

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)

December 2011

Volume 21 Number 4

## 112<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Citizen Science in Action

Reprint from the National Audubon Website



### Black-capped Chickadee – photo by Bill Linn

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.

From feeder-watchers to field observers, to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes

part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for the 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.

For more information about how CBC data helps birds go to: [www.christmasbirdcount.org](http://www.christmasbirdcount.org)

To become involved, join one of our local Christmas Bird Counts - see field trips at the end of this newsletter.

## DECEMBER PROGRAM

**DATE:** December 13, Tuesday  
**PLACE:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**SPEAKER:** Kris Buchler  
**PROGRAM:** " Prepping for the Christmas Bird Counts" A quick bird identification review concentrating on those troublesome species, some rarities to look for and a basic course on gulls.

**COOKIE EXCHANGE!** Bring 2 dozen of your favorite Christmas treats – one dozen to trade and one to share!

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:**  
 Look for sign up sheets on the table

**BOARD MEETING**  
**DATE:** December 13, Tuesday  
**PLACE:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA  
**TIME:** 4:30 p.m.

## HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Reprint from the National Audubon Website



Prior to the turn of the last century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go a-field with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition - a "Christmas Bird Census" - that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California, with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

## COUNTY BIG YEAR

As of Nov. 21, a total of 297 bird species have been observed in Idaho during 2011. The top five counties are: **Ada** 229, **Owyhee** 200, **Canyon** 197, **Kootenai** 191, **Gem** 189.

### **Recent additions to the Kootenai County list:**

#### Doug Ward added

White-winged Scoter-Nov.7-Cougar Bay  
Surf Scoter-Oct.29-Cougar Bay  
Snowy Owl-Nov.12-Rathdrum Prairie  
Common Redpoll-Nov.12 – his feeder  
Greater Scaup-Nov.12 –Cougar Bay

#### Bill and Joan Gunlach added

Golden Eagle-Oct.12-Killarney Lake

#### Mike Halderman added

White-throated Sparrow-Oct. 10-Blue Creek Bay

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch-Oct.16 –Latour Pk

Thayer's Gull-Nov.5 – CDA City Beach

White-winged Crossbill-Oct.27-Cougar Bay

#### CDA Field Trip-Janet Callen leader added

Pacific Loon- Oct. 22-Wolf Lodge Bay

#### Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Shirely Sturts added

Red-thoated Loon-Nov.8-Cougar Bay

#### Norma Trefly added:

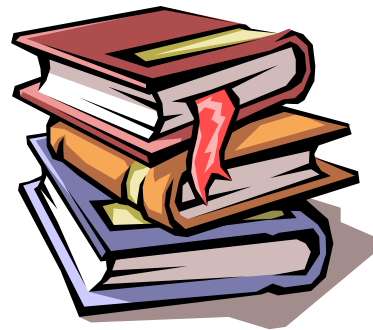
Snow Bunting-Nov.13-Rathdrum Prairie

Read about the County Big Year on:

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

or

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



**ANOTHER  
CHANCE  
TO BUY  
USED  
BOOKS !!!!**

If you missed the sale at the "Shops", please come to our next Audubon meeting on Dec 13th. All books are nature-related plus you can buy new calendars with three choices of subjects. This is your last chance--come browse through this unique collection!

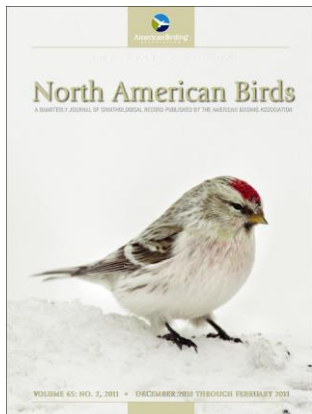
We had a very successful book sale on Saturday, Nov. 12th. Our appreciation and thanks to those of you donating your wonderful books! Jenny Taylor receives a special thank you for her large donation of 100 books to our Audubon chapter before she left the area. Thank you, Jenny!! Special thanks goes to the group who sorted, priced, and stored the books, then set up the tables at the Resort Shops Plaza to sell the books and calendars. Those folks are: Laura Bayless, Valerie Zagar, Lynn Sheridan, Antje Cripe, Jan Severtson, Roland Craft, Kris Buchler and Joan Gundlach. Our special thanks to Mr. Chuck Shirley, Resort Events Manager, who graciously provided the space, tables, and advice, for our sale.

# CHECK OUT THE LATEST NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS!

by [Ned Brinkley](#)

Reprinted from the American Birding Association ABA Blog 10/27/11

Why subscribe to *North American Birds*? Good question!



The answer, for decades, has been: To stay abreast of changes in bird distribution across North America. But what exactly does that mean in the twenty-first century?

In the past decade, with the flourishing of internet-based bird resources of so many kinds, some have worried that the the instant

news of rare birds we receive via iPads, iPhones, and myriad other glitzy devices would make the journal obsolete. How could a quarterly publication even compare?

It's true that *North American Birds* does not offer instant information. The journal offers a different sort of information altogether: an overview of what just happened in the preceding season, with summary and analysis on both the regional and the continental levels.

Unlike the internet's scattered bird material, some of it excellent, some fanciful, *North American Birds*, for nearly a century has presented solid information from the continent's sharpest teams of birders and ornithologists. With historical context, new insights, and even a little well-grounded speculation, the journal offers a combination found nowhere else in the birding or ornithological worlds.

In the economic climate of the past five years, many of us have cut our expenses down to the most essential. Perhaps you're one of the people who now travels a bit less for birding, concentrating more on local and regional birds. And maybe you've found that there are as many fascinating, unanswered questions about birds in your area as there are in some of the places you've traveled.

If you're one of the thousands of birders hoping to learn more about what's going on with our THE FISH HAWK HERALD

birds, *North American Birds* will provide abundant food for thought—about patterns of bird distribution related to weather systems, climate, and habitat changes, as well as those patterns whose causes are both unknown and uninvestigated. You'll be able to apply the lessons (and questions) from others in your area and from other regions to your own birding—making that transition from good birder to great, not just learning but also identifying the many gaps in our understanding of birds.

As evidence for these outlandish claims, and to whet your appetite to subscribe, we offer links to three items in our latest issue (see this article in our Website: [www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)).

## Four Redpolls Visit Ontario

## Subspecies of Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sparrows

## The Changing Seasons: Escapes

The last item, an essay we offer with each issue, covers a diversity of topics in winter 2010-2011, from Northern Lapwings and other European vagrants in eastern Canada, to the flight of Dovekies, to Greater Ani, Ross's Gulls, and Black-vented Oriole. There is eye candy, yes, but there is careful pondering in these pages too. (Put them on your iPad and zoom in on those photos and graphics—gorgeous and informative? yes! boring? nope!)

If you're someone who wants to go beyond the field guides, pondering hybrids and subspecies, or to figure out what a cold front, tropical storm, or blizzard might bring to your part of the continent, or to predict the best time to visit Newfoundland to look for European birds, then four times a year, we have a treasure trove for you, with plenty to keep you busily honing your strategies for birding in your backyard and beyond, for redpolls or alcids, warblers or tropicbirds. We cover not just the ABA Area—we cover the entire AOU Area, almost 2100 species!

The journal's offerings change from issue to issue, but they are consistently topical and thoughtful and on the cutting edge of what is known about bird distribution and identification. As hurricane Irene approached the East Coast two months ago, hundreds of birders rushed for their back issues of *North American Birds*, for clues as to what they

**Continued on page 4**



## NEW STAMP ART CHOSEN



On 29 October, the new artwork for the 2012-13 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (commonly called the "Duck Stamp") was chosen. There were five qualifying species in the competition: Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Wood Duck, and Gadwall. An image of a male Wood Duck by Joseph Hautman was ultimately chosen. (Joe Hautman has now won the contest four times!) [www.fws.gov/duckstamps/](http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/)

This colorful illustration will appear on the 2012-2013 stamp and the proceeds for the \$15 stamp will go to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) to secure wetland and grassland habitat for the refuge system.

## ...NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS!

Continued from page 3

might expect from the storm. They were glad to have the benefit of many decades of thinking about this dramatic phenomenon, witnessed for the first time on such a scale in over 70 years in New York, New Jersey, and southern New England. Their preparation produced hundreds of amazing bird records. Curious about *Irene's* birds? Tune in to the fall 2011 issue, already in preparation!

**Editor's Note:** You may not realize that some of your sightings may have been sent to Dave Trochlell, regional editor for all of Idaho and western Montana. They may also have turned up in one of the *North American Birds* publications. I send in a quarterly report on bird sightings in North Idaho to Dave. The four quarters are: winter - December-February, spring - March-May, summer

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

- June-July, and fall-August-November. Dave is limited to a certain number of words so only a few North Idaho sightings make it into the publication. For example, three of our North Idaho sightings made it into the December 2010-February 2011 issue: the Mew Gull (reported all three months by Lisa Hardy, Kris Buchler and Bill Gundlach), The Western Scrub Jay that spent the winter at the feeder of Chuck Murray in Bayview, and the Spotted Towhee seen during count week of the Coeur d'Alene CBC by Doug Ward.

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

From The Birding Community E Bulletin B

October 2011

National Geographic's *Field Guide To The Birds Of North America* has been a standard since first appearing in 1983. Still, why would yet another edition merit attention? And, more importantly, if you have the 4th or 5th edition, why would you even consider getting this 6th edition that has just been produced?

Your editors definitely think it's worth it! The 6th edition - thoroughly re-tooled by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer - contains more new material than any other previously published revision, and it is most impressive. For instance, it includes 300 new art figures (amazingly produced by five artists, all with extensive field experience); it contains extensive migration information overlaid on the species maps; it also includes a series of breakthrough subspecies maps; and there are thumbnail presentations that increase the number of mega-rarities covered at the end of the book from an impressive 71 to an astounding 92.

Of course, the ID text has also improved where desired or necessary. Even the font is finer and crisper than in the previous editions. But perhaps the most interesting innovation in this 6th edition is the addition of field-mark labels on almost all the illustrations. These are often mini-notes, hints, or Peterson-like pointers to draw your attention to one or another aspect of each species' look and feel.

The combination of organization, illustration, and design adds up to a book that should please birders at virtually any level of experience.

## RARITY FOCUS

From THE BIRDING COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN

\*\*\*\*\*

October 2011

<http://www.refugeassociation.org/birding/birding6.html>



Birders can find Northern Wheatear in most North American field guides, but that doesn't mean they can find one close to home! Northern Wheatears are primarily an Old-World species that, in North America, prefer open and rock-strewn habitats in Alaska and the Yukon in the west and Nunavut and northernmost Quebec and Labrador in the east. The Alaskan/Yukon and the Greenland/Eastern-Canadian-Arctic wheatears represent two different subspecies, both of which leave North America in the fall, each population traveling an extraordinary distance to winter in sub-Saharan Africa. Because of this, finding one south of the species' limited North American breeding range is remarkable.

But this is exactly what happened in late September and October at a number of places, both at coastal sites and even at a few inland locations. Although Northern Wheatears are occasionally found along the Atlantic coast in fall, the species is much more rare on the West Coast.

Here's what we already know about this fall. The first sighting under consideration actually occurred on 28 September in Newfoundland where a Northern Wheatear (probably a female) was found at Red Cliff.

Then, on 6 October, a visiting South Carolina birder found a Northern Wheatear at a dumpster behind a Days Inn in Lickdale, Pennsylvania. The bird stayed until 10 October and was photographed on 8 October by Geoff Malosh, whose photos and notes can be found here:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~pomarine4/id23.html>

Next, on 7 October, another Northern Wheatear was found at the Walkill Watershed Management Area in Orange County, New York, right across the way from the viewing platform at Walkill National Wildlife Refuge. This bird remained until at least 9 October.

About the same time, another Northern Wheatear was found at the lagoon at Abram's Village on Prince Edward Island on 8 October. This individual continued through 10 October, the same day that another wheatear was seen and photographed along Waite Road in Sherbrooke. This individual was reported again on 20 October.

In addition to these and other East Coast reports of Northern Wheatears, some were even found on the West Coast: Starting on 23 September, Daniel Tinoco observed and photographed a Northern Wheatear at Malibu Lagoon in California. To see pictures of this bird see:

[www.whatbird.com/forums/storage/10/259878/IMG\\_2647.JPG](http://www.whatbird.com/forums/storage/10/259878/IMG_2647.JPG)

Then, on the afternoon of 2 October, a birder found a Northern Wheatear on private property north of Anchor Bay, Mendocino County, California, where it was last seen on the morning of 4 October. And most recently another Northern Wheatear was observed for several minutes in Curry County, Oregon, just east of the Pistol River Bridge on 17 October. And there may have been more Northern Wheatears found last month and this fall, but this is certainly an impressive sample.

### **Kootenai County Big Year 2011 (editors Note)**

I'm sure we won't be able to add a Northern Wheatear to our Kootenai County Big Year. However, there are some species that we would like to add before January 1, 2012. If you have seen one sometime this year, let me know about it.

Missing from our list: White-breasted Nuthatch (we have had one every year –all January dates.), Barrow's Goldeneye (another usual for January but not this year), Gray Partridge (they are out there but hard to find), Glaucous-winged Gull (on the Idaho Bird Records Committee "Review List" – rare bird report requested), Owls (also hard to find Barred, Western Screech, Northern Saw-whet, Long and Short Eared), Black and White Warbler © (one never knows - found during CBC in the City Park in 2004)

## A HIKE ON MINERAL RIDGE

November 5, 2011

Janet Callen



**Pacific Loon**  
– Photo by Wayne Tree

Crisp fall weather with larch and cottonwoods in brilliant yellow-gold, made for a perfect day to hike on Mineral Ridge. In both Wolf Lodge Bay and Beauty Bay, Bufflehead, Western Grebes, Horned Grebes, Common Mergansers and

cormorants were among the 16 species identified. And there were the loons. As we traveled the south side of Wolf Lodge Bay, we spotted a group of five loons to the north near the Blue Creek Bay bridge. When we drove around the corner from Wolf Lodge to Beauty Bay, we saw another group of seven loons. All of these appeared to be Common Loons, but we were unable to stop for a closer look.

Later in the morning as we returned from the Mineral Ridge Trail, we saw two more loons that were close enough to observe well in the area where Beauty Bay joins Wolf Lodge Bay. After much consultation and close examination of bird guides, we concluded these two were Pacific Loons.

Another good birding day with Roland Craft, Valerie Zagar, Matt Thurley and Karen Williams.

## WATERVILLE PLATEAU

November 20, 2011

Janet Callen

Seven Coeur d'Alene birders (tough people all) left town at 5:30 a.m. to join the Spokane Audubon Society. From our meeting place, we headed west along Highway 2 towards Wilber, WA, to an area known as the Waterville Plateau. As we traveled west, the terrain gradually turned more rugged with sagebrush and basalt cliffs. Wheat fields were carved around outcroppings of house-sized rocks which appeared to have been dropped from the sky. And we could see for miles in any direction. Kim Thorburn, the Spokane leader, led us via back roads into the small town of Mansfield. The town was pretty quiet, but as many as 100 or more

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

California Quail seemed to have taken over the town's streets.

Some of the highlights of the day were numerous Northern Harriers, and many flocks of Horned Larks. Kris Buchler spotted a Great-Horned Owl, sitting in a willow. In a stand of brush and trees, probably once the wind-break for a farmstead, we saw five Long-eared Owls. All of us had great views of the birds as they flew back and forth. I recorded 32 species for the day, but may have missed some.

“...yes it was a long day, but so worth it. Besides the owls (which were remarkable) our car saw a fabulous landing and subsequent take-off of a light-morph Rough-legged Hawk which really displayed all the distinguishing markings beautifully”, commented Karen Williams. And Matt Thurley described the landscape as VanGogh-esque. And it was, with bright yellow stubble sticking up in the white snow, red-brown basalt cliffs, gray-green sage and blue-green conifers in the background. My thanks to Roland Craft for driving my car and to Bill Gundlach for taking his. Our two Subarus were part of a caravan of five Subarus. And I am pleased that Mary Deasy joined us.

## KOOTENAI ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE (KEA) DECEMBER CALENDAR

### Thursday, December 1st @ Noon

The Iron Horse Restaurant 407 Sherman Ave  
**Program:** KEA Lunch & Learn: CDA Basin Clean Up & the Natural Resource Damage Assessment  
**Speakers:** Rebecca Stevens, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and Jeff Johnson, BLM  
Free & Open to the Public

### Saturday, December 3rd 2:00-6:00

#### Wes Hanson Art Show

The Log House 1302 N 7th St., CDA  
Coeur d'Alene art lovers come and enjoy an array of watercolors by local artist Wes Hanson. Sales benefit Kootenai Environmental Alliance. For a sneak preview go to: [www.kealliance.org](http://www.kealliance.org) Free admission, cocktails & appetizers.

### Thursday, December 15th @ Noon

#### KEA Christmas Party

The Iron Horse Restaurant 407 Sherman Ave.  
Free & Open to the Public.





## FIELD TRIPS 2011-2012

**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 mileage reimbursement for the driver.

### COEUR D'ALENE CBC SCOUTING TRIP

**Date:** December 3, Saturday  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - half day  
**Meet:** South end of K-Mart Parking Lot  
**Leader:** Roland Craft - 457-8894  
**Activity:** This is a scouting trip for the Coeur d'Alene CBC. We will see if we can locate recently reported birds such as the Snowy Owl, Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Pacific and Red-throated Loon etc.

### MICA BAY SURVEY

**Date:** December 13, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. **Note time change**  
**Meet:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95  
**Leader:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318  
**Activity:** We spend about 2-3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome. We will help you with identification skills.

## AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

**We go out in teams. Sign up at the December 14<sup>th</sup> 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 CBC December 17, Saturday

**Compiler:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318  
[shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.sturts@gmail.com) or 7:00 a.m. to join your team. Meet for breakfast at 6:00 a.m., Michael D's Eatery

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

**WHEN:** December 17<sup>th</sup>, 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:** Home of Laura Bayless -612 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, CDA. **RSVP:** Laura at 964-0115. Please bring a dish to share: appetizer, entree, salad, dessert, plus the beverage of your choice.

### INDIAN MOUNTAIN CBC January 2, Sunday

**Compiler:** Don Heikkila 659-3389 -

[jdfinn@sm-email.com](mailto:jdfinn@sm-email.com)

Team organizers: Shirley Sturts 664-5318 -  
[shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.sturts@gmail.com) and Lisa Hardy 783-1262  
[basalt@earthlink.net](mailto:basalt@earthlink.net)

Meet and time - made by each participating team

### SPIRIT LAKE CBC January 5, Wednesday

**Compiler:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318

[shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com). Please bring money to share the cost of the pizza, something to add to a green salad (greens will be provided). Hot tea will be provided. Bring whatever else you want to drink.

