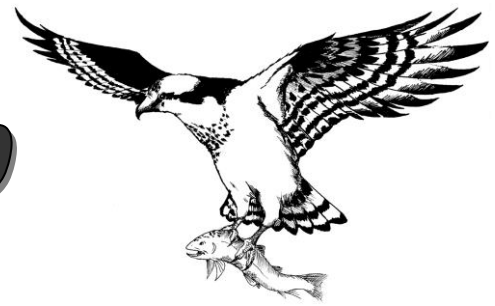


THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

December 2004

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 4

COMING EVENTS BOARD MEETING

DATE: December 13, Monday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mt. West Bank-125 Ironwood Dr.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: December 13, Monday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: First Presbyterian Church, 521 E. Lakeside, CDA
PROGRAM: "Bird Count Identification". Slides and video to help Christmas Bird Count participants brush up on winter birds and plumages. We'll review those confusing "look-a-likes" and highlight some rarities to be watching for this winter.
SPEAKER: Kris Buchler

AND

A COOKIE EXCHANGE: In keeping with the holiday tradition of overindulgence we are going to have a cookie exchange at the December meeting. This is how it works: everyone who brings two dozen cookies gets to take home (or eat) two dozen cookies. Bring a container for your goodies and wear loose clothing 😊.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS AND POTLUCKS

See page 2 for more information on the potlucks and page 3 for the counts.

Visit our website: www.cdaudubon.org

BLUEBIRD TRAILS

(Editors note: This is the second in a series of articles on bluebird conservation and bluebird trails)

Photo by Wayne Tree



DR. LAWRENCE ZELENY AN ODYSSEY OF LOVE

Condensed by Bob Niebuhr

Reprinted from "Bluebird Tales" the newsletter of Mountain Bluebird Trails, Inc. (MBT). (Their website is www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com)

Larry Zeleny was the founder of the North American Bluebird Society. The hundreds of articles he wrote on the subject of bluebirds, culminated in his book, *The Bluebird: How You Can Help Its Fight For Survival*. The articles and book have motivated and counseled thousands of people across the continent. He lectured hundreds of times on his favorite subject, giving informed answers with patient enthusiasm. However, although he was indeed a forerunner, a leader in the field of bluebird preservation, his fondest wish was to have others become leaders. His book's subtitle gives him away. He wanted us to start our own trails, to monitor those trails, to experiment with prudence and, he hoped, to appreciate the beauty of the bluebird and its struggle to endure in our own way.

Larry was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on April 30, 1904. He was second of two sons born to Anthony and Mattie Zeleny. Minnesota's moderate summers compensate for the very long, very cold winters. At that time Minneapolis was not a large industrial center and there were open spaces and

fields aplenty along the Mississippi River and Larry enjoyed the out-of-doors as much as possible.

Like many other bluebird conservationists, he didn't know what sparked his love for the species. During his youth, bluebirds were "always there," nourished by the Mississippi. Other people had bluebird boxes in the neighborhood, with bluebird tenants. By the time he entered high school, Larry, using a Department of Agriculture bulletin, was building his own bluebird houses and in 1921 he entered the University of Minnesota and graduated in 1925 with a degree in Chemistry. While at the University he took a course in ornithology from Professor Thomas S. Roberts, author of the magnificent two-volume *Birds of Minnesota*. He felt right at home. He enjoyed the field trips, but he especially enjoyed the long hours of consultation with Dr. Roberts.

Continued on Page 4

BIRD TRACKS



Audubon Members make a difference



**What
to Do
When
You
See a
Rare
Bird:**

Reporting Your Observations to the IBRC Idaho Birds Records Committee

Harry Krueger, Secretary

We all enjoy watching birds for the aesthetic pleasure they give us. For many in the birding community there is also an exciting level of sport involved in the mere simple pleasures of finding, identifying, and listing. But whether it be glancing at a backyard feeder, packing binoculars during a favorite stroll through our local park or "green area," or a more well-planned and targeted birding excursion, somewhere, sometime, we will all see that out-of-place, "What is it doing here?" bird that makes us look twice and wonder, "This is great, but now what do I do?".....

Editors Note: Visit the new Idaho birding website www.idahobirds.net to find out what to do. There you can read about the Purpose, Function, How to Report a Rare Bird, a Report Form for Online Reporting, the Official Checklist of Idaho Birds and much more. Information will also be available at the December meeting.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

RECEPTION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NOV. 19, 2004

Lynn Sheridan

I represented our Audubon chapter, and met the recipient of the Susan Weller Memorial Scholarship. She is Wanetta Gail Bolin, who likes to be called Gail. She was born in 1951 in Urbana, Missouri, of parents who were dairy farmers. She attended high school and business school in Bolivar, Missouri. Gail worked in travel agencies, had 2 children, and moved around a lot following her husband's work as an engineer.

Eventually, a few years ago, they came to live in Sagle and Gail continued to work in Sandpoint. After 9/11, as Americans traveled less, she was out of work. Also, her Vietnam vet husband had become disabled.

A life-long interest in gardens, native plants, and sensible farming encouraged her to study environmental science. Now in her third year at NIC, she'll have an Associate Science Degree, and will transfer to the University of Idaho in September. In Sandpoint, she teaches a class in herbology: its culture, preservation and uses (salves, ointments, tinctures). She and her family have found a Bald Eagle's nest with chicks near their home!

A bright, energetic woman, very concerned with the environment and the need to use our land wisely, Gail seems a worthy recipient of the Susan Weller Memorial Scholarship.

Idaho Birding Trivia: The honor of having the oldest Christmas Bird Count in Idaho goes to Moscow, ID. On Christmas day 1914, three participants counted 8 species of birds. Their next CBC was in 1937 with 18 species.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

(DEC.18TH) After counting birds either all or part of the day, come to the Severtson's for good cheer and lots of good food. A sign-up sheet will be available at the Dec. meeting. Anything that goes with a lasagna dinner will be appreciated. Please bring your own beverage. Table service is provided. Happy Counting!! RSVP 667-6209.



2004-YARD LIST CHALLENGE

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
2153B Old River Road
Kingston, Idaho 83839
email: basalt@earthlink.net

You will need to submit a list of species and information about your location. Note whether you are in city limits, urban, suburban or rural, whether you have a water view, type of vegetation and cover available, feeders provided etc. 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. What was your favorite bird? Share any interesting bird behavior you noted while observing birds in your yard.



If I were to make a study of the tracks of animals and represent them by plates, I should conclude with the tracks of man"
Henry David Thoreau

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

1. Please register with the leader ahead of time.
 - a. It helps the leader plan the trip.
 - b. You will be informed if the trip time or location is changed or if the trip is canceled.
2. Fees: (to be paid to the driver of the car) \$5.00 - all day trips, \$3.00 - 1/2-day trips.
3. We sometimes use radios to communicate between cars. If the radios are used we are asking participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries.

Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count

RATHDRUM PRAIRIE

DATE: December 5, Sunday

TIME/MEET: 12:00 noon - bird until dusk, K-Mart parking lot

LEADER: Dick Cripe 665-0010

ACTIVITY: This is a good time of the year to look for winter visitors: Rough-legged Hawk, American Tree Sparrow, Snow Bunting, Northern Shrike, and Snowy Owl.

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: December 14, Tuesday

TIME/MEET: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. Fernan Lake Boat Launch, west end

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan - leave messages for Lynn with Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: Bird for an hour along the shores of Fernan Lake.

MICA BAY SURVEY

change of time for winter

DATES: December 8, Wednesday

TIME/MEET: 9:30 a.m. at Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

LEADERS: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739

ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours twice a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area. Beginner birders are encouraged and welcome to join us.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

There is a participation fee of \$5.00 for counters in the field. There is no fee for those under the age of 18 and feeder counters. The money goes to the National Audubon Society to help pay for expenses involved in organizing, compiling, analyzing and publishing the results. In addition, we ask you to help the driver out with gasoline - \$5.00 full day, \$3.00 half day.

December 18, Saturday - Coeur d'Alene - Compiler: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318

Breakfast: 6:00 a.m. Michael D's Eatery, Lake Coeur d'Alene Drive

Potluck: Home of Herb and Jan Severtson -1364 Fairmont Loop Road - RSVP Jan at 667-6209.

January 2, Sunday - Indian Mountain - Compiler: Don Heikkila, 589-3349

Breakfast: Planned by each team.

January 4, Tuesday- Spirit Lake - Compiler: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318

Breakfast: 6:00 a.m. Rustler's Roost, Hayden Lake

Pizza Party: Home of Theresa Potts, 4103 Arrowhead Road. Cost of the pizzas will be shared. Small salads, desserts, side dishes or drinks are welcome. RSVP-Theresa 765-0229.

To volunteer to lead a trip, or to suggest places to go, call or email Lisa Hardy 682-4808 or basalt@earthlink.net

DR. LAWRENCE ZELENY AN ODYSSEY OF LOVE

Continued from page 1

There was a girl enrolled in that class, a science education major named Olive Lowen, and pretty Olive had an eye on Larry. She finally made the shy Zeleny kid notice her, and Olive and Larry became a team. They relaxed in each other's company, having many common interests in wildlife conservation. Olive said she endured some of those long field trips more because of her interest in Larry than for the birds she might have seen.

Both Larry and Olive received their bachelors degrees the same year. Olive began her career as a teacher and Larry started graduate school at the University. He earned his M.S. in 1927 and his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1930. As soon as Larry completed his final degree, they married on June 19, 1930, six days after their engagement.

In 1935, the Zeleny's moved to Washington, D.C. and Larry started work for the Department of Agriculture. Larry held various scientific and administrative positions with the Department of Agriculture, culminating in the position of Branch Chief of the Grain Division from 1943 until his retirement in 1966. During that time he authored or co-authored 62 technical papers in the general field of agricultural biochemistry. He helped develop internationally recognized procedures for evaluating the quality of cereal grains and oil-bearing seeds. He received numerous professional awards. He led a most distinguished professional career.

When visitors came to the Zeleny home in University Park, MD they would expect to find

numerous birds around his large backyard, and of course, many reminders of bluebird activity throughout, from his basement workshop where he continually tinkered with building a better nesting box, to the Richard Sloan autographed print, "Eastern Bluebird," he received from the Griggsville Nature Society. To a bluebirder, Larry's home was the North Pole on Christmas Eve.

How did it all start? With the Department of agriculture, Larry occupied an office for nearly 25 years on the grounds of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. There were quite a few bluebirds at the Center until 1950. But then came an invasion of starlings and the bluebirds disappeared. Larry was concerned, but the press of business precluded his personal intervention. In 1955 he did place a nesting box on a pole outside his office window and monitored it constantly. Bluebirds became permanent tenants. But they were exceedingly scarce elsewhere on the spacious grounds of the Center, graced with habitat, which, should have been full of bluebirds. With his retirement, he inherited that most-precious of all commodities. Time. He asked the Center's director for permission to place 13 nesting boxes around the area for the 1967 nesting season. At the same time he placed 144 nesting boxes around the state's parks. From his correspondence with Dr. T. E. Musselman, among others, he developed what he thought was a good nesting box design, with attention given to cavity size, insulation, ventilation, and drainage. That design, with little modification, endures to this day.

In 1968, Larry learned about a newly formed group, The National Association for the Protection and Propagation of the Purple Martins and Bluebirds of America. He joined the organization, then journeyed to Illinois for a meeting with the group. The folks there put him in charge of bluebird protection, whereupon Larry proposed to write a booklet about the subject. Again, he secured approval and the result was a beautifully rendered handbook, which Olive entitled *Bluebirds for Posterity*. It sold thousands of copies and is now out of print.

In 1969, Larry took over Dr. Musselman's popular column in the *Purple Martin News* (now the *Nature Society News*). He was elected president of the Maryland Ornithological Society, a member of the board of directors of the Audubon Naturalist Society and served as a consultant for Camp Fire Girls, Inc. All these positions gave him a forum to reach larger numbers of people. He became convinced that bluebirds could be helped only by many people, tens of thousands, working in small groups or as individuals, each informed as to the nature of the bluebirds' problems, and armed with a general plan for coping with them. When he wrote or talked about bluebirds, he did so in the simplest language possible, making sure that everyone understood his message.

People received his message on local radio and television programs. They picked it up in newspaper articles, in magazines ranging from *Living Wilderness* to *Exxon, U.S.A.* They got it from his book, published in 1976. Then in June 1977, *National Geographic* featured his article, "Song of Hope for the Bluebird,"

punctuating it with the stunning bluebird photographs taken by his good friend Michael L. Smith. The volume of mail he received because of that article was overwhelming (over 80,000 pieces), even for Larry. He called in a few friends to discuss the situation and—the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) came about.

There is much to say about this remarkable man, and not nearly enough space. He received awards for his conservation work from numerous organizations, most notably from the Patuxent Group of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Naturalist Society. He took no money for his conservation work and donated receipts from the sale of his book to NABS.

Those of us who have personal knowledge of Little Brother and Little Sister—even those who have read his account of these hand-raised bluebirds—know that his love for bluebirds is real. He uses the word love a lot. It is not a word that comes easily from men in this culture. When asked about his courtship with Olive, he would respond with a simple explanation: “We fell in love.” He dedicated his book to Olive, hearkening back to their ornithology class in Minnesota, “where we fell in love with birds and with each other.”

When Larry and the writer discussed the text for the NABS color brochure, “Where Have All the Bluebirds Gone? Larry wished the first sentence to read, “We celebrate the beautiful bluebird as a symbol of love, hope and happiness.” Because the writer thought the sentiment a bit maudlin, he deleted the word “love.” It was a mistake. From the beginning, it was the reason this decent and learned

man was involved. *Condensed from a story in NAB's quarterly journal Sialia.*

ACKLING GEESE HAVE THE LAST LAUGH

ACKLING GOOSE VS. CANADA GOOSE

Lisa Hardy



Photo by Harry Krueger

We have a new identification problem in our area - thanks to the recent split of Canada Goose into Canada Goose and Cackling Goose. The Canada Goose has historically been divided into numerous, and periodically shifting, subspecies. Until this year, the haggling over these subdivisions could be safely left to the professional ornithologists, but with the formation of a new species from a group of former Canada Goose subspecies, the issue has been thrown into the lister's lap.

When I sat down to write this note, I planned to draw up a little table with handy identification points for distinguishing the two species. Instead, as I read through the notes of David Allen Sibley, and experienced “local” birders, J. Harry Krueger (Idaho) and Michael Schwitters (Montana), I realized that even the most expert birders are not able to resolve the two species in many cases. So, in the following paragraphs, I will try to convey a sense of how complex the issue is, and then offer a few

identification possibilities.

First, the basics. The eleven Canada Goose subspecies were split into a group of seven larger-bodied, interior-breeding subspecies that remain as Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), while the four smaller, tundra-breeding subspecies form the new Cackling Goose species (*Branta hutchinsii*). One immediate point of confusion is that the subspecies formerly known as the “cackling goose”, *B. h. minima*, is only one of the four subspecies that now make up the Cackling Goose species. Apparently, the correct way to refer to this subspecies is as the Cackling Cackling Goose.

OK, now that we have that cleared up, let's move on to the problems of identification. Branta geese that breed in our area are most likely the *moffitti* subspecies of Canada Goose (*B. canadensis moffitti*). In migration, we additionally see the Lesser Canada Goose (*B. canadensis parvipes*).

Cackling Goose breed on tundra far to the north, and probably pass through our area in small numbers in fall and spring migration. The subspecies most likely to come through our area are the Taverner's and Richardson's subspecies of Cackling Goose (*B. hutchinsii taverneri* and *B. hutchinsii hutchinsii*).

Overall coloration, and presence or absence of white neck bands and black chin stripes are not reliable guides to distinguishing the two species. Instead, relative size is the best guide. Any large goose is clearly a Canada Goose, in our area probably a *moffitti*. But the smaller geese could be either Canadas or Cacklings, that is, either Lesser Canadas or Taverner's or Richardson's

Cacklings. The difference in size between the smallest of the Lesser Canadas, and the larger of the Taverner's or Richardson's is too small to be reliably distinguished in the field. Or at least, this is what the experts are telling us.

Subspecies (and now species) identification is problematic even for experienced workers who examine the birds in hand. David Allen Sibley relates that up to half of all Dusky Canada Geese (*B.c. occidentalis*) processed at hunter check stations in Washington were misidentified. How do we know that they were misidentified? A study was conducted using genetic testing to assess the reliability of in the hand measurements.

Short of genetic testing, the possibility of accurately identifying a Cackling Goose in our area appears to be much more remote than the possibility of seeing one. Our best chance for identifying a Cackling Goose is finding an individual of the very smallest subspecies, *B.h. minima*. *Minimas*, or Cackling Cackling Geese, breed in Alaska, and winter on the Pacific coast. Their migration corridor is presumably well to the west of Idaho, and individuals would be quite rare here. Yet their diminutive size makes them the only subspecies of Cackling Goose we are likely to be able to identify in the field. We should look out for any Canada-type geese that are only a little bit bigger than a Mallard, especially those that occur with Snow or Ross' Geese, or those having a noticeably higher-pitched vocalization. One such bird was found by J. Harry Krueger in Boise in October (see photo).

Perhaps the best way to view this split is as a chance to exercise our observational skills.

The goose question could also serve as a cautionary tale, and encourage us to spend more time identifying subspecies of other birds - before they are split.

For more details, see David Allen Sibley's notes at http://www.sibleyguides.com/canada_cackling.htm

BOOK CORNER

CARLA DOVE

FORENSIC

ORNITHOLOGIST

Tina Wynecoop, Colbert, WA



In the newly published *Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis & Clark's Indian*

Collection, by Castle Mclaughlin, there is an article about a forensic ornithologist named Carla Dove, of the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution. The author states she holds the nation's only full-time position and that she "is often called upon to identify a species of bird on the basis of a single feather. She has identified the feathers on the pipes and other objects in the Peabody Museum's Lewis and Clark collection by comparing them with bird specimens in the collection of Harvard's Museum of Natural History, both visually and through microscopic analysis. She identified nineteen species of birds used by the Indians, including the head of a male Ivory-billed Woodpecker." (The Harvard museum also holds what is believed to be the only remaining bird specimen from the Lewis and Clark expedition, a *Melanerpes lewis*, commonly known as Lewis's woodpecker.)

Although the focus of the book encompasses much more than the use of birds in Indian regalia and art, the chapter on bird identification was unexpected and engrossing. Having helped with the Plateau Indian collection at the Museum of Arts and Cultures in Spokane, and being aware of plant and animal materials used, it didn't cross my mind to wonder if the quills were from something other than porcupine. I was surprised to learn from the book that the quilling method used to decorate clothing, etc., included the use of bird quills as well as porcupine quills.

Recently there have been many books published about the Lewis and Clark expedition. The *Arts of Diplomacy* presents the diplomatic aspect of the journey, balancing beautiful photographs of the collection with fine writing, detailing the objects of exchange between the indigenous cultures and the explorers.

Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis & Clark's Indian Collection, by Castle Mclaughlin. Published: October 2003 by The University of Washington Press.

CHAIN OF LAKES BIKE RIDE: October 30, 2004

Dick Cripe

It was a dark and stormy morning when the five intrepid birders set out for a day along the Chain-of-Lakes, happy that they had left their bikes safely in their garages. Although the rain never arrived, the wind was incessant and, at 45 degrees, it felt more like late November than late October. We were all dressed suitably and no one suffered, but we were happy to be able to take periodic refuge in Lisa's truck. Participants were: Brian Taylor, Lisa Hardy, Roland

Craft, Dick Cripe, and Janet Callen.

We saw lots of birds, 37 species, and some interesting individuals. Specifically, we watched a lone Bonaparte's Gull in beautiful winter plumage for several minutes as it battled the wind over Killarney Lake. We were able to watch it leisurely at all angles, refer to our field guide picture, look back and forth to the bird and the picture several times, consider all of the possible alternatives, and agree by acclamation that it was, in fact, a winter Bonaparte's Gull. Similarly, we had a lengthy, close-up view of a Northern Shrike near Rainy Hill, referred to our field guide, and discussed why this was a Northern rather than a Loggerhead (yes, I know that we don't see Loggerheads up here except occasionally in the summer) all of the time watching the bird flit around in the nearby bush.

We saw two Common Loonson Killarney Lake as well as numerous other waterfowl. We had an involved discussion about the possibility of the chapter buying a piece of property on the north end of Killarney, at a vantage point that overlooks the length of the lake, and building a lodge or perhaps a retirement home for senior birders. The matter will be referred to the board for further discussion. Beyond Killarney, we took extended and leisurely looks at Porter's Slough, Lane Marsh, Medicine and Cave Lakes, and numerous points in between. There were *beaucoup* swans on the west end of Cave Lake, but we were too far away to be able to determine if there were any Trumpeters in the group. Similarly, we looked through the Canada Geese to see if any belonged to the Cackling subgroup, but they all

had their heads tucked in so we couldn't tell. We saw all three nuthatches that are seen in our area within the space of a few minutes near the boat launch on Killarney. For our trip list see the newsletter on our webpage.

TRAIL OF THE COEUR D' ALENES BIRD WALK

Roland Craft

The field trip was a walk along the Trail of the Coeur d' Alenes (bike trail) from Cataldo to Enaville, a distance of about 5 miles. Since the trail is paved and level, and we walked slowly looking at birds, nobody was very tired at the end. The weather was damp and cold with patches of fog. A typical early to mid-winter group of species was sighted. Highlighting the bird list were 80 Bohemian Waxwing, a winter visitor in Idaho. When we think of going south for the winter (people and birds), Arizona, Texas, Mexico and points south come to mind. For the Bohemian Waxwing, however, southern Canada and the northern part of the United States provide a snug winter home with plenty of berries to keep them warm.

Participants on the hike were Dick Cripe, Lisa Hardy, Janet Callen, Kris Buchler and Roland Craft. Afterwards, we stopped at the Snakepit for a delicious chicken-breast sandwich.

Most sightings were in Shoshone County except for the Bohemian Waxwing, House Finch, Red Crossbill, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Song Sparrow and several of the Black-capped Chickadee, which were in Kootenai County.

See the newsletter on our website for a complete list of bird species.

BIRDING WITH A BROWN BAG

11/16/04

Lynn Sheridan

It was a cool damp day as we met at Independence Point: Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Nels and Steve Johnson, and myself. There were not many birds at first, but more were seen as we got closer to the river. We identified only 5 Double-crested Cormorant, but as many as 32 had been seen by the Johnson boys, a few days ago.

Others species seen were 1 Common Merganser female, 1 Red-necked Grebe, 1 Mew Gull, and 10 California Gull among the many Ring-billed. Dozens of Bufflehead kept to themselves as the Mallard and Canada Geese milled about.

Twittery Pygmy Nuthatch were easily seen, but Black-capped Chickadee, California Quail, Northern Flicker and House Finch were only heard.

Back at the parking lot I was surprised to see a Cormorant on a pole at the foot of Tubbs Hill.

Thanks for the company, fellows.

OBSERVATION POST

2004 Kootenai County Big Year -
Total to date 200 as of Nov. 20th.
OUR GOAL OF 200 IS REACHED!

Bonaparte's Gull 1 Killarney Lake,
Oct. 29, Chapter Field Trip
Harris's Sparrow 1 Lockhaven Hills,
Hayden lake, Nov. 20. Doug Ward

OTHER SIGHTINGS

Costa's Hummingbird 1 imm
First Confirmed Sighting for Idaho. Meridan,
Ada Co., Nov. 8, photographed and banded
by Stacy Jon Peterson-go to
www.idahobirds.net to see photo and video.
(a sighting at the feeder of Barbara Durrell
in May of 1996 is being reconsidered by the
Idaho Birds Record Committee is pending)