

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaaudubon.org

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Upcoming Events

Chapter Zoom Meeting April 11

The regular monthly chapter meeting will be held virtually 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 11. The program will be "Monarch Butterflies." See "President's Message" at Pages 3-4 for details on how to attend and programs for other upcoming meetings.

Annual Highway Cleanup Set for April 29

The Chapter's yearly clean-up day for its section of US 95's "Adopt a Highway" program will be held on April 29. Ellie Emm is organizing the event, as she has for many years.

Members who would like to participate should meet at the Mica Grange, 7465 W. Kidd Island Road at 8 a.m. where they can receive some treats and be issued safety vests, bags, grippers, and assignments.

Clean-up crews generally work in teams of twos, and if 16 or so members participate the work should be successfully completed in a couple of hours. Signup sheets for the cleanup will be available that day or call or text Ellie Emm at 970-744-0104.

In Memoriam: Keith Sturts

Keith Sturts, avid birder and husband of former newsletter editor Shirley Sturts, passed away March 8 of natural causes. He was 86.

Keith was also a computer enthusiast. He worked behind the scenes over many years to create several birding data bases. He developed a searchable index to all the articles in prior *Fish*

Hawk Herald newsletters and set up a data base using historical information dating back to the 1800s. It's on the Idahobirds.net website and in use by the Idaho Fish and Game Department.

Keith and Shirley were married in 1958, after his graduation from the University of Idaho. Shirley received a Bachelors in Education and Keith earned a Masters in Education the next year.

Keith was a junior high and high school teacher in the Coeur d'Alene School District for a decade and he and Shirley also taught for a year in Verdun, France. He came back to the States and earned a Master's degree from Eastern Washington University. Keith was employed as Head Librarian at North Idaho College, a position he held until he retired.

Keith loved the outdoors and was an avid backpacker and hiker, completing most of the Pacific Coast Trail route. He and Shirley were members of the Spokane Mountaineers and summited Mt. Whitney.

Keith is survived by his wife Shirley and daughter Carrie Sturts Dossick and son Kim Sturts, both of Seattle, and his sister, Diane Sturts. Carrie is a professor at the University of Washington and Kim is Executive Chef for Aegis Living on Mercer Island.

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BIRDING TRIP TO SKAGIT VALLEY

Poetry By Marilyn Robertson

A thousand Swans; No, many more.
After such a start, what else will we see?
A pond is covered with Snow Geese; to count them
would be a chore.
After those, look for EACH bird;
be sure of the species, that is the key.

Eagles, Eagles everywhere-
I never thought I'd see so many.
Then-Short-Eared Owls; is that a pair?
Among those Widgeons, look for Eurasian.
When we finally find one, add 'Thanks'
to your prayer.

Yes, that IS a Pintail-what a beauty!
I forgot a Bufflehead had SO much white.
He nearly glows on his tummy and back.
Of real good looks, he does not lack.

Of course, there was some rain.
Birds still appeared for us to see.
Naming each bird challenged my brain.
Were we looking for drama and color?
Harlequins were there.
They preferred pounding waves, without a care.
But Oystercatchers made us ALL stare.
Is that bird right out of a cartoon?

I won't try to name each bird I saw.
Fifty- five species are on my own list.
There were more that I missed.
Also, there were old friends and new.
Helpful hints and laughs, more than a few.
We had a great trip, with a WONDERFUL
LEADER and a fine crew.

Skagit Tour Slideshow Recap

Submitted by Peggy Albertson

The program for the March membership meeting, assembled by Ralph Kerr, included wonderful slides of the Skagit field trip held over President's Day weekend. Contributors to the show were Mark Launder, Ted Smith and Peggy Albertson. Antje Crip opened the evening's event

with a heartfelt reading of Marilyn Robertson's poem "Birding Tribe to Skagit Valley" (see left).

"Birding Trip" may also be viewed at <http://www.cdadudubon.org/fieldtrips.html>.

Thanks to Marilyn for the poem and to Webmaster Patty Beyer for posting it and additional photos from the field trip at <http://www.cdaadudubon.org/photogallery.html>.

The camaraderie of our Audubon participants, along with the beauty of Mt. Vernon, Skagit Valley, Rosario Beach Deception Pass were also well documented in the slideshow.

Bird highlights of the trip were Short-eared owls, massive numbers of Snow Geese and Trumpeter Swans, Northern Harrier, Pigeon Guillemot, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatcher, Surf Scooters, Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe and three species of Cormorants.

Ralph presented photographic documentation of what became of a Short-eared owl when it was attacked by 9 bald eagles. Ralph also showed the audience the distinguishing marks of the Pigeon Guillemot and how it differs from the Black Guillemot.

The Chapter Field Trip Chair, Ted Smith, was unable to attend the March meeting but indicated that he is putting together a robust local field trip schedule for the future!



Scene from Skagit Trip: Trumpeter Swans soar above a gigantic gathering of Snow Geese
Photo by Peggy Albertson

President's Message

Greetings Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Birders.

Welcome to Spring. Have you noticed your friends or strangers, whether it be at your home or in the grocery store, talking about how enjoyable it is to see sunny days and warmer temperatures? Spring is a great season of the year, and for birders it is a special time as the bird migration progresses and we welcome our avian visitors again.

Speaking of bird migration, you may be interested in a virtual tour of the Sandhill Crane migration in Nebraska. I have not watched it but wanted to reference it in case you want to see it. If you want to search for it, do a search for it as Iain Nelson Audubon Center @ Rowe Sanctuary. The virtual tour was broadcast on March 13, 2023. I don't know if it is still available for viewing but it may be worth a search.

The Spotted Owl has come up again for possible conservation action. I won't try to repeat all of the information here but if you would like to read the article, it is in the Coeur d'Alene Press February 23, 2023 issue. For any of you who subscribe to the Press electronically, it is an easy lookup. If you don't have the newspaper available you might do an internet search for the Spotted Owl in California. I don't guarantee you will find it but it is worth a try.

You may be aware that the issue of changing the Audubon name due to some of the history attributed to Mr. Audubon. Recently, Audubon National voted to retain the Audubon name.

The Audubon Program for April 11, 2023 will be via Zoom. We will not meet in person. The reason is the program will be presented by Rachel Taylor who will be presenting from Salt Lake City. We will begin the program at 7:00 PM (PDT) and then have our business meeting after the presentation. The Zoom link is below. Ms. Taylor will be hosting the meeting rather than our having a local host, so this login is different than the one we have previously used for our meetings.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02.web.zoom.us/j/82565840541?pwd=VW1UVGt2L2R6NHpQVD1xdjRURiRVUT09>

Meeting ID: 825 6584 0541

Passcode: 457042

Please make note of the link and/or login information.

Be watching your email because there may be additional details to be worked out as well as we will broadcast the information again before the meeting date.

The May meeting will be held as usual at the church. The subject of the May 9 meeting will be a discussion of the future of our Audubon Chapter. Please be prepared to "brainstorm" ideas to attract some younger members to integrate for the foundation of the Chapter into the future. I encourage all of you that can attend to do so. We enjoy the experience and contributions of our long standing members and want to add to both for the future.

The June meeting is our annual meeting and is ordinarily a picnic. According to the By-laws it is also the date to take the final vote on the selection of officers presented by the nominating committee. The location details will be communicated in future newsletters.

On the lighter side, would you like a good laugh, at my expense? You know that I enjoy

wildlife photography. One of the subjects I look for first in the spring is the Tundra Swans at the chain lakes. When I went there, I was pleased to find some swans had arrived, and even more pleased to find some close to the road. I began to photograph the swans. The light was perfect and the swans didn't spook and fly away. After a few frames, I began to think something wasn't quite right. I found out I was photographing Swan Decoys. Go ahead and laugh. I sat there and laughed at myself.

Idaho Fish and Game had set out some decoys in an effort to live trap swans to take blood samples to test for lead content. Unfortunately several swans die each year poisoned by the lead residue in the shallow lake bottoms from which they feed.

Until next month, enjoy the spring days and have a great month.

Good Birding
Ralph Kerr

Is it Live or Is it Memorex?

"Calm" Swans Can Fool Even the Best Birders



Photo by Ralph Kerr

Test Your Avian Awareness: Climate Change Bird Casualties

Some bird species have gone extinct due to overhunting (the passenger pigeon and dodo bird) or were seriously threatened by toxic chemicals (DDT thinned eggshells in raptors). Now, climate change poses a wider threat to the survival of wild birds. Answers, page 3.

- According to the Audubon Society, what percentage of North American birds are at risk of extinction because of climate change?
A. 20% B. 40% C. 75% D. 95%
- Which of the hummingbirds listed below has been identified as particularly susceptible to climate change threats?
A. Ruby-throated B. Rufous C. Anna's D. Black-chinned
- Ducks Unlimited helps lessen the effects of climate change on game-bird waterfowl by
A. Lobbying for clean and renewable energy sources. B. Opposing suburban sprawl in rural areas C. Supporting indigenous groups fighting against Amazon deforestation. D. Helping to fund wetlands restoration projects
- In the past 50 years, the number of birds in North America has decreased by:
A. 10 million B. 50 million C. 100 million D. 3 billion
- Some mountain birds have responded to warming temperatures of climate change by:
A. Moving to higher elevations
B. Increasing their body size C. Acquiring greater immunity to viruses D. Decreasing the length of their wingspans
- Scientists have identified the following changes in some birds' behavior because of climate change:
A. Nesting and laying eggs later in the season B. Beginning autumn migrations sooner. C. Failing to migrate at all

7. Widespread, longer-lasting drought caused by climate change means migratory birds:
- A. Must travel greater distances between rest stops
 - B. May encounter unexpected frigid temperatures during their migrations
 - C. Are more vulnerable to predators
 - D. All of the above.
8. Drought conditions exacerbated by climate change have resulted in the spread of "cheat grass" in the Great Basin. This invasive plant is highly flammable and has been linked to significant losses of habitat for what vulnerable bird species?
- A. Sage Grouse
 - B. Meadowlark
 - C. Red-winged blackbird.
 - D. Ring-necked pheasant
9. Elk move farther up in elevation to browse as temperatures increase. What kinds of birds are particularly hard-hit by this development?
- A. Various species of geese
 - B. Migratory songbirds
 - C. Hummingbirds
 - D. Mallards
10. Coastal bird species have been dramatically affected as the climate warms. In 2015-16 a long-term marine heat wave in the northeast Pacific:
- A. Decimated a Magellanic penguin colony
 - B. Caused hungry seagulls to attack tourists on Oregon beaches
 - C. Resulted in starvation deaths of nearly 1 million common murres.
 - D. Drowned sandpipers in Northern California.

The Common Murre, often called a
"Flying Penguin"



Historic Columbia Condor Featured in "Inlander" Cover Story

A fascinating article by condor enthusiast and writer Jack Nesbit, entitled "The Beautiful Buzzards of the Columbia," was the cover story of the March 2-8 *Inlander*.

Nesbit's historical piece recounts the last known sighting of a condor in Washington by naturalist and avid birder C. Hart Merriam. It includes photos of the spectacular bird, which was featured in an exhibit at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane.

At the time of Merriam's 1897 sighting (he didn't report it right away because he knew it would cause a stir), the last condor seen in the area had been spotted over fifty years earlier.

Nesbit recounts how a Philadelphia ornithologist named John Kirk Townsend shot two condors in the Pacific Northwest in 1834. His larger specimen is believed to be the model for John James Audubon's portrait of the bird. Audubon had never seen a living condor.

Nesbit, a Spokane author, has written about Northwest condors in two books—*Visible Bones* and the upcoming *The Language of Birds*.

Interested readers can access the article through the *Inlander's* online archives.

Last May, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service website, the Yurok Tribe in Northern California successfully released a pair of condors in Redwood National and State Parks.

The Tribe undertook this work because of its deep historical and cultural connections to the "Prey-go-neesh," as the Yurok people call the bird. The Yurok have established the northernmost condor release area to date.

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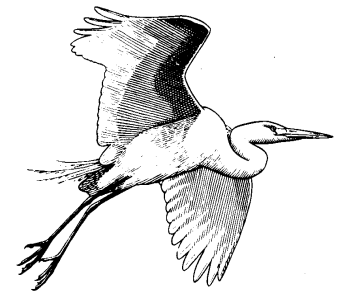
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