



# THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society  
Editor: Shirley Sturts - E4615 Fernan Lake Rd - Coeur d'Alene, Id. 83814 - 664-5318

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## BIRD SIGHTINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

Would you be interested in leading a field trip? Do you have any suggestions for locations or types of field trips you would like to see? Are there any special birds you would like to identify? Please call Shirley Sturts at 664-5318 with your suggestions or questions. It is a good idea to call and register with the field trip leader. The weather, unusual sightings or conflicts could change the time and location of the field trip. If you have any unusual or interesting bird sightings please call me. I'm looking for sightings to put in the newsletter. I also keep a bird record data base. I try to call the birding hot line weekly and would be glad to pass your sighting on so that others could look for it. If you wish to call the birding hot line yourself the number is: 1 (208) 882-6195.



## CALENDAR CHECK

**FEB. 6 SUNDAY**  
**FIELD TRIP: HAWK**  
**IDENTIFICATION**

Time: 9 AM

Place: Ward's Parking Lot  
S.E. corner

This is a half day trip on the Rathdrum Prairie to check out hawk and owl species. If time and interest we may visit Hayden or Hauser Lake

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318. (Please call and register as the date of this trip could change depending on the weather)

**FEB. 15 TUESDAY**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

Time: 7 PM

Place: Iron Horse

Program: A slide presentation from Idaho Rivers United on wild and scenic rivers in Idaho.

**FEB. 20 or 27 SUNDAY**  
**FIELD TRIP: COUGAR**  
**BAY AND MICA BAY**

Time: 8 A.M.

Place: Ward Parking Lot  
S.E. corner

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318 (please call the date of this trip is tentative) This will be a 1/2 day trip to look for waterfowl and migrants that return north early such as Red-winged Blackbirds.

# MID-WINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY

Susan Weller, Leader

On January 8th a troop of Audubon field trippers set out to make short work of the 1994 mid-winter Bald Eagle survey. After a hearty breakfast at Rustler's Roost, we headed out into



a mild snow storm to count eagles. Our initial trepidation about whether or not we'd be able to distinguish Bald Eagles from snow clumps vanished once we were afield.

Joining me and my husband Greg were regulars Herb and Jan Severtson, Randy and Ryan Backman, and Ryan's friend Brad Barnett. The Backmans are new to the area, as are Brad and his family. Both young men were good spotters, and were additionally helpful because they were both wearing time pieces!

We saw our first Bald Eagle at 8:38 a.m. across from the lake from Tony's Restaurant at Bennett Bay. The new freeway arrangement added an interesting cross-country jog to the count, but did not disrupt things too badly. We nearly had to backtrack across Mullan Trail Road to get to Wolf Lodge Bay. Counting was lively this year and we had tallied 18 adult Bald Eagles, and 2 immature

Bald Eagles by morning end. This year's total of twenty birds is more than double the number of birds seen on the 1994 count.

As usual, much bird life abounded in Wolf Lodge Bay. We counted Belted Kingfisher, Bufflehead, Canada Geese and Common Goldeneye. We were able to spot the Pacific Loon documented earlier in the week by Dan Svingen in Wolf Lodge Bay.

Later in the day, Greg and I wandered up the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. On the way, we spotted a Bald Eagle at the Cataldo Slough, and a pair of Bald Eagles on the river.

# GULL IDENTIFICATION TRIP

Shirley Sturts, Leader

On Jan. 16 Dan Svingen and Shirley Sturts visited the Fighting Creek Landfill to identify and count the gulls. Dan has spent many hours studying the gulls and has become the local expert identifying the various species in their adult and immature plumage. There were approximately 450 gulls present. About 2/3 were Herring and 1/3 California. There were no Ring-Billed Gulls. However we were looking for the rare visitors and we were not disappointed. There were 2 Glaucous Gull (1 1st winter and 1 2nd winter), 1 Glaucous-winged Gull (2nd winter), and 3 1st winter Thayer's Gulls.

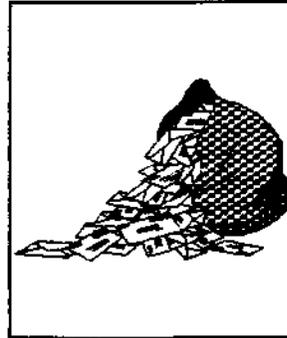
## \*\*\*TAKE ACTION\*\*\*

### VOLUNTEERISM UNDER ATTACK

(Report from Susan Weller)

Late in October of 1993 the house passed H.R. 1845, a bill to establish the National Biological Survey (NBS), a new agency within the Department of Interior. The purpose of the NBS is to better assess the Nation's biological resources, including birds. Agencies within the NBS include the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Unfortunately, when the House passed this bill it also adopted potentially harmful amendments, including the one by Rep. Billy Tauzin, a Democrat from Louisiana. Tauzin's amendment would remove a provision authorizing the Secretary of Interior to accept the services of volunteers for collecting scientific data for any of the aforementioned agencies. Tauzin does not want data collected by volunteers to go into a national data base. Many of the comments made to the House floor regarding this issue are insulting to volunteers everywhere. In short Tauzin is worried that volunteers from environmental and conservation organizations would somehow plot together to skew data on scientific surveys. He feels information collected by volunteers on the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) somehow constitutes "...bad science." Or consider the words of Rep. Jack Fields, a republican from Texas:



LETTERS NEEDED

"It is hard to believe that an interest group could actually be one of the volunteers, that we could have the ...Audubon Society.. qualify as

volunteers to go out and collect data... And in essence we are creating an environmental gestapo that will go on people's private property."

Evidently, Mr. Tauzin has never tried to submit a poorly documented, unsubstantiated sighting to his local representative of American Birds. Unusual sightings on the CBC must be backed by at least two credible witnesses, and a photograph or field sketch of the species in question. I have personally had species I have seen on a CBC not accepted by American Birds, as have most experienced birders. The CBC already has a very reliable system in place that guards against well-meaning but incorrect sightings. It is not necessary to enact legislation against volunteers to prevent them from collecting data-- or to keep government agencies from accepting this data.

**\*\*\* Take Action\*\*\*Continued**

In fact, much of what we have learned about bird distribution over the past one hundred years is information collected and contributed by volunteers.

Another disturbing facet of Mr. Tauzin's amendment is that it could dismantle the (BBS). Again, much of what we know about birds, their migration and distribution, their population rises and declines, has been collected over the past twenty years by volunteers of the BBS.

The ironic thing is, in the state of Idaho about 80 percent of the volunteers collecting data for the BBS are wildlife professionals. According to Mr. Tauzin, that means that Dr. Chuck Trost, an ornithologist from Pocatello, is practicing good science when he collects data for his university.

However, the data collected by Dr. Trost as a volunteer on the BBS suddenly becomes "bad science" because he is volunteering his time.

As BBS coordinator for the state of Idaho, I know the effort that goes into finding people qualified to conduct a BBS.

Tauzin's fears are totally unfounded and his "volunteer provision" is a insult to the integrity of volunteers everywhere.



This is a sad state of affairs, but there is something you can do to help. Write or call your local legislators and let them know that Billy Tauzin's amendment to H.R. 1845 is unacceptable.

Ask your representative to support the use of volunteers to collect data that would be accepted by the NBS.

(Larry LaRocco has already voted against the amendment in the House)

Write to: Senator Larry Craig  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dick Kempthorne  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The following **\*\*\*Take Action\*\*\*** are reports from Ellen Scriven

### BOMBING RANGE IN IDAHO'S OWYHEE CANYONLANDS

Oppose the bombing range planned for this area. The Owyhee Canyonlands contain some of the finest examples of native desert vegetation and overall biological diversity found in a high-desert ecosystem. In order to protect the desert bighorn sheep in this region, the BLM designated key habitat as an Area of Critical Environmental concern. Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcon use the airspace. The bombing range would severely impact 15 Wilderness Study Areas and a candidate for Wild and Scenic Rivers.

**\*\*\*Take Action\*\*\***

Critical habitat for pronghorn antelope (highest density in Idaho) would be endangered. Fires would will be more frequent as a result of bombing activities and the noise would be disruptive.

An Air Force draft Environmental impact statement is now out for public comment. Secretary Babbitt must be urged to disallow a land swap between Idaho BLM and the USAF. LaRocco has not yet decided weather to support protection of the Owyhee Canyonlands.

Write by Feb. 9 to:  
Ms. Brenda Cook  
HQACC/CEVA  
129 Andrews St., Ste 102  
Langley AFB, VA 23996-3328

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt  
Secretary of the Interior  
Interior Building  
18th and C. Streets, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Rep. Larry LaRocco  
House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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**Northwest Forests**

Write to:  
Jim Lyons, Assistant Secretary for  
Natural Resources and Environment  
Dept. of Agriculture, Rm. 217-E  
Washington, D.C. (and copies to  
U.S. Representatives and Senators)

Urge him to: Revise President Clinton's "Option 9" plan for Northwest forests so that all

remaining ancient forest, unlogged "roadless" areas and key watersheds are permanently protected from logging. Apply the full riparian "Buffer zones" recommended by the Scientific Advisory Committee outside of the key watersheds. Quickly implement the Dept. of Agriculture's PACFISH (Pacific Fish) buffer zones for all streams throughout the Inland Northwest. We must keep livestock grazing, damaging logging and polluting activity at a safe distance away from all rivers and streams.

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**Grizzly Bear Recovery**

The Final Recovery Plan recently released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is fundamentally flawed because it (1) fails to protect grizzly bear habitat (2) sets insupportable low recovery targets and establishes recovery zones that are too small to recover grizzly populations (3) calls for grizzly management in a number of small, isolated populations, which conservation biologists believe could lead to the extinction of the species in the lower 48 states. Write to the following people and express your concern.

Chris Servheen  
Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator  
MS 312, Univ. of Montana  
Missoula, MT 59813

Bruce Babbitt and U.S. Representatives and Senators - see addresses under other topics.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: A membership in the National Audubon Society also entitles you to chapter membership in the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society and receipt of the bimonthly Audubon magazine and the chapter newsletter, The Fish Hawk Herald. First time members should make their checks payable to the National Audubon Society and send them to our membership chairman (see address below) If you send your membership check direct to the National Audubon Society data center, please mention you wish to be affiliated with the Coeur d'Alene Chapter and give them the chapter code 75CH8  
 New Membership \$20, Regular Membership \$30.

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