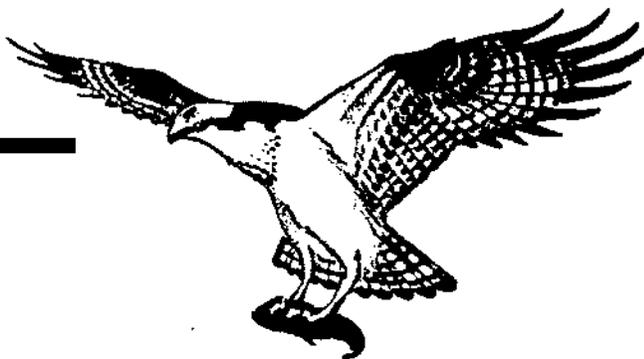


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD

**Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society**

**Pam Gontz, Editor**  
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**February 1992**

**Volume 2, No. 1**

## **CALENDAR CHECK! --**

**FEB. 18, 1992 7 PM**      **FEBRUARY MEETING** - location: basement of the Security Pacific Bank in Hayden Lake. This will be "Video Night". We will show Roger Tory Peterson's "How to Attract Birds to Your Yard" and if the group hasn't already seen it, Audubon's "New Range Wars".

**FEB. 25, 1992**      **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** for submitting articles, etc.

## **THANKS AND WELCOME . . .**

We have a changing of the guards for Hospitality Chair. First we want to thank Joan Sestak for being the hospitality chair the last year. She has done a wonderful job of making sure we have our goodie quotas and caffeine for the evening. Thanks, Joan, for the terrific job!

Second, we'd like to welcome Talopatina "Moana" Anderson as our new Hospitality Chairperson!

Members and Non-members are Invited to the

## **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

### **NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**Capitol Hill Reception ♦ Council Conclave ♦ Exciting Speakers ♦ Hands-on Training Sessions ♦ Population/Science/Education/Sanctuary Workshops ♦ Learn about Wildlife Habitats ♦ Protect Ancient Forests ♦ Mid-Atlantic Natural Treasures ♦ Exhibits ♦ Save Wetlands ♦ Make a Big Difference for Wildlife ♦ Bookstore ♦ Earth Summit Report ♦ Endangered Species Need You! ♦**



American University

Washington, DC

June 13 - 19, 1992

**BIRD NOTES -**

- Boreal Chickadees - at Susan Weller's feeder
- Yellow-billed Loon & Bonaparte's Gull - seen at Harrison Slough on 01/01/92 by Dan Svingen
- Barn Owl - seen 01/06/92 by Dan Svingen on St. Joe River Road. Seen again by the Audubon field trip group on 01/10/92.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler - seen in St. Maries on 01/10/92 by Dan Svingen
- Greater Scaup - seen on 01/12/92 on Chatcolet Lake by Dan Svingen
- Pygmy Owls (2) - seen on St. Joe River Road on 01/15/92 by Ila Svingen
- Great Horned Owl - seen near Poleline & Huetter intersection on 01/16/92 by Pam Gontz
- Glaucous Gulls (3) - seen at Kootenai County Landfill on 01/17/92 by Dan Svingen
- Thayer's Gull
- Blue Jay - seen near Harrison Slough area on 01/19/92 by Dan Svingen
- Common Snipe - seen at Mission Point on 01/19/92 by Dan Svingen
- Great Horned Owl - seen near Ramsey & Kathleen intersection on 01/20/92 by Pam Gontz
- Great Horned Owl - seen near Ramsey & Hanley intersection on 01/21/92 by Pam Gontz
- Great Horned Owl - seen near Rainey Hill Area on 01/25/92 by Pam Gontz
- Greater White-fronted Goose - seen on Chatcolet Lake by Dan Svingen on 01/26/92
- Great Horned Owl - seen near Poleline & Huetter intersection on 01/31/92 by Pam Gontz
- Short-eared Owl - seen near Huetter & Poleline intersection on 01/24/92 by Pam Gontz
- Red-necked Grebe - (1st winter plumage) seen in Beauty Bay on 01/25/92 by Pam Gontz
- Bewick's Wren - seen in Benewah Lake Area 01/18/92 by Dan Svingen and again on 01/20/92
- Swamp Sparrow - seen near Plummer Creek area, Heyburn State Park, on 01/26/92 by Dan Svingen and again on 02/02/92
- Bewick's Wren (2) - two "heard" in Benewah Lake Area 02/01/92 by Dan Svingen, Shirley Sturts, and Pam Gontz



A few other bird species seen in search of Bewick's Wren on 02/01/92 by Dan, Shirley & Pam: Winter Wren, Bald Eagle (A-7/imm-1), Townsend's Solitaire, Red-winged Blackbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Canvasback Ducks, Pintails, Redhead Ducks, and Lesser Scaup

Some of the bird species seen on a one-day drive to Davenport and Grand Coulee on 01/18/92 by Pam Gontz: Rough-legged Hawks [A-7/imm-10], Red-tailed Hawks (8), Northern Shrikes (2), Snow Buntings (7), Gray Partridge (9), Prairie Falcon, Short-eared Owl (2), Great Horned Owl

A few of the birds seen on a one day trip to the Moses Lake area on 02/02/92 by Pam Gontz: Burrowing Owls (2), Horned Larks, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Green-winged Teals, Western Meadowlarks, Northern Harriers (10), Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle [imm.]

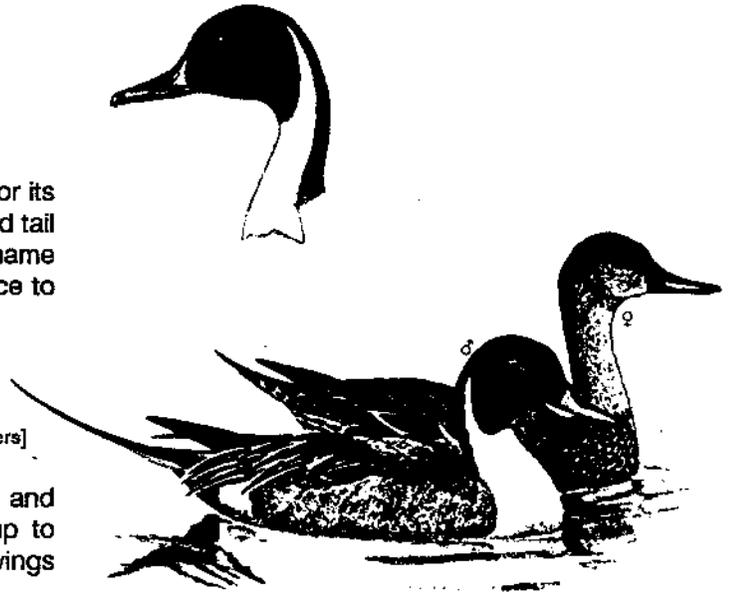
## FEATHERED FACTS --

### NORTHERN PINTAIL [Anas acuta]

The Northern Pintail has in its name the words "Northern" for its Northern Hemisphere range and "Pintail" for the long pointed tail of the male. *Anas* is Latin for 'a duck'. The species name *acuta* is from the Latin "acutus" meaning sharp, in reference to the tail.

#### DIAGNOSTIC FEATURES:

- a dabbler duck [see companion article on Dabblers v. Divers]
- a graceful, slender duck with narrow wings
- adult male has a brown head, slender white neck and breast, with thin vertical white stripe extending up to side of head; grayish overall, with some black in wings and fairly long, thin, black central tail feathers
- female is mottled brownish overall with slender neck, blue bill, and long tail



**SIMILAR SPECIES:** The female Mallard is stockier, browner, with blue speculum bordered fore and aft with white. The female Gadwall has a white patch in the speculum.

**BREEDING HABITAT AND NESTING:** The Northern Pintail breeds in grasslands, cultivated fields, tundra, sandy flats, islands in boreal forest lakes, marshes and ponds. Their nests are occasionally far from water and concealed in grasses or stubble. The nests that are placed in stubble fields are often plowed up. Dry grasses and leaves are used to fill the nest and then a liner of finer materials is used. Down is added as incubation progresses. Eggs are 2.2" and are olive-green or olive-buff. Their clutch size of 6 to 9 eggs is smaller than most of the dabbling ducks.

**DIET:** The Pintail's diet consists of 90% vegetation including seeds, aquatic vegetation, sedges and grasses. It also feeds on minnows, aquatic invertebrates, insects and tadpoles.

**CONSERVATION NOTES:** Northern Pintails are one of several ducks that seem to suffer the heaviest mortality due to lead poisoning. Pintails eat hard seeds and grains similar in appearance to lead shot and dig with their bills for tubers and seeds of aquatic vegetation in areas where the lead pellets lodge. Other ducks and geese that forage the same as Pintails such as Mallards, Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Canvasbacks, Lesser Scaups and Canada Geese suffer the same fate. Ducks such as Northern Shovelers, Blue-winged Teals, Green-winged Teals, and Wood Ducks have lower lead poisoning mortality rates because they take softer food and forage without digging. A single pellet swallowed with some food or taken as grit and ground in the gizzard can introduce enough lead into the bloodstream to kill a duck. This lead poisoning is also carried over to predators such as the Bald Eagle. Since 1980 more than 60 Bald Eagles which have preyed on waterfowl acquired the poison and died.

[ - Pam Gontz Sources: The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds, by John K. Terres; The Birder's Handbook, by Ehrlich, Dobkin & Wheye; Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society; Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds' Nests, by Hal H. Harrison]

SPECIAL  
THANKS  
TO:



The Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society would like to thank ALPINE PRINTING for their donation to our newsletter. Please support ALPINE PRINTING, 205-F East Seltice Way, Post Falls, with your patronage.

**DUCKS . . . ARE THEY A DABBLER OR A DIVER?**

You may have noticed in your field guides that ducks have been separated into groups on the basis of who eats what, where and when. Basically the ducks have been divided into two, sometimes three, groups -- Dabblers or dabbling ducks [some field guides refer to these as surface-feeding ducks] and Divers or diving ducks [referred to in some field guides as bay ducks or sea ducks]. The chart below shows which category different duck species fall into.

**DABBLERS, DIVERS & DUCKS THAT DIVE**

| <i>Dabblers</i>   | <i>Divers &amp; Stiff-tailed Divers</i>   | <i>Ducks that Dive</i><br><i>[usually not referred to as "Divers"</i><br><i>- often called "Sea Ducks"]</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Green-winged Teal<br>Mallard<br>Northern Pintail<br>Blue-winged Teal<br>Cinnamon Teal<br>Northern Shoveler<br>Gadwall<br>American Wigeon<br>American Black Duck<br>Mottled Duck | Canvasback<br>Redhead<br>Ring-necked Duck<br>Greater Scaup<br>Lesser Scaup<br>Ruddy Duck<br>Masked Duck | Harlequin Duck<br>Oldsquaw<br>Goldeneyes<br>Bufflehead<br>Mergansers<br>Eiders<br>Scoters                   |

Below are some of the differences between dabbling and diving ducks --

**DABBLERS**

**DIVERS**

1. ***Legs centered under body***

***Legs at back of body***

This is a characteristic you can't see when their in the water. The legs of dabbling ducks tend to be more centered under the body and are able to walk well on land. Diving ducks with their legs placed towards the back of the body don't walk well on land.

2. ***Hind toe is not lobed***



***Hind toe is lobed***



This is not a useful characteristic for identification purposes, but it is important in morphologically separating the groups out. The hind lobed toe of the diving duck helps with swimming and diving.

3. ***Feet smaller***

***Feet larger***

Diver's feet tend to be larger. This trait is important for divers as they pursue prey under water and need to swim more quickly than a dabbling duck.

4. ***Iridescent speculums***

***Dull speculums***

This is important for identification purposes. The divers, as a whole, have very dull speculums. Dabblers, on the other hand, tend to have iridescent speculums. [See companion article 'Avian Anatomy' for definition and location of the speculum.]

5. ***Sits with tail out of the water***

***Sits with tail in water or even with water***



Looking at how a duck sits on the water is often used in identification between divers and dabblers.

## 6. Springs up off the water



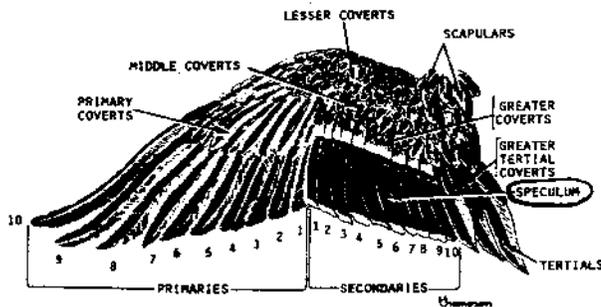
## Runs across the water



Another characteristic between Dabblers and Divers is how the bird takes flight off the water. Dabblers spring up off the water and take flight immediately. Diving ducks run across the water. This has to do with wing loading of Diving ducks. The wings of a diving duck are not as large in relation to the size of its body, so they have to run across the water take off. The force they generate with each flap isn't nearly as great as with Dabbler ducks. [-Pam Gontz Sources: The Birder's Handbook, Ehrlich, Dobkin & Wheye; Ducks, Geese, & Swans of North America, Frank C. Bellrose]

**AVIAN ANATOMY -**

One of the key identification features in identifying ducks species is the speculum. The speculum is the lustrous or specially colored area on the wing of certain birds. Below is a diagram of a duck's wing showing the location of the speculum. The speculum is also illustrated below in pictures of a duck in flight and in a sitting position.



[-Pam Gontz; Source: Ducks, Geese & Swans of North America, by Frank C. Bellrose; Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society]

**FIELD TRIP REPORT [January 11, 1992] -**

Nine birders met for breakfast at Rustler's Roost before heading out to count Bald Eagles around Wolf Lodge and Beauty Bay on Coeur d'Alene Lake. We were participating in the Mid-winter Bald Eagle survey sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation. This count has been done nation wide for several years. We counted 18 adults and 1 immature. Other birds counted were as follows: Great Blue Heron 2, Canada Goose 90, Mallard 69, Common Goldeneye 2, Common Merganser 295, Ring-billed Gull several, Common Raven 7, Golden-crowned Kinglet 3. After our official counting was done we drove to Rose Lake where Susan Weller joined us on a trip to the St. Maries area to look for the Bewick's Wren and to meet with Dan and Ila Svingen who took us out to see a Barn Owl along the St. Joe River. We didn't see the Bewick's Wren but we did see the Barn Owl. Birds seen between Rose Lake and St. Maries are as follows: Great-blue Heron 1, Bald Eagle 1, Red-tailed Hawk 4, American Kestrel 1, Ring-necked Pheasant 6, Wild Turkey (about) 12, Common Snipe 1, Northern Flicker 1, Belted Kingfisher 1, Black-billed Magpie 1, Common Raven 2, European Starling 27, Song Sparrow 2, Dark-eyed Junco 10.

Participants were: Shirley Sturts (leader), Phil Waring, Bee and Chuck Finne, Noah and Haley Couser, Pam Gontz, Gertie Hanson, Issac Torres, and Susan Weller. [-Shirley Sturts]



# NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send the Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$20 payable to the National Audubon Society is enclosed.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Send this application and your check to  
National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Local Chapter  
Coeur d'Alene G06

Local Chapter Code  
7XCH8

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