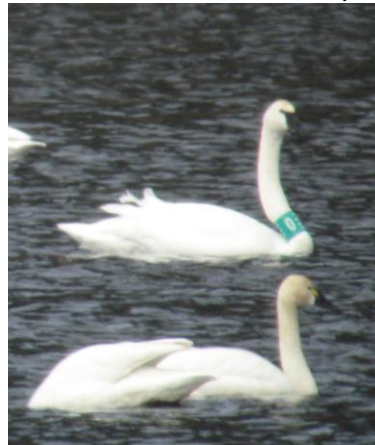
We found no swans at Schlepp Ranch, ironic because most of the ranch area is a conservation easement managed to provide safe feeding for the swans. Schlepp instead hosted thousands of ducks and Canada Geese. Here we found the usual dabblers plus Northern Shoveler, a Eurasian Widgeon, and a "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal in amongst its American brethren. Only a handful of these latter two come through our area each spring.

The Eurasian and American populations of Green-winged Teal are considered two subspecies of the same species by the American Ornithological Union, but separate species by almost everyone else. It is a good possibility that the Eurasian form, *Anas crecca crecca* and the American form, *A. c. carolinensis*, will be split into separate species by the AOU in the future. While the American Green-winged teal is widespread across North America, the Eurasian birds show up only in small numbers,

mostly along the coasts, having strayed from their usual Old World range.

There are only two accepted records for Eurasian teal in Idaho to-date, but they are probably more frequent visitors to our wetlands in migration than the records would suggest because of their similar appearance to the abundant American form. The best field mark of the Eurasian form is a horizontal white scapular line above the gray flanks, instead of the vertical white line on the side of the breast shown by the American form. Eurasian birds are most likely to be found if one is actively hunting for them, checking the vertical white stripe on every drake Green-winged Teal that appears.

After the Schlepp Ranch, we ate lunch and walked the trail at Medimont, then backtracked to the marshes along Killarney Lake Road. The Killarney Marshes, along with Lane Marsh, are amongst the most heavily contaminated with lead-bearing mine tailings from the Silver Valley mines, and there we found most of the swans we tallied for the day - about 2100. Amongst these, we found five collars, and were interested to note that four of the five had been seen in our area in past years.



### A Banded Swan Photograph by Lisa Hardy

These four birds were banded on their breeding grounds in Alaska, specifically, 1) near Bethel on the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta, 2) and 3) on the north Alaska Peninsula, and 4) at the Buckland River near Kotzebue Sound. The swan research conducted by the Alaska Science Center of the USGS has found

that the birds we see in spring migration have wintered in northern California, and make a wide detour inland over our area on their way to coastal Alaska.

Participants: Bob Brunn, Kris and Ed Buchler, Janet Callen, Mike Clabby, Roland Craft, Mary Deasey, Lisa Hardy, Bonnie Hensley, John Hopper and his grand-daughter Grace, Nancy Mertz, Jim Stebbins and Matt Thurley.

## THINGS THAT GO 'HOOT' IN THE NIGHT

*From Bird Studies of Canada - March 23, 2012*

All across Canada adventurous volunteers are getting ready to conduct owl surveys. The Canadian Nocturnal Owl Survey <http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/natowls/> is a



**Barred Owl -  
Photographed by Wayne  
Tree**

roadside survey conducted by volunteer Citizen Scientists, primarily targeting nocturnal, forest-breeding owls (e.g. Barred Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl). The target owl species differ by region. In some cases, special protocols have been developed to sample poorly-monitored species (e.g. Flammulated Owls in British Columbia).

The national Nocturnal Owl Survey operates through a network of regional surveys that contribute data to a central database. Regional partners include government and non-government organizations. The main objectives of the survey are: to determine the relative abundance and distribution of owls in Canada; to monitor changes in owl populations over time; to determine habitat associations; and to investigate the impacts of habitat change on owls.



**Northern Saw-whet Owl  
Photographed by Wayne  
Tree**



**Boreal Owl -  
Photographed by  
Wayne Tree**

Because spring arrives on the west coast earlier than in other parts of Canada, some surveyors there have already completed their owl surveys. Timing varies across the country, but most surveys take place on a single evening in April or early May – a time when owls are most vocal. The owl survey is one of Bird Studies Canada's most popular programs, because it provides a unique glimpse into the lives of these mysterious nocturnal species.



### **ADOPT-A HIGHWAY SPRING CLEAN-UP** It's time for spring cleaning of our section of Highway 95!

**Date/Time:** Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m.

**Place:** Meet at Mica Grange Hall for donuts, coffee and road assignments.

**Activity:** Pick-up will take about 2 to 2 1/2 hours, depending on number of volunteers. Wear long pants & sleeves; work gloves are advisable. Otherwise, dress for the weather.

Advance sign-up required at next Chapter meeting. If in doubt, sign up and cancel later by notifying Mike or Val Zagar at 208-819-5115.

### **BIG YEAR MARCH ADDITIONS**

#### **Benewah County**

Donni Moen reported:

Northern Shoveler - March 1

Tundra Swan - March 3

Varied Thrush - March 7

Gray Jay – March 7

#### **Kootenai County**

Lisa Hardy reported:

Marsh Wren – March 7 – Cataldo area

Shirley Sturts reported:

Spotted Towhee – March 12 – Fernan Lake

White-breasted Nuthatch – March 27

Kris Buchler and Gary Worthington (birder from Boise) reported:

Say's Phoebe – March 23 – Fernan Lake

Western Bluebird – March 23 – Fernan Lake

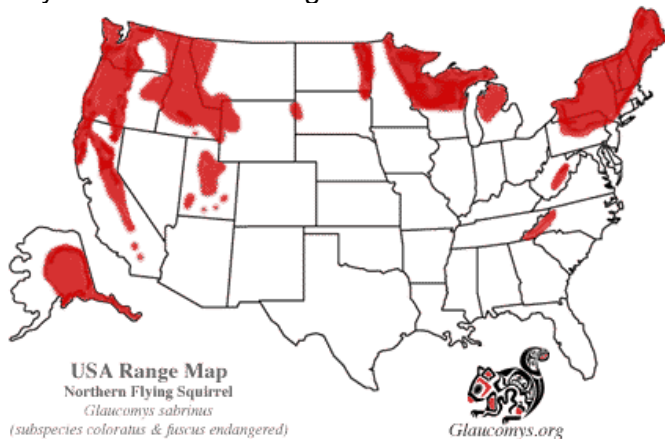
Cassin's Finch (Kris) – March 28 – Armstrong Hill

## FANTASTIC FLYING SQUIRRELS!

Carrie Hugo

Because these rodents are nocturnal, most people don't even know that we have them here in North Idaho. And even though they don't actually fly—they glide, long distance travel is not out of reach for them. "Flights" of up to 295 feet have been recorded! When the flying squirrel lands after a glide, it often will move sideways to the opposite side of the tree to escape potential predators that may be in pursuit.

Flying squirrels are the oldest of the modern squirrels. Evidence of flying squirrels in the fossil record dates back 38 million to 55 million years ago. Tree squirrels did not come on the scene until 30 million years ago. According to Wikipedia, there are 44 species of flying squirrels gliding around the world, the largest being a resident of Pakistan's Kashmir Region. The woolly flying squirrel has a body length of 18-24 inches long. In contrast, the northern flying squirrel found in our region reaches only 10-14.5 inches long.



Because flying squirrels are strictly nocturnal, you are only likely to encounter one if it has moved into one of your bird houses, or if you cut down a tree that has a cavity in it that is occupied by one or more flying squirrels. When the sun sets, they emerge from their cozy nests and begin the hunt for mushrooms, insects, tree sap, lichens, and bird eggs. They will cache away some lichens and seeds in tree cavities for tough times when mushrooms are covered in a blanket of snow. In winter, they may gather together in one cavity to keep warm because they do not hibernate.

The northern flying squirrel nests in holes in trees, preferring large-diameter trunks and dead trees. Tree cavity nests play an integral role in the life of  
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the flying squirrel. Flying squirrels are secondary cavity nesters - they do not create cavities, but rely upon either primary cavity nesters who have abandoned the cavity they excavated, or naturally-occurring cavities for sleeping, resting, eating, rearing and over-wintering. They sometimes use cavities created by [woodpeckers](#).

Continued on page 5



## FANTASTIC FLYING SQUIRRELS!

Continued from page 4

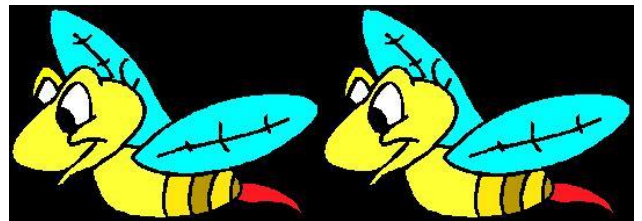
In the Pacific Northwest and Atlantic Southeast, outside nests (called dreys) made from found plant materials, are commonly employed during warmer months. Drey nests are often employed by flying squirrels during hot summer months. In the Pacific Northwest, the northern flying squirrel employs the common Bryoria lichen as the main construction material for its drey nests. There are one or two entrance/exit holes in a drey, and they are usually found on the bottom, a location which keeps rainfall out. The drey is constructed such that rough-hewn materials are woven on the outside, with the material becoming finer in texture towards the middle. The very center consists of very finely shredded material. Dreys are subject to the harshness of the environment and require constant upkeep to remain water and predator-resistant. Some dreys have been observed to be in use for over 10 years by generations of squirrels, although the average drey may be used only one or two years before it is abandoned and left to the elements. Suitable nest sites tend to be more abundant in [old-growth forests](#), and so do the squirrels. Except when rearing young, the squirrels shift from nest to nest frequently.



They often share nests. In one nest, over 50 individuals were found co-habiting, although usually nests contain 2-5 individuals. The sharing of nests by flying squirrels is important in maintaining body temperature in the winter, as flying squirrels do not hibernate. In all but the most severe weather conditions, the squirrels are active year-round.

Home range size for females is about 10 acres, while males have a home range half again as large at about 15 acres. In the Pacific Northwest, the squirrels breed once per year, in May or June. Litter sizes vary from 2-4 young. These little ones are weaned at 60 days and independent at around 90 days.

Barred, Great Horned, and Western Screech Owls, Northern Goshawks, and Red-tailed Hawks are some of the documented predators of the northern flying squirrel. Mammals that are known to prey upon this rodent include the marten, otter, weasel, fox, bobcat, lynx, and wolf. While there are two endangered subspecies of the northern flying squirrel in the Eastern US, the remainder of the distribution of this unique species appears to be secure. And while they apparently are not rare, count yourself lucky if you ever get to see one of these secretive animals!



## KOOTENAI ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE (KEA)

### APRIL CALENDAR

#### Thursday, April 5th @ Noon

KEA Lunch & Learn: Friends of the Clearwater  
The Iron Horse Restaurant

#### Thursday, April 19th @ Noon

KEA Lunch & Learn: George Wuerthner, Ecologist,  
Photographer and Author  
The Iron Horse Restaurant

#### Friday, April 20th @6:30

Earth Day Gala  
The Hayden Lake Country Club  
[www.kealliance.org/earth-day-gala/](http://www.kealliance.org/earth-day-gala/)

#### Sunday, April 22nd Noon-3:00

Earth Day Fair  
Coeur d'Alene Library Community Room  
[www.cdaeearthday.org](http://www.cdaeearthday.org)

American Bird Conservancy newsrelease - March 2012

## NEW VOLUNTARY WIND GUIDELINES WILL FAIL TO PROTECT BIRDS

### DOI Rejection of ABC's Petition Calling for Mandatory Standards Shortsighted

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/120323.html>



(Washington, D.C., March 23, 2012) American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has called the final, voluntary wind guidelines released today

by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) unenforceable, and charged that they will do little to protect millions of birds from the negative impacts of wind energy.

"ABC supports wind power when it is ['bird-smart.'](#) Unfortunately, voluntary guidelines will result in more lawsuits, more bird deaths, and more government subsidies for bad projects, instead of what America needs: true green and bird-safe wind energy," said Kelly Fuller, Wind Campaign Coordinator for ABC.

"The United States has had voluntary guidelines since 2003, and yet preventable bird deaths at wind farms keep occurring. This includes thousands of Golden Eagles thought to have died at Altamont Pass in California, and just recently, more than 500 songbirds reportedly killed on two nights last fall in West Virginia," said Fuller.

"Years ago, we thought hydro power was the 'green' energy of the future, so we rushed ahead and built scores of dams. Over 1,000 of those dams have now been torn down because of their serious impacts to the environment. That same blind, shortsighted rush is happening with wind power. We aren't learning from our past mistakes. History is simply repeating itself," said Fuller.

In December, with the help of Meyer, Glitzenstein and Crystal (MGC), a Washington, D.C.-based public interest law firm, ABC formally petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to establish a mandatory project permitting system (a process  
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that would ensure that wind farms were well-sited, operated, and mitigated). If adopted, this system would prevent the most egregious developments while allowing relatively benign developments to proceed in conjunction with certain mitigations.

However, DOI today also rejected this petition. Had it been adopted, the proposal would have protected birds and provided legal certainty that wind developers in compliance with a permit would not have been subjected to criminal or civil penalties for violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The petition is available [here](#).

"For four years, FWS has been attempting to fix the voluntary guidelines problem with band aids. This is in spite of the fact that more than [150 organizations](#) and 20,000 concerned citizens have shown their support for mandatory standards or are on record asking the Department of Interior for mandatory standards, not voluntary guidelines. Included in this group are the Sierra Club, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Birding Association, and many state Audubon societies," Fuller said.

"The federal government is seeking to promote an energy sector in a manner that is in violation of its own laws. The rejection of the effective alternative proposed in our petition in favor of non-binding guidelines is disappointing -- for many years now, voluntary guidelines have proven to be completely ineffective. All the government has done today, despite the groundswell of support for mandatory standards, is come up with yet another version of a failed strategy," said Shruti Suresh, an attorney at MGC.

"Switching to the project permit system proposed in our petition would have fulfilled the agency's mandate to protect migratory birds and keep them from becoming endangered while still enabling wind power development to continue," Fuller said.

In 2009, [FWS estimated that 440,000 birds](#) were being killed each year by collisions with wind turbines, and recently included this figure in the agency's 2013 budget [request](#) to Congress. In the absence of clear, legally enforceable regulations, the massive expansion of wind power in the United States will likely result in the deaths of more than one million birds each year by 2030. Further, wind energy projects are also expected to adversely impact almost 20,000 square miles of terrestrial habitat, and another 4,000 sq miles of marine habitat. ***(Editors Note: Underlined words have a link on our Website)***

## SPRING FIELD TRIPS 2012

**PLEASE REGISTER:** Participants should contact the trip leader at least 24 hours in advance of the field trip to find out if the meeting place/time or destination has been changed.



### PLEASE NOTE:

The following list shows field trips planned by the Coeur d' Alene Audubon Society.

Trips may be

added with short notice so check the website often. **Trips also may be cancelled at any time due to bad weather, too few participants, or the lack of a leader.** Contact the leader for more information and to reserve a spot. If you are unable to register before the schedule deadline, yet want to attend, be sure to check with the leader to ensure the trip is still on. Leaders are club volunteers and are not compensated. Field trips are free. However, if you carpool you will be expected to compensate the driver for your share of vehicle costs.

### BLUEBIRD TRAIL ORIENTATION, CLEANING, AND REPAIR

**Date:** April 3, Tuesday

**Alternate Dates:** ( in case of bad weather)

April 4, Wednesday or April 5, Thursday

**Leaders:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318 and  
Kris Buchler 664-4739, Roland Craft 457-8894

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Meet:** K-Mart parking lot, south side.

**Please Register with leaders so we can call you for date and time changes.**

Sign up if you are interested in helping to monitor our two bluebird trails that have been nurtured and maintained for more than a decade! Helping with the effort is guaranteed to be fun! You get to see bluebirds as well as other cavity nesting species up close and you help provide important information to NestWatch, a program of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Mountain Bluebird Trails [www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com](http://www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com)

Age or experience is irrelevant.

## MICA BAY SURVEY

**Date:** April 10, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

**Leader:** Shirley Sturts, 664-5318

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. (**Note time change**)

**Meet:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

**Activity:** We spend about 2-3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome. We will help you with identification skills.

### LITTLE PEND OREILLE WILDLIFE REFUGE

**Date:** April 28, 2012 (Date may change but we will notify participants)

**Leader:** Roland Craft, 457-8894

**Meet:** Super 1 grocery store in POST FALLS, southwest corner of parking lot.

**Time:** 7:30 a.m.

This will be a full day trip and a refuge employee will be our guide

### ILLER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

**Date:** May 5, Saturday

**Leader:** Dick Cripe

**Meet:** K-Mart parking lot, south side.

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

Easy hike in riparian and mixed forest hillside, looking for neotropical birds. Half day – bring water and snack. Iller creek is just beyond Dishman Hills in Spokane Valley.

### ADOPT-A HIGHWAY SPRING CLEAN-UP

**Date:** May 12, Saturday - See page 3 for details

### MISSOULA BIRDING TRAILS AND MOISE BISON RANGE

**Dates:** May 19 and 20, Saturday-Sunday

**Leader:** Janet Callen, 664-1085

[jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com](mailto:jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com)

This will be a two-day trip. On the first day, we will travel to Missoula, MT, where we will explore some of the 14 sites along the Missoula Valley Birding and Nature Trail. Many of these include hikes of various lengths. The next day we will head north to the Moise Bison Range and Nine-Pipes NWR. If time permits and participants are interested, we may visit Wild Horse Island State Park on Flathead Lake.

