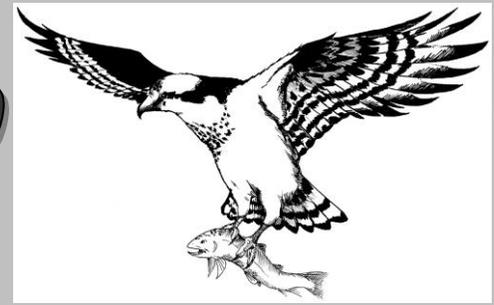


THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

December 2001

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

Visit our website: www.cdaaudubon.org

COMING EVENTS

BOARD MEETING

DATE: January 15, 2002, Tuesday

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Mountain West Bank

DECEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: December 10, Monday

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: First Presbyterian Church,
521 Lakeside

PROGRAM: "Christmas Bird Count ID" Susan Weller and Kris Buchler will challenge and review your identification skills to prepare you for the three Christmas Bird Counts coming up in December and early January. Several special items will be raffled, including the new "Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior", (a \$45.00 value). Christmas cookies and beverages for everyone!

2001 YARD LIST CHALLENGE



Fuertes' Eastern Bird Collection

How is your yard-list coming along this year? You have one more month to whip it into shape. On January 1, tally up your species and submit to:

Lisa Hardy

basalt@earthlink.net

2153B Old River Road

Kingston, Idaho 83839

You will need to submit a list of species and information about your location. Include a street address to locate your yard on a generalized map, note whether you are in city limits, urban, suburban or rural, and whether you have a water view. Feel free to offer additional comments on your location or on the species observed. Remember, your list should include all birds seen or heard *from* your yard, so you can include, for example, the geese that flew over at 3000', or the owl you heard one night in the neighbor's yard.

Look for the results in the February *Fish Hawk Herald*

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS AND POTLUCK

Beginning and experienced birders are all welcome and needed to participate in our three local Christmas Bird Counts. You can join a team in the field or count at your feeder if you live within the count circle. See "Field Trips" on page 3 of this newsletter for more details and numbers to call for signing up.

Christmas Potluck After the Dec 15 Birdcount--Please Come!!

You are all invited to come and share potluck whether you have "counted" birds or not. The sign-up sheet will be at the Dec 10th meeting or please call Jan at 667-6209. Bring your own beverage and dish with servers to share: appetizers, salads, desserts, bread and butter. Jan is making lasagna, both vegetarian and traditional. Place settings will be provided. We start at 4 p.m. Hope to see you!!

BIRD AND WHALE WATCHING - MAGDALENA BAY, BAJA, CALIFORNIA

The dates have been changed to February 9-15 and the special Audubon price deadline has been extended to December 14th for the Bird and Whale Watching trip to Magdalena Bay off Baja California. See information in the November Newsletter or call Nancy Mertz at Sea Kayak Adventures (765-3116).

MISTER STELLER COMES TO STAY

And grants me an honorary place
within the jay clan

Continued from the November Newsletter

Susan Weller

Photograph by Susan Weller



15 August

Jay is doing well outside and spent his first night out of the enclosure. He has taken a liking to the greenhouse. This concerns me as I found Pine Siskin feathers on the ground in front of the door. There is a kitty door in the greenhouse and he uses it to enter the space sometimes. I leave the window open this time of year, and I really wish he would use it more to enter and exit. A chipmunk also likes the greenhouse, so maybe he found the siskin on the ground already dead. I arranged the pots and trays so that a predator can't lurk in the shadows.

My chickens roosted in the greenhouse in the winter and seemed to find it adequate shelter against the storm. Jay likes it because the potting benches allow him to perch at a height just above my waist, so if I bend over a little, we can see eye to eye. He hops, skips, and jumps the entire length of the benches and screeches to a halt in front of

me. That way, he can croon and chortle to me as an equal.

I suspect Jay may be the one dragging the dead siskins into the greenhouse - as now there are several. (I hope he isn't killing them, but that would be on par with typical jay feeding habits). I find little rocks, and discarded wrapping off of spent fireworks, odd tidbits of both rusted and shiny metal, clumps of colorful moss and lichens. When I examine these items he runs over immediately, lays his crest back, and picks up the treasures with his beak and presents them to me. Sometimes he trades one for a morsel of food.

Later...

Lazarus lost his fight today-he had been feeling worse and worse. He had not eaten in nearly a week. During the last few nights he slept on my pillow wrapped tightly around my head, purring loudly. It was odd because he always sleeps next to, or on, Greg. The fluid infusions were both painful and nerve wracking for him so I stopped them day before yesterday. He wanted to be left alone and communicated that to me in no uncertain terms. Lazzie died in our arms as we sat on the bedroom carpet. The vet had administered a sedative to ease his pain. He died in the same room where, laying on Greg's warm belly, he was once brought back to life, after his mother abandoned him to a freezing March morning when only hours old. He has come full circle, but Lazarus will not rise again.

Jay followed us as we carried Lazzie's body up to our pet cemetery in the woods. Jay watched silently from atop a snowberry bush as we wrapped the body in an old comforter and buried him with a few of his favorite cat toys. Jay then flew

over our heads as we walked back to the house.

Continued in the January Newsletter

INTERPRETIVE PANEL HAS NEW HOME

Kris Buchler

November 12 was a school holiday, but nine high school students chose to spend the morning in service to the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society. Randall Butt of Idaho Parks and Recreation had alerted me to the fact that BLM had an extra interpretive panel at Mineral Ridge that had no artwork. Terry Kincaid said they had come up short on the art panels and we were welcome to the base. With the help of Terry, the students and direction of Del Cameron, the heavy panel was moved to the site of our "Adopt a Wetlands" sign at Mica Bay.

We are very grateful for the time, sweat and vehicle use of George Saylor's Coeur d' Alene High School students, Brad Biddle, Willy Rhodes, Stacy Crandall, Megan Pingree and another student who came along for the fun. Pam Gomes' students from Lake City High School, Nathan Conley, Joe Kubista, Kelly McElhenney and Josh McKain, provided much of the muscle power. In fact, Josh nearly disappeared into a hole he was digging for the support posts. Some of these students also did a little cleaning up of our trail to the viewing platform.

The next stage is choosing the subject and artists for the panel. With luck and planning, we hope to have it completed before spring.

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Leader ahead of time.
 on the trip.
 if the trip time or location is changed or if the trip is canceled.
 (renter of the car) \$5.00 - all day trips \$3.00 - 1/2 day trips.
 radios to communicate between cars. If the radios are used we are asking
 for a \$1.00 toward batteries.

MICA BAY SURVEY

on 16 and 17, Mondays / 9:00 a.m.
 (Fairmont Loop) and Highway 95
 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739
 for about 3 hours twice a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area.
 Come to join us.

HAYDEN LAKE

Sunday/ 8:00 a.m.
 - behind Fast Burger
 664-4808 or basalt@earthlink.net
 hosts interesting winter visitors, such as Long-tailed Duck and
 view the lake from several vantagepoints, and probably walk a bit,
 if possible. This is a half-day trip, followed by an optional lunch at a local

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

on Tuesday, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.
 north end where River Road changes to Rosenberry Drive
 (call Shirley 664-5318 to leave message for Lynn)
 for fowl and gulls along the Spokane River.
 They will likely be found feeding in the Ponderosa Pine trees.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES

Fee of \$5.00 for counters in the field. There is no fee for feeder
 contributions to the National Audubon Society to help pay for expenses involved
 in analyzing and publishing the results. In addition we ask you to help
 cover the cost - \$5.00 full day, \$3.00 half day.

Coeur d'Alene - Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318
 at Michael D's Eatery, Lake Coeur d'Alene Drive
 and Jan Severtson -1364 Fairmont Loop Road - RSVP Jan at 667-6209.

Indian Mountain - Compiler: Don Heikkila 589-3349
 with a search team.
 at Don Heikkila on O'Gara Road east of Harrison. RSVP Don at 589-3349 .
 664-5318

Hayden Lake - Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318
 at the Fish Hawk's Roost-Hayden Lake
 and the team brings a salad and something to drink and share the cost
 of the trip. The date will be announced at breakfast that morning.

**THE PART-TIME
 NATURALIST - MIXED
 FLOCKS**

Lisa Hardy

A winter walk on a raw, gray day. I stopped partway up the hill as my attention was caught by a high-pitched twittering overhead, and waited for the twitterer to show itself. Within a few moments, I became aware of one or two dozen birds darting from tree to tree, and started to identify them – Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch. A Downy Woodpecker, and then a Brown Creeper appeared. This was a mixed flock, common feature of the winter birding landscape, and boon to birders.

What is a “mixed flock”? The most basic definition is of individual birds of more than one species that travel and forage together, but typically does not apply to waterfowl or groups of birds that have come together to take advantage of a rich food source such as a feeder or fruit crop.

Why do mixed-species flocks form? There must be a survival advantage or they would not occur.

In the tropics, mixed flocks are a year-round arrangement, and have been the subject of a number of studies. The tropical studies suggest that the individuals of a given species, while in proximity to birds of other species, nevertheless forage within a distinct “microhabitat”, for example the undersides of leaves vs. crevices in bark. This reduces the direct competition between different species, and is a factor in determining the numbers of each species making up the flock. The advantages to being a member of a flock instead of a solitary forager appear to be enhanced detection of predators, and a flushing up of insect prey. In this latter scenario, a bird may flush up an insect that is caught by another member of the flock.

The insect might have escaped if flushed up by a solitary bird. Thus, the members of the mixed flock function as “beaters” for each other as well as hunting for themselves. In addition, the flocks defend their foraging territory – if everyone else is grouped up, it is difficult for a single bird to defend territory.

There has been less study of mixed flocks in temperate zones, and the results of tropical studies may not completely apply. While some of the American tropical and subtropical mixed flocks change character with the seasonal addition of North American migrants, the temperate flocks of North America consist of non-breeding birds, and are characteristic of groups in migration and of winter residents. Similar advantages in foraging and predator detection have been suggested, though. It is difficult, however, to envision insects being “flushed up” on a cold, North Idaho day, and the “beaters” scenario is probably not significant here in winter. Most of the insect food that the birds probably find is in the form of eggs, or larval or adult forms immobilized by cold.

One foraging idea is that a group covers more area in looking for food, and has a greater likelihood of finding a food source than an individual. This seems to be the case for some monospecific flocks; Passenger Pigeon, for example, ranged in huge flocks that fanned out across a broad front, the better to locate forest stands with abundant acorn crops. In this case, all of the birds of the flock are eating the same food. But the mixed flocks that I see tend to have a visible niche distribution like the tropical flocks, with Golden-crowned Kinglets near the tops of the trees, then chickadees and nuthatches at

mid-levels, and woodpeckers and Brown Creeper on the tree trunks.

As for predators, birders can call in a mixed flock of nuthatches and chickadees by imitating the call of a Northern Pygmy-Owl, a predator of small birds. These flock members apparently respond as a group in order to “mob”, or harass the predator until it leaves the area.

A question I have which remains unanswered is whether the birds of a mixed flock roost together at night for warmth. This is not an issue in the tropics.

If you are curious about the behavior of mixed flocks like I am, you might assemble some questions to focus your observations of the next mixed flock you come across. For example, what are the numbers of each species present? In my neighborhood, chickadees have the largest presence in a flock, followed by smaller numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglet and Red-breasted Nuthatch, while I never see more than one Brown Creeper or Downy Woodpecker. Researchers talk about “core” species – in our area, that is certainly the chickadees. Next you might note the behavior of each species – where is it foraging? What is the distance maintained between birds? Who is leading the flock? If you care to record your observations, you can be on the “cutting edge” of science! There has not been any study of mixed flocks in our area, to my knowledge. And an odd behavioral detail may suggest a line of research.

A note here for beginning birders – in winter, if you see a chickadee dart across the road, or hear the high “seep-seep” of a Golden-crowned Kinglet, you are probably in the proximity of a mixed flock, and a little patience will be well-rewarded. A winter

birding technique that I commonly use is to drive slowly with the windows down and the heater on. As soon as I hear high-pitched notes, I stop and glass them out.

Here is a list of the typical species you will find here in a winter mixed flock, in general order of decreasing abundance:

Black-capped Chickadee
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Mountain Chickadee
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Brown Creeper

In migration, we typically see mixed flocks including warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Juncos, siskins, sparrows and wrens may also be components of mixed flocks.

BROWN BAG BIRDING

Cougar Bay, Coeur d'Alene Lake

Roger Young

In light of the news on September 11th, I canceled the birding trip, but went out just in case someone would show up. Sure enough, Larene Adkinson arrived. The day was warm and bright so we walked along the shore of Cougar Bay.

On October 9, Shirley Sturts and Kris Buchler and I spent about an hour wandering through the beautiful yard and garden of Roberta and Dave Larsen. While setting up our scopes a Bald Eagle picked up a bird off the water, possibly an American Coot, landed on a piling and proceeded to pluck the bird, sending feathers in all directions over the water. Other birds included Mallard, Canada Goose, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow and a Belted Kingfisher.

Fernan Lake - November 13

Shirley Sturts

Lynn Sheridan and I spent a pleasant hour birding along the shores of Fernan Lake. Mike McLean of the Coeur d'Alene Press joined us for the first half-hour. He took several pictures of us as we enjoyed watching 2 pair of Bufflehead, 1 female Common Merganser and a flock of Mallard.

I explained to Mike that we hope to attract new birders by having an hour birding event once a month. Lynn said that was how she got started in birding.

We found a total of 9 species, birding both ends of the lake.

THE TRIP TO HEYBURN

Lisa Hardy

The waters and forest of Heyburn State Park at the south end of Coeur d'Alene Lake were the destination of seven Auduboners on November 18. We spotted our first Rough-legged Hawk of the season on the road to the park. At our first stop, the Plummer Creek viewing area, we walked out the new boardwalk through the marsh for close-up views of several very vocal Marsh Wrens. Back at the parking lot, we found a Brown Creeper in a mixed flock of chickadees and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

The cloud cover started to burn off as we started up the Indian Cliffs trail. We climbed through an area of Ponderosa pine that is being managed to replicate the open stands characteristic of this species before the days of fire suppression. Near the top of the hill, the last of the clouds burned off, and we paused to listen to a rhythmic whistling that proved to be a Northern Pygmy-Owl. The owl perched on the very top of a tree, giving us all good looks. From our vantagepoint above

Chatcolet Lake, we could see the cottonwoods lining the St. Joe River channel and Round Lake beyond, with Indian Mountain on the skyline. The trail then turned downhill, and in thicker forest we found a Steller's Jay, two Gray Jays and a Ruffed Grouse.

Next we turned back to the water, and from the road overlooking Chatcolet Lake, we scoped out rafts of American Wigeon and Canada Goose. Roland spotted a Pacific Loon, but we lost it because trees screened our view. After lunch at the Chatcolet docks, we walked out the muddy railroad grade to the south to try to relocate the Pacific Loon. We found five Common Loons, and finally the Pacific Loon, distinguishable first by its slender bill.

By now, the sun was noticeably sinking toward the horizon, and so we returned to our cars and picked up the pace by car-birding to Benewah Lake, where we found several Wood Duck and Green-winged Teal in the channels near the highway. And our last species of the day, a Double-crested Cormorant, was spotted off Rocky Point in the fading light.

Despite a lack of redpolls (and robins and juncos!), we had a good mix of land and water species, plus the beautiful weather and great company!

Trip participants: Roland Craft, Lisa Hardy, Shirley Sturts, Judy & Phil Waring (and Tina), and Karen & Marv Williams. 39 species total. For the expanded article and complete trip list, see the webpage www.cdaudubon.org

INTRODUCTION TO RAILS-TO-TRAILS

Field Trip - November 11, 2001

Janet Callen



Common Redpoll

Photographed by Wayne Tree

Fourteen Audubon members and one visitor, took advantage of a beautiful sunny November day to walk sections of the recently constructed trail on the old railroad grade that travels from Mullan to Plummer, Id. We walked the trail southwest from Black Rock Road across the wetland near Lane for several miles, then proceeded to Cataldo where we traveled southwest for approximately a mile. The highlight of the trip was a flock of about twenty Common Redpolls feeding in birch trees along the river. Sixteen species were seen or heard including: House Finch, American Goldfinch, Common Raven, chickadee species, Song Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pine Siskin, Black-billed Magpie, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, Marsh Wren, Dark-eyed Junco, Bewick's Wren and Common Redpoll. *Birders included Phil and Judy Waring, Lynn Sheridan, Kris Buchler, Shirley Sturts, Roland Craft, Elaine Codding, Jan and Herb Severtson, Ken Goodrich, Dick Cripe, Teresa Potts, Lisa Hardy, Janet Callen and her sister Maxine Kunkel.*

A RED CROSS VOLUNTEER HIS STORY

Dick Cripe
Dick is the Vice-president of our chapter - we are very proud of him.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

A year ago I participated in Red Cross Disaster training for mental health professionals with the idea that once a year I would help out in hurricane or flood relief. The first call from the Red Cross came at the end of September directing me to go to New Jersey in response to the World Trade Center attack - not what I had originally anticipated. I began my work 22 days after the attack and I was there for three weeks.

My first assignment was to work out of the Elizabeth, NJ, Red Cross office. One third of the people who worked and died at WTC lived in New Jersey. We met as teams with several survivors who worked at WTC or the immediate vicinity and who managed to get out of the area alive. Their lives were affected in many ways and the Red Cross offered a variety of services, primarily immediate financial relief. In the process of discussing this financial assistance I looked for opportunities to talk with these survivors about their experience and subsequent adjustment. Usually all I had to say was, "Tell us what happened to you," and their story would pour out. Their stories were powerful and horrible and they were all in various states of acute traumatic stress. The Red Cross does not provide for ongoing counseling, but I was able to meet for a second time with some of these survivors, talk with them about post-traumatic stress reactions, and give them some support and encouragement.

My second assignment was at Liberty Park, a large state park with a view of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and lower Manhattan. We were directly across from the site of WTC. During my time there I accompanied families on the ferry

trip across the river to visit Ground Zero, and to be with them to provide whatever support and assistance they needed. This was a difficult experience, but very important for the families. They seemed to get relief from the trip and viewing the site. I guess it brought home to them the finality of it, but the experience also provided an opportunity to connect with the family member who was gone.

It was an amazing experience to work with this ad hoc group of volunteers from all over the country. Everything was chaotic and disorganized, but everything that we needed to do got done. All the volunteers pitched in and worked very hard with remarkable energy and enthusiasm.

Everyone in the country reacted with horror and grief to what happened in New York and wished that they could do something to help. I was glad that I was able to respond in this way and be of some direct assistance. It was a very powerful experience that I will never forget.

BIRDSEED FOR SALE

Black Oil Sunflower

50LB \$15.00

Niger (Thistle) \$1.25 LB

Available at Regular

Meetings

or call Janet Callen at

664-1085

Price includes sales tax

All proceeds benefit

Coeur d' Alene Audubon

SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING

November 15, 2001

Lynn Sheridan, Secretary

13 members present

- ◆ We authorized treasurer Ronn Rich to re-imburse George Saylor \$182.00 for slides he obtained and prepared for educational school programs.
- ◆ The Post Falls Library has asked us to do a bird nest display for their new display case. Those interested in working on this project will meet at Kris Buchler's home at 10:30 a.m., November 27.
- ◆ A wooden 6'X4' display board, given by the BLM, was installed at Mica Bay with the help of Del Cameron, Dick Cripe and volunteer students from both Lake City and Coeur d'Alene High Schools. The Idaho Fish and Game has offered to pay for the art work to go on the board (up to \$299.00)
- ◆ Installation of 2 Osprey platforms at Mica Bay is still pending. Kootenai Electric Cooperative will install the platforms, built by the Idaho Fish and Game Department.
- ◆ The Conservation Committee is making a display board and will have informational pamphlets concerning ANWR at our November meeting. They are currently working on several project ideas. They welcome ideas for other projects but ask that you submit them in writing.

Next board meeting: January 15, 2002

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to our chapter and hope to see you at the field trips and meetings! Pat Bearman, Danny Sackmann, and Tammy Flagor. A BIG WELCOME !!!

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

BIRD QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

In his inquiry about happiness Aristotle has this to say: " For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy"

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, Chapter 6-7

OBSERVATION POST

OBSERVERS: Kris Buchler (KBUC), Lisa Buchner (LBUC), Roland Craft (RCRA), Jerry Hanson (JHAN) Lisa Hardy(LHAR), Steve Lindsay (SLIN), Nathan O'Bleness (NOBL), Theresa Potts (TPOT), Jan Severtsdon (JSEV), Lynn Sheridan (LSHE), Shirley Sturts (SSTU) Jenny Taylor (JTAY),

Common Loon 24-49 Higgins Point, CDA Lake and 1- 8 Silver Beach Oct. 29-Nov.15 (KBUC); 1 found dead Nov. 4 that had been banded in Walker Lake, NV June 7, 2000 email from JTAY)

Eurasian Wigeon 1 Squaw Bay, CDA Lake Nov.18 (SLIN)

Common Goldeneye 4 Higgins Point and 4 Bennett Bay, CDA Lake Nov.15 (KBUC)

Bald Eagle 2 Blackwell Island Nov.18 (JSEV); 2 adults and 3 immature NIC Dike Road Nov. 4 (LSHE) 1-2 Higgins Point and Silver Beach, CDA Lake Oct. 29-Nov.1 and 1 Mineral Ridge Nov.15 (KBUC)

Rough-legged Hawk 1st seen this fall Rathdrum Prairie Oct. 21 (SLIN)

Common Snipe 4 Mica Bay Survey Nov. 19 (JHAN)

Herring Gull 1st arrival this fall Dike Road CDA Nov.18 (SLIN)

Thayer's Gull 1 Dike Road CDA Nov.18 (SLIN)

Northern Shrike 1 (first seen this fall) Mica Bay Survey Nov.19 (KBUC, TPOT, SSTU, LBUC)

Pygmy Nuthatch 3 Fairmont Loop Rd. CDA Nov.18 (JSEV)

American Dipper 1 Mica Bay Survey (RCRA, JSEV, SSTU, NOBL)

Bewick's Wren 1 Thompson Lake Nov.18 (SLIN)

Bohemian Waxwing 20 in her yard north of Kingston Nov.11 (LHAR)

Common Redpoll 10 her yard Coeur d'Alene Nov.18 (JCAL); 25-30 Mica Bay, CDA Lake Nov.18 (JHAN, SLIN); flock Rose Lake Nov.18 and 25 CDA yard Nov. 25 (SLIN)

Snow Bunting 20-25 Rathdrum Prairie (Lancaster Rd.) Nov.23 (TPOT, SSTU)

CHECK IT OUT 9th ANNUAL BIRD FEEDER WATCH

Sign up to count the birds at your feeder 4 times during the winter (starts Dec.15). The purpose of the survey is to share information about the birds coming to our feeders. The results will be summarized in the March issue of the newsletter.

If you participate in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology "Project Feeder Watch", you could use the same data for our local feeder survey.

You can pick up survey forms at our December meeting or call Shirley Sturts - 664-5318 and she will send you one.