

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

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

December 2010

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 4

FISH HAWK HERALD SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Our September issue is complimentary to all local Audubon members. To receive the October - May issues you need to subscribe: \$15 for one year or \$25 for two years. (See the subscription form on the back of this newsletter.) Some of you have paid for two years, and some have a different expiration date. Please call Jan at 667-6209 if you are unsure of your subscription status. The newsletter is free of charge on our website: www.cdaudubon.org

ALSO: Articles for the newsletters are welcome. Please submit to the editor Shirley Sturts at: shirley.sturts@gmail.com by the 20th of each month, All submissions are subject to editing.

Thank you and happy reading!

DECEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: December 14, Tuesday
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master,
4800 North Ramsey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
SPEAKER: Kris Buchler
PROGRAM: "Gems of the Christmas
Bird Count: CDA CBC's 20th
Anniversary". Kris will focus her
presentation on the more elusive bird
species, several of which have been on the
count only once out of 19 counts.
See <http://cdaudubon.org/cdacbcchart.htm>
Learn the steps you need to take if you see
a rare bird and want it to make the official
list.

BOARD MEETING

DATE: December 14, Tuesday
PLACE: Mountain West Bank,
125 Ironwood
TIME: 4:30 p.m.

COEUR D'ALENE AUDUBON MIDWINTER BANQUET

Monday, February 14, Valentine's Day
See details on page 4

Visit our website:
www.cdaudubon.org

DON'T GIVE A HOOT!

ARE WE LOVING SOME BIRDS TO DEATH?

*Reprinted from the Wild Phlox, newsletter of North Central
Washington Audubon Society*



Spotted Owl -- Photo by Art Barnes

Birders are generally conservation-minded people. They truly care about the animals they are interested in seeing and hearing. However, in their quest to observe as many species as possible some birders are using tools that can be harmful to the birds they are trying to find. In particular, the use of tapes/MP3s and callers to locate birds can result in unintended negative consequences to the species attracted through the use of these tools. In some cases, the modest use of playback calling is an acceptable way of locating a bird. At other times it is very risky and exposes a bird to harm by calling it out from a hiding place or causing other problematic changes in behavior. Biologists and birders alike have an ethical and biological responsibility to know when not to use playback to find birds.

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DON'T GIVE A HOOT!

Continued from page 1

A 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey of wildlife-associated recreation activities estimated there were nearly 48 million birders 16 years of age and older in the U.S. With this many birders it becomes more important than ever to pursue this activity ethically and with bird conservation in mind. The United Kingdom's Birdwatcher's Code states it eloquently: *avoid disturbing birds and their habitats – the birds' interests should always come first.* The recent explosion in affordable technology has made it easier to overlook the birds' interests. Internet posting of sightings, publication of localized birding guides, and advances in digital music players and compact speaker technology enable birders to follow detailed directions to known locations of rare birds and draw them out. Some birders' relentless pursuit of the Spotted Owl is one such example of the harm that may come from the use of modern technology.

The Spotted Owl was listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened in 1990. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Spotted Owl primarily due to threats stemming from the loss of suitable habitat through timber harvest, but other factors included additional habitat loss from wildfire and competition from other species, especially the Barred Owl. Despite its listing and the additional protections it has been afforded, the Spotted Owl continues to display a range-wide population decline. Now that the range of the Barred Owl completely overlaps that of the Spotted Owl, the degree of competition for food, habitat, and space has never been greater. Disturbances caused by human presence and noise can add to the stress caused by habitat removal and competition.

There is a growing consensus among owl biologists that Barred Owls are pushing Spotted Owls out of their territories and may also be causing a reduction in Spotted Owl vocalization. Birders who use playback to incite spotted owls to call may be inadvertently putting Spotted Owls at risk by causing them to vocalize when they would normally be trying to stay "under the radar". Human presence near nest sites also causes spotted owls to vocalize more frequently. Barred Owls (as well as Northern Goshawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Great Horned Owls) have been observed attacking Spotted Owls on a number of occasions. Being near an active nest site or using playback to incite Spotted Owls to call is likely to increase the odds

that Spotted Owls will be killed or driven from their territories. While the risk of an attack on a Spotted Owl may be low, it is not zero, and it is literally a matter of life and death.

Exposing a Spotted Owl to predatory attack is the most serious consequence posed by unethical birding, but other negative effects can occur:

- An owl that spends time looking for the perceived owl (playback) in its territory does not spend that time foraging for itself and for its young. The energetic cost of needlessly defending a territory may be a higher price than the owl or its chicks can pay.
- Playing calls within a territory may make an owl think the territory is already occupied, and the owl may needlessly move on to seek a vacant territory. Vacant territories are increasingly hard to find in a landscape overrun by Barred Owls.
- Unattended chicks in the nest are potential prey not only to the raptors listed above, but to corvids as well.

All of these impacts added together (and repeated if multiple uninformed birders visit the same site during the year) may lead to nesting failure, site abandonment, or death of Spotted Owls. *A Birder's Guide to Washington*, published in 2003, included detailed directions to many known Spotted Owl sites. At least two of these nest sites near Cle Elum, WA have become vacant or only sporadically occupied by single owls since this book was published – possibly due to the dramatic increase in birder visits.

Calling for Spotted Owls without a permit is not only unethical, it is also **illegal**: it is a violation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and can be considered "take" which can lead to a fine of up to \$25,000 and 6 months in jail. Causing a Spotted Owl to leave shelter and have it fixated on you while you observe and possibly spotlight it, *significantly disrupts its normal behavior*, a form of "take" through "harassment."

All birders should be familiar with the American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics, which states up front: 1(b) *To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger... Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.* **Continued on page 3**

DON'T GIVE A HOOT!

Continued from page 2

Part of the joy of birding should be the development of your fieldcraft while giving fair chase to your quarry, not relying on a crutch like playback to lure birds into easy view. Birding should be as much about the methods used as it is about the numbers, and your county or life list is all the more impressive when acquired skillfully and ethically.

Locations of ESA listed species should never be posted on web sites such as eBird, Tweeters, or similar e-bulletin boards. Principled birders have no way of knowing who will read their posts, and what methods the next person may use to attempt to locate the bird. The Spotted Owl is but one example of why using call playback is not an ethically or environmentally responsible means of attracting sensitive species for viewing. As a birder, your need to tick another county or life bird is never more important than a bird's life. No biologist wants to see a species go extinct on his or her watch. Please help contribute to the Spotted Owl's recovery rather than contributing to its demise by allowing it to find and defend territories and raise its young undisturbed.

American Birding Association (United States), Principles of Birding Ethics:
www.aba.org/about/ethics.html

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (United Kingdom), Birdwatcher's Code:
www.rspb.org.uk/advice/watchingbirds/code/index.aspx

Many people contributed to this article including:

Janet Millard, Don Youkey, Kent Woodruff, Bill Gaines – USDA Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Stan Sovern, – Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University, Eric D. Forsman – USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Dan Stephens – Wenatchee Valley College, North Central Washington Audubon, Washington Ornithological Society board member, Jeff Parsons – Vice President, North Central Washington Audubon, Ken Bevis – Habitat Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

STAMP ART: A HAUTMAN AGAIN

Last month, James Hautman won the 2010 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. He has previously won the competition three times, in 1989, 1994, and 1998. His painting of a pair of Greater White-fronted Geese will grace the 2011-2012 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp to go on sale in late June 2011. The USFWS produces the stamp, which sells for \$15 and raises about \$25 million annually to provide critical wetland and grassland habitat for the Refuge System.

There were 235 entries in last month's contest, and James's brother, Robert Hautman, placed second with his painting of a single Greater White-fronted Goose. Robert Hautman is a two-time previous contest winner (1997 and 2001). A third Hautman brother, Joe, has won three times, in 1992, 2002, and 2008. This is serious family talent! You can view James Hautman's first-place image here:

www.fws.gov/home/feature/2010/2010DS047.jpg



Northern Saw-whet Owl -Photo by Russ Hursrud

COUNTY BIG YEAR

Read about the County Big Year on:

<http://www.idahobirds.net/reports/reports.html>

<http://cdaudubon.org/> then click on Kootenai, Shoshone, Benewah, Boundary, or Bonner

As of Nov. 21, 300 bird species have been observed in Idaho during 2010. The five top

counties are: **Ada** 249, **Gem** 206, **Custer** 204, **Owyhee** 202, **Latah** 198, **Canyon** 195, **Kootenai** 193

Doug Ward recently added 4 bird species to the Kootenai County List (the 2 sparrows in his yard in Hayden and the 2 terns in Cougar Bay.

Lincoln Sparrow -September 11

Common Tern - September 19

Forester's Tern - September 19

White-throated Sparrow - October 17

Western Scrub Jay Oct. 24 – Bayview - **Chuck Murray**

Snow Bunting - Nov. 5 –Lane Marsh –**Steve Dike**

Eared Grebe - Nov. 13 - Cougar Bay– **Doug Ward**



BLUEBIRD TRAIL ACTIVITY

Shirley Sturts

Our Audubon Chapter has 3 Bluebird Trails that we service by monitoring, cleaning and repairing. In the past, we have reported nest activity to the nest program run by *Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology* and to the *Mountain Bluebird Trails* program. Due to the time involved, we have made only periodic visits to the trail for the past two years. This year Roland Craft, Theresa Potts and I did our initial spring checking and repairing in April. Thanks to the efforts of Roland Craft, all boxes were checked on July 23rd and again on November 11th by both Roland and Laura Bayless. Roland also checked Mica Bay and Mica Flats on May 11th and June 8th and 29th. The majority of the boxes are used by Tree Swallows. House Wrens and chickadees use two or three boxes and Box 1 on the Hoo Doo Trail has become the home of a Flying Squirrel.

Laura and Roland prepared the following report for us: (All bluebirds in the report are thought to be Western. However, Mountain were present in April)

Mica Bay (7 boxes) - No Bluebird activity all summer

Mica Flats – (12 boxes)

Box 1 – nest building on 5/11/10, 4 young counted on 6/8/10, possibly fledged as nest had 3 swallow eggs on 6/29/10

Box 1B had 2+ Bluebird babies on 7/23/10. As of 11/11/10, 1 dead Bluebird baby, all others fledged, cleaned out.

Box 9 – 3 bluebird eggs on 5/11/10, 4 young and yellow jackets in the box on 6/11/10, 1 dead, 1 unhatched egg, 3 assumed to have fledged on 6/29/10

Hoo Doo –

Box 7 had 4 feathered Bluebird babies on 7/23/10. As of 11/11/10 all fledged, yellow jacket nest and box cleaned out.

Box 14 had Bluebird nest on top of swallow nest and big yellow jacket nest, no eggs on 7/23/10. Cleaned out on 11/11/10.

Box 17 had Bluebird nest, fledged and cleaned out on 7/23/10. Squirrel nest cleaned out on 11/11/10.

Box 17A had Bluebird nest, fledged and cleaned out on 7/23/10. Swallow nest, fledged and cleaned out on 11/11/10.

Box 21 had Bluebird nest, fledged and cleaned out on 7/23/10. Box was still empty on 11/11/10.

Box 26 had Bluebird nest, fledged and cleaned out on 7/23/10. Box was still empty on 11/11/10.

Box 31 had Bluebird nest with 3 babies on 7/23/10. 4 Dead Bluebird babies and cleaned out box on 11/11/10.

Box 38 had Bluebird nest complete but perhaps not used and yellow jacket nest, did not clean on 7/23/10. Cleaned out on 11/11/10.

Box 41 had Bluebird nest, post fell down, 1 dead adult and broken eggs on 7/23/10. Empty on 11/11/10.

Box 44 had Bluebird nest, 3 dead babies, cracked roof fixed, cleaned out box on 7/23/10. Empty on 11/11/10.

Bluebird Trail Project 2011

We hope to do more monitoring of the bluebird trails next year. If you are interested in helping with the Bluebird Trail project for next year, sign up with Roland rolcra@roadrunner.com or Shirley shirley.sturts@gmail.com



ARE LOVEBIRDS ENDANGERED?

Let's hope not! Coeur d'Alene Audubon is planning a midwinter banquet as a social occasion and fundraising activity. Here are the details so that you can mark your calendar:

- Monday, February 14, Valentine's Day
- Greenbriar Inn, 315 Wallace Avenue in Coeur d'Alene
- Social hour 6 p.m.; dinner at 7:00 p.m.
- Cost is \$35 per person, payable in advance by February 7
- Payment by cash or check payable to Coeur d'Alene Audubon, delivered to the Treasurer, or mailed to Coeur d'Alene Audubon, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816. Please provide your mailing address to receive a confirmation of payment. Call Ronn Rich (664-3139) if you have questions.

The Greenbriar Inn will be closed to the public and reserved for us on this night, making it an even more special occasion. However, seating is limited so be first to make your reservation. The buffet dinner will have a selection of entrees, including vegetarian, and a no host bar. We hope to have a little entertainment and a few silent auction items to make it interesting. We hope you will plan to come. As Carrie says, you either are a lovebird, or you love birds, so everyone is welcome.

A RAINY FARRAGUT STATE PARK FIELD TRIP - NOVEMBER 7TH

Roland Craft



Photo by Chuck Murray
Western Scrub- Jay - in Bayview
A first for Kootenai County
First seen October 24 - Chuck says it came into
his feeder a half-hour after Roland and his crew
left. It is still there as of November 22

Rain! Rain! And more rain! That was the story of the whole day and altered visits to some trails we wanted to see. We did have a nice group in spite of the weather - Janet Callen, Lisa Hardy, Dick Cripe, Mike Zagar and Roland Craft.

We decided to hike the Shoreline Trail from the boat launch to Beaver Bay Beach and back. There were several restrooms along the way where we stood under the eaves to "dry out".

We saw Bufflehead, Horned Grebe, Common Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red Crossbill and a favorite, two Common Loons. We also scoped Bernard Peak and spotted several Rocky Mountain goat.

Our next stop was Bayview. We were invited to Mr. Murray's property to see a reported Western Scrub-Jay but we were out of luck. We checked out birds in Bayview and saw Mallard, Common Goldeneye, American Coot, California Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Horned Grebe, and Western Grebe.

Considering the weather, we all felt that the trip was fairly rewarding.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

EAST SIDE OF LAKE COEUR D'ALENE FIELD TRIP NOVEMBER 20

Kris Buchler

Six intrepid birders braved crisp temperatures on sunny Saturday to get in training for our three Christmas Bird Counts December 18, January 2 and January 5. We focused on lake birds while tallying small numbers of songbirds along the way.

Our first stop was the pullout at the end of Wolf Lodge Bay. Here and in Beauty Bay we gladly observed a few returning Bald Eagles which will be the focus of the Christmas Eagle Watch. Here was our only California Gull of the day with a few of the many Ring-billed Gulls we saw everywhere. Common Merganser males were in evidence as they usually are this time of year along with some Western Grebe and Pied-billed Grebe. A raft of over 50 Double-crested Cormorants were near the highway bridge near Blue Creek Bay. I've never seen numbers as large as this while doing the Important Bird Area Count for the last seven years. We recorded our first Common Loon near the entrance to Beauty Bay.

Gotham Bay produced two more Common Loon but not much else. It wasn't until we reached Carlin Bay that we found significant numbers of birds. Seven Tundra Swans caught our attention but we couldn't turn even one into a Trumpeter. Horned Grebes gave everyone a great look and Laura Bayless was the first to spot a huge raft of birds out in the center of the lake. A spotting scope determined there were 250+ Western Grebes gathered there.

Thompson Lake was partially iced over but hosted many waterfowl in open water and even some were walking on the ice. One swan appeared to be limping but then we weren't sure if it was just walking on two different substrates. We found 35 swans here and spent some time on identification. A flock of 16 flew over and by using the iPod for song; we knew that they were indeed Tundra Swans. However, close scrutiny found one bird we were 95% certain was a Trumpeter. Here we were treated to an excellent view of a juvenile Northern Shrike. His brownish coloring, rather than pure gray, determined his youth.

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DEAR AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PARTICIPANT:



As the newly appointed President of the National Audubon Society, it is my great honor to thank you for your tremendous contribution to our conservation mission.

This issue of *American Birds* includes the latest CBC findings, but only hints at the true conservation value.

A former newspaper editor, I have long known that the secret to finding the facts of a story is to follow the money. Upon becoming an executive with an environmental organization, I quickly discovered that the secret to effective conservation is to follow the birds—exactly what you and Audubon make possible.

The dedicated efforts of CBC participants like you enabled Audubon to compile one of the world's most extensive databases of bird population trends. Thanks to you, we were able to document the alarming decline of some of America's most popular common birds and to contribute to the collaborative development of a periodic Watch List that monitors the status of rare and seriously imperiled species. This year and for several seasons to come, we anticipate that your efforts will help to clarify the impacts of the BP oil disaster, both on birds that winter in the Gulf and on the millions that use the area as a migratory Grand Central Station.

Christmas Bird Count data are the foundation of scores of peer-reviewed studies, of state and local conservation plans, and of headline-making news. Data you collected inspired Congress to pass and fund vital legislation such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that benefits species across the Western Hemisphere. Your dedication allowed Audubon to reveal disturbing climate-linked shifts in bird ranges. In California, CBC findings enabled Audubon to predict the future impact of climate change on both birds' ranges and habitat health, and to begin planning to help birds adapt. This vital research and response will soon be expanded nationwide.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now using CBC data as one of 24 major indicators of climate impacts. And together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, we are

continuing to evolve Audubon's original CBC-based *State of the Birds Reports* to a multi-group effort that garners attention at the highest levels of government, and enhances the opportunities for the latest information on bird population trends that drive important changes in national conservation policy.

In short, your love of birds and commitment to conservation are at the core of Audubon's role as America's leading advocate for birds and habitat and as one of the nation's most respected conservation organizations. You also are setting an example and keeping alive a tradition that will connect people to nature and to its stewardship for generations to come. I hope you take great pride in your important contribution to the Audubon network and to our conservation mission. And, I invite you to discover more about the combined impact of our work by signing up for updates on Audubon conservation accomplishments and opportunities. Simply visit www.audubonaction.org/cbc. We are gratified that you are a part of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and of all we accomplish together.

Thank you. And, for those participating in the 111th CBC, happy counting!

Sincerely, David Yarnold, President & CEO

EAST SIDE OF LAKE COEUR D'ALENE

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Leaving Thompson Lake along the north shore road, we were able to look down upon the ducks using the sheltered waters. Close to 100 Green-winged Teal were gathered here along with some Ring-necked Ducks, hundreds of Mallards, American Wigeon, small numbers of Northern Pintail, Redhead, Hooded Merganser and Gadwall. We saw at least two Belted Kingfishers, a species that can be very hard to find at times.

Without seeking out tweety birds, we found 33 species including a few songbirds such as Song Sparrow and Black-capped Chickadee. Besides eagles, our only other raptor was a Northern Harrier.

Trip participants were Dick Cripe, Janet Callen, Laura Bayless, Valerie Zagar, Jan Severtson and Kris Buchler.

BIRDING LISTSERVS

When you are leaving your home area – on business or pleasure – and you wish to catch up on some out-of-town birding, it's always a good thing to see what local birders are talking about. Let's say you will be visiting Southern California, Michigan, Florida, Washington DC, and you want to catch up on the local birding scene.

A quick way to do just that is to view the local birding listserv for the area in question. It's a great way to see what birds are being seen, especially which "most-wanted" of your birds or which rarities might be encountered.

For a number of years, Jack Siler has provided a crucial link to most of the vital regional and specialty listservs. It has been a wonderful service. You can view all the listservs through this essential page: www.birdingonthe.net/birdmail.html

In each case, of course, you can subscribe to the listserv in question, but that's not required. At Silers' site you can simply view... and learn!

FIELD TRIPS 2010



PLEASE REGISTER:

Watch the website or newsletter for updates to our field trip schedule. 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. Participants will share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver.

MICA BAY SURVEY

Date: December 14, 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, especially beginner birders. We will help you with identification skills.

AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

We go out in teams. Sign up at the December 14th meeting or call Shirley 664-5318. Note: there is a \$5.00 participation fee, plus we share the cost of the gas with the driver.

COEUR D'ALENE

December 18, 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.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

WHEN: December 18th following the Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count, when it's too dark to bird anymore, and the hunger pangs are too strong to ignore!! All are welcome, not just the bird counters!

WHERE: At Herb and Jan Severtson's

RSVP: (and for directions) Jan, 667-6209. Please bring a dish to share: appetizers, entrees, salads, desserts, plus the beverage of your choice to drink. Need directions? Please call.

INDIAN MOUNTAIN

January 2, Sunday

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 - made by each participating team

SPIRIT LAKE

January 5, Wednesday

Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

shirley.sturts@gmail.com Meet for Breakfast at 6:15 a.m. Rustler's Roost, Hayden Lake, Highway 95 and Hayden Avenue, or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

COMPILING PARTY - PIZZA AND SALAD

WHEN: January 5 following the Spirit Lake Christmas Bird Count, about 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: Janet Callen's home

RSVP: (and for directions) Janet, 664-1085 or email, jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com. 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.

