

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



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

December 2009

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 4

Articles for the newsletters are welcome. Please submit to the editor Shirley Sturts at: shirley.sturts@gmail.com by the 15th of each month. All submissions are subject to editing. Thank you and happy reading!

DECEMBER MEETING

DATE: December 1, Tuesday
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master 4800 North Ramsey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
SPEAKER: Kris Buchler
PROGRAM: "GET READY FOR THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS" - Tips to increase your bird count success. Play "Gone Birding" and review video of some of our local species.

AND

A COOKIE EXCHANGE: 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☺.

BOARD MEETING

DATE: December 1, Tuesday
PLACE: Mountain West Bank, 125 Ironwood
TIME: 4:30 p.m.

Visit our website:
www.cdaudubon.org



Downy Woodpecker
Photo by Bill Linn

THE 110TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: CITIZEN SCIENCE IN ACTION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009
TO TUESDAY, JANUARY 5,
2010

Reprint from "Bird Source"

From December 14 through January 5 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

- Read Audubon President John Flicker's thank you letter [to participants](#).
- Learn how data from the [CBC helps birds](#).
- View results from [this year's count](#) or from [previous years](#)
- Explore the [CBC Photo Gallery](#) of birds seen during counts.

SEE AREA CBC COUNTS ON PAGE TWO



AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

We go out in teams. Sign up at the December 1st meeting or call Shirley 664-5318. Note: there is a \$5.00 participation fee plus share the cost of the gas with the driver.

Bohemian Waxwing , a winter visitor

Photographed by Wayne Tree

Coeur d'Alene - December 19, Saturday

Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

shirley.sturts@gmail.com

Meet for Breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Michael D's Eatery or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

Potluck After the Christmas Bird count, please join us for a potluck at Severtson's. The time will be after you have counted, when darkness falls, or about 4:30. Please bring food already prepared: salad, main dish, appetizers, or dessert plus beverage of your choice. Please call Jan to RSVP (667-6209) or jansjam@verizon.net and let her know your choice in shared item. Food can be brought ahead of time.

Spirit Lake - January 2, Saturday

Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

shirley.sturts@gmail.com

Meet for Breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Rustler's Roost, Hayden Lake, Highway 95 and Hayden Avenue, or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

Pizza and Salad about 4:30 p.m. after the Christmas Bird Count. Please bring money to share the cost of the pizza, something to add to a green salad (greens will be provided) and drink of your choice. Host: Janet Callen RSVP: 664-1085 or email jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com Directions---call Janet

Indian Mountain - January 4, Monday

Compiler: Don Heikkila 659-3389 -

jdfinn@sm-email.com

Team organizers Shirley Sturts 664-5318 -

shirley.sturts@gmail.com and Lisa Hardy 783-1262

basalt@earthlink.net

Meet and time - plans made will be made by each participating team

COUNTY BIG YEAR

Lisa Hardy and Shirley Sturts

At this writing, the 2009 Kootenai County Big Year list stands at 193 species, still a bit short of our goal of 200, but reachable if we find some of our species that are less common in the area but still turn up regularly. The history of the county Big Year lists is known to many of you: In 2001, Dr. Stephen Lindsay did a personal Big Year in which he attempted to see 200 birds in Kootenai County. He tallied up 199, and the following year Shirley started a group Kootenai County Big Year list. That year, 2002, we counted 195 species. Our highest count number is 207 in 2004 and our lowest count is 189 in 2008. We have reached our goal of 200+ in 4 out the 7 years of counting. It has become a challenge to many of us to see who can find the first of the various species. Our top counters are Lisa Hardy 63, Kris Buchler 54, Shirley Sturts 36, Bill Gundlach 30. Several species were seen by more than one person on the same day.

The idea of doing County Big Years caught on. In 2005, twenty-two counties tallied Big Years, and this year, the total number of participating Idaho counties has reached thirty (out of forty-two). The current and historical results are posted on www.idahobirds.net. So far this year, four Idaho counties have exceeded the 200 mark - Ada, Canyon, Custer and Owyhee. And, as a state, we have tallied an impressive 305 species (out of an all-time official state checklist of 409 species). Five counties have the distinction of reporting the only species found in the state: Bonner - Yellow-billed Loon, Little Gull, Kootenai - Red-throated Loon. Gem County - Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Northern Mockingbird., Gooding - Red-breasted Sapsucker, Canyon - Iceland Gull, Glossy Ibis, Chestnut-sided Longspur, Ada - Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided and Black-throated Blue Warblers. With the exception of the Northern Mockingbird, these species are on the Idaho Bird Records Committee's Review List and require a rare bird report.

Birders from outside Idaho began to take note of the county tallies. Washington state started to collate group county Big Years in 2007. One of the benefits of collating the county lists on a state-wide basis is the ability to track arrival dates across the region. Of course, not all the dates are arrival dates, especially for uncommon species, but the data bring the migration timing into clearer focus.

Continued on page 3

COUNTY BIG YEAR continued from page 2

Another interesting aspect of the county lists is what does not appear on them. For example, a look at the field guides shows Kootenai County as being well within the range of the Great Gray Owl, yet we have not had a report of this species in the county since 1996.

As an aside, many hours of volunteer time go into compiling these interesting lists. Lew Ulrey does a fantastic job of pulling all of the Idaho county lists together. But if everyone reported their sightings on eBird, these county lists could be generated with just a few mouseclicks. Hmmm...something to think about.

Back to our home turf, we want to encourage everyone to spend a little time birding outdoors this month (in addition to the Christmas count, of course!). Our best bets for making the 200 mark are to be found among the divers, the gulls and the owls, although we are still missing a few possible forest birds like Northern Goshawk and Spruce Grouse. The divers to look for include White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck and Pacific Loon. Anyone driving the Rathdrum Prairie should keep an eye out for Snowy Owl and Short-eared Owl, while a walk around Independence Point might turn up one of the gulls we have not tallied yet, such as Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous or Glaucous-winged.

Other nearby counties could use some help. Totals as of this writing are: Benewah (121), Shoshone (138) and Bonner (156) You can find the results to all four counties on www.cdaudubon.org. Report additions to the list for Kootenai and Benewah to Shirley at shirley.sturts@gmail.com and Shoshone and Bonner to Lisa at basalt@earthlink.net

So, don't leave home without your binoculars!

BROWN PELICAN'S 40-YEAR RECOVERY

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officially takes state bird of Louisiana off endangered species list

Reprint from the National Audubon Webpage

Washington, DC, November 12, 2009 - National conservation groups focusing on the restoration of coastal Louisiana are hailing the announcement by federal officials that the state bird of Louisiana, the Brown Pelican, is being removed from the Endangered Species List. Audubon, the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Wildlife Federation view the recovering pelican as

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

powerful proof that a healthy coast and strong environmental protections can benefit people and nature alike.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says the species has sufficiently recovered from the impact of DDT contamination compounded by continuing habitat loss to be taken off the list in areas where it is not already delisted. Populations along the Atlantic Coast, in Florida and Alabama were delisted in 1985.

"The delisting of this iconic Gulf of Mexico species shows that cooperation produces results," said Mary E. Kelly, senior counsel of the Environmental Defense Fund's Center for Rivers and Deltas. "Now, we need to ensure that same spirit of cooperation and results extends to restoration of coastal Louisiana's wetlands, which, among many other benefits, provide habitat and food for this beautiful bird."

"This is an Endangered Species Act victory that demonstrates the great success we can achieve when we work together," echoes NWF's John Kostyack. "Maintaining that success will require confronting climate change and its relationship to coastal restoration and the species that depend on these important ecosystems."

According to Audubon's annual [Christmas Bird Count](#), Brown Pelican population trends have risen in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and California for the past 40-50 years. Hurricane Katrina took a toll on the Gulf Coast populations that has not been thoroughly erased, but the prospects remain good, provided coastal recovery stays on track.

"The future of the Brown Pelican depends on the same strategies that will benefit coastal residents," said Audubon's Louisiana Bird Conservation Director Melanie Driscoll. "Pelicans and people need a strong, well-funded coastal restoration plan that will speed the recovery of coastal marshes and the barrier islands that are our first defense from hurricanes and their primary source of food and shelter."

Continued monitoring of Brown Pelicans is essential to detect any unexpected future population declines. Conservationists also caution that proper site selection, operational guidelines and vigilance will be needed to ensure that proposed wind power projects don't threaten recovery in Texas and other areas

Continued on page 4

PELICANS

Continued from page 3

For example, officials at Audubon California stated that continued threats to the bird's habitat will require continued conservation if the Brown Pelican is going to fully return to its former glory. "Obviously, the dramatic return of the Brown Pelican over the last few decades is a tremendous victory for the Endangered Species Act," said Graham Chisholm, executive director of Audubon California. "But given the threats that still exist, it is important that the Department of Interior and others continue their efforts to protect this important species."

The Brown Pelican was first declared endangered in 1970 under the Endangered Species Conservation Act, the precursor to the current Endangered Species Act. At that time, pollutants such as DDT had driven the species to near extinction. Brown Pelicans along the Atlantic Coast and in the South were removed from the list in 1985.

It is estimated that the global population of Brown Pelicans has reached about 620,000. Of these, about 172,000 live along the California and Mexico coast. This latest move by the Department of the Interior removes all Endangered Species Act protections for the bird.

Although the Brown Pelican population has increased substantially, much of its breeding grounds face near constant threat from human activity, particularly pollution risks such as oil and sewage spills. Moreover, the Brown Pelican needs fish to survive, which links the species to the continued health of marine fisheries.

"For many Californians, our magnificent coastline is part of our natural identity, and the Brown Pelican is a treasured part of that image," added Chisholm. "That is all the more reason why we need to remain diligent about protecting this bird from the many threats that it still faces."

More at www.audublog.org/ and [Audubon California](http://AudubonCalifornia)

MIDWAY - ALBATROSS TRAGEDY

A few weeks ago there were several posts on IBLE (South Idaho birding listserve). about Albatross nesting babies being fed bellies-full of plastic by their parents, who soar out over the vast polluted ocean collecting what looks to them like food to bring back to their young. On this diet of human trash, every year tens of thousands of albatross chicks die on THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Midway from starvation, toxicity, and choking. Documented photographs of actual stomach contents of dead baby birds can be found on:

http://www.chrisjordan.com/current_set2.php?id=11



Sample of one of the pictures

Steve Bouffard, a retired wildlife ecologist from Boise, recently visited and worked at Midway and had this to share with Idaho birders.

"I visited Midway last holiday season to count albatross nests and have several similar pictures. I also have pictures of huge mounds of plastic and glass garbage that has floated onto the islands. The adults evolved thinking anything that floats and is small enough to eat, is food. If they can swallow it, they feed it to their young. The adults can regurgitate. The regurgitation reflex develops later in the young. Once their digestive tract becomes impacted they die, by the hundreds. The refuge staff estimated that the adults import some 5 tons of small plastic items to the islands every year as they feed their young. It is not possible to walk 5-6 feet in any direction on the islands without encountering one or more cigarette lighters. They also estimated another 10-20 tons of larger plastic & glass items float into the islands every year. I have given several talks on my experience and always leave the message to use alternatives other than plastic, to recycle what plastic you must use, and do not litter. By littering, you could be responsible for killing sea birds, turtles, and mammals for the next 500+ years - that's a terrible legacy to leave behind!

PS: We're talking lots of birds on Midway. In 2008-09 season we counted over 500,000 Albatross nests - and that's not counting the other 15-16 pelagic species that nest there.

BIRDING HAYDEN LAKE

Lisa Hardy

October 24, 2009



Pied Billed Grebe - Photograph by Bill Linn

The forecast was proved wrong by the sun rising on a clear, breezy day. Our first stop was Honeysuckle Beach on Hayden Lake, where we met a photographer from the newspaper tasked with taking pictures to illustrate an upcoming article about our chapter. We searched for the Red-throated Loon without success, but did relocate the three Surf Scoters seen earlier in the week. The scoters appeared to be females, and not juvenile males, by the dark brown color of their bills.

We then checked the upper end of the lake from the sportsman's access near the mouth of Hayden Creek, and found several dabblers, including Northern Shoveler and Gadwall.

During the morning, we identified five of the six grebe species found here: Pied-billed, Horned, Eared, Red-necked and Western. There may have been a Clark's Grebe mixed in with the Westerns, but the light angle was poor for distinguishing their best fieldmark, the deeper yellow bill color. We found one Common Loon, mostly in winter plumage.

Trip participants: Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Dennis and Candy Enslow, Lisa Hardy, Shirley Sturts and Adela Sussman. Thanks for tallying, Roland!

Complete trip list can be found on our website: www.cdaudubon.org



**Belted Kingfisher
Photograph by Wayne Tree**

CATALDO FIELD TRIP

November 14, 2009

Jan Severtson

Fourteen pairs of eyes searched the bushes, trees, skies, and ground in hopes of finding fall birds along this beautiful portion of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. The weather was quite decent at 36 degrees, with interesting clouds and a few breaks to allow the sun to warm us. However, eight species were all that could be found. We had a good look at a male Downy woodpecker as he hopped about a leafless tall bush. He seemed undisturbed by the large group of birdwatchers.

Those enjoying the walk were: Phil & Judy Waring, Valerie & Mike Zagar, Jan & Herb Severtson, Shirley Sturts, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Lisa Hardy, Adela Sussman, Janet Callen, and two new watchers, Karen Orchard, and Christine Ibsen.

Other birds spotted were: Black-Capped and Chestnut-Back Chickadee, Common Raven, Belted Kingfisher, Black-billed Magpie, Common Flicker, and Winter Wren.

FIELD TRIPS

CHRISTMAS COUNTS : See Page 2

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: December 8, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

LEADER: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay.

Everybody is welcome. Beginning birders are welcome. We will help you with identification skills.

