

# 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

FEBRUARY 1997

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## CHECK

(Registering for a field trip is not required but if you register the leader will call you if the time or meeting place is changed)

## MEETINGS

### FEBRUARY 6 THURSDAY BOARD MEETING

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** Kris Buchler's House

### FEBRUARY 17 MONDAY REGULAR MEETING

**Time:** 6:30 Bird sharing and identification (call Shirley 664-5318 if you have slides, video etc. to share)

7:00 p.m Meeting starts

**Place:** Idaho Fish and Game Office  
2750 Kathleen Avenue

**Program:** Kathy Miktuk, Association Industries of the Inland Northwest will present a program: "Learning About Green Star" (how to make a business friendlier to the environment).



### MARCH 22-23 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY WILDLIFE REHABILITATION SEMINAR

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council will be presenting a weekend seminar. This event is currently being organized by some Audubon members and area wildlife rehabilitators. If you wish to receive an application, call Kris Buchler 664-4739 or Cynthia Langlitz 687-2475.

## FIELD TRIPS

### FEBRUARY 3 MONDAY FEBRUARY 17 MONDAY MICA BAY SURVEY

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.

**Meet:** Cove Bowl Parking Lot

**Leaders:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318

**Activity:** We will bird the area until 11:30 a.m.

### FEBRUARY 16 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP NORTH TO SPIRIT LAKE AND SANDPOINT

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.

**Meet:** Rosauers Parking Lot, on the east side the Rosauers store.

**Leader:** Gordon Comrie 664-1050

**Activity:** Our route will include Twin Lakes, Spirit Lake, Blanchard, Priest River, Sandpoint and back down through the Hoodoo Valley. We will be looking for early spring arrivals including Northern Pintail, Killdeer, Western and Mountain Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird and Western Meadowlark. Our winter visitors such as Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike and Bohemian Waxwing will still be in the area. This will be an all day field trip. Bring a lunch and some money for a latte.

### FEBRUARY 25 TUESDAY BIRDING WITH A BROWN BAG

6TH in a series of noon time birding

**Time:** 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.

**Meet:** Cove Bowl Parking Lot

**Leader:** Kris Buchler 664-4739

**Activity:** Kris will meet us at Cove Bowl and from there we will drive to her home on Pottatch Hill (birding on the way). She has a variety of birds coming to her feeder and sometimes there are great views of soaring Red-tailed Hawks and Bald Eagles. Participants are invited to stay into the afternoon and play a game of "Gone Birding".

## LITERARY OBSERVATIONS



"Birdwatching is a bloodless expression of man's primitive hunting instincts. We have substituted binoculars and cameras for the gun, yet we still seek a trophy - A new species on a life list, or photographs of one of earth's rarest and most exquisite creatures. Our search may take us no farther than a nearby

meadow - Or it can lead to the cloud forests of tropical mountains." - **James A. Kern** -

"A cardinal whistling spring to a thaw but later finding himself mistaken, can retrieve his error by resuming his winter silence." - **Aldo Leopold** -

"Grey herons instinctively know not to breed if in a five-mile radius they don't have enough food to raise their families. Human beings should be subject to the same laws." - **Max Nickolson** -

"They are big, black, noisy and fearless (Some would say, ugly). On a frigid winter mourning temperature about 2 degrees (or -10 depending on where you live) as the town comes awake the trucks have emptied the garbage, and the crows know it. From the tops of tall trees fluffing feathers, stretching necks the birds strut, screech and call to each other. (Quit! We are still asleep) they descend quickly gathering their meal a missed banana peel, dry crust, bone. Dawn shines over the hills. crows are gone. (and so is the litter).

- **Edith Edgerton** -

"In the cool of the morning I saw a dozen wild geese fly away; first they soared above me then they moved further away until dividing into two flocks, forming two arches like eyebrows over my eyes which now gazed into the land of poetry,"

- **Soren Kierkegaard** -

## IDAHO BIRDING HISTORY

Taken from: *The Oologist* vol. XXI July 1904

### "An ornithological Iron-Clad"

By Chas. S. Moody, Sandpoint, Idaho

Number one of the A.O.U. is not such a very interesting bird from the standpoint of the scientific ornithologist but in the trite language of my erstwhile friend Josh Billings, he is "an amoosin' cuss." I have gotten more downright hilarity out of watching the Western Grebe than any other bird in the catalogue. He always reminds me of an Iron-clad Monitor under full steam, with nothing of him but an elongated neck and a mere speck of dark gray back sticking up out of the water.

Below the long railroad bridge crossing Lake Pen'd Oreille (pronounced Pond deray) in northern Idaho this bird is a constant resident. They breed in the sedgy marshes surrounding the lake and in the winter season fish in the channel. For the lake has a channel and a current being only a widening of the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. Any day you may sit on the bridge and see from fifty to one hundred of them disporting themselves in the limpid water.

They are not gunned very much, in fact it does very little good to gun them for like Johnny's woodchuck, they can get home faster than a gun can shoot. This is a fact that I had to acquire by stern experience. I wanted a few of them for mounting and took out my Smith for that purpose. After firing away about a ton of shot, and every time the shot got there the bird was over in another county. I concluded that as far as Mr. L.C. Smith and his justly famous gun was concerned, I would go hungry for Grebe a long time. I finally secured a few however by laying for them with a 22 rifle. Its about the most amusingly provoking thing in my experience to see one of these fellows tip up at the report of your gun and calmly disappear beneath the water. It is all done with such an air of deliberation and sang froid that you cannot get really angry. When he comes up it is always just out of range and he goes paddling away with a sort of grim chuckle that tells more plainly than words how much he enjoys the triumph.

To Be Continued - March Newsletter

## THE ORIGINS OF BIRD NAMES

by Susan Weller

Even if you haven't been birding for long, you've no doubt wondered about the origins of the common or scientific names for birds. An easy one is *Asyndesmus lewis*, or the Lewis' Woodpecker. Most North Americans know that Meriwether Lewis was half of the team of Lewis and Clark, who led a military expedition to find an overland route to the Pacific. William Clark also had bird species named after him, such as *Nucifraga columbiana*, or Clark's Nutcracker.



Explorer, ornithologist, zoologist, entomologist, seems to be the preeminent occupations of most of those honored by having a bird named after them, yet some were also physicians, politicians, and every day amateur naturalists

of every sort. William Swainson, a naturalist who was largely self-taught, was called a "brilliant observer of natural history," and a "more than moderately accomplished artist." Swainson became a lithographer so he could illustrate his own books, and published quite a few over his lifetime. Unable to sustain his family on what he made as an artist and writer, Swainson immigrated in 1837 from England to New Zealand. There he taught, wrote, and farmed. Swainson both named and described over 20 species of North American birds. The Swainson's hawk and Swainson's warbler were named after him by others. John James Audubon named the Swainson's warbler in honor of his friend.

John Cassin was a Quaker and ornithologist from Pennsylvania. Though a businessman his whole life, Cassin also found time to be Curator of birds at the Academy of Natural Sciences. He was known as the only American ornithologist to have a familiarity with "the avifauna of both

the Old World and America." During his 26 years at the Academy he described and named about 11 species of bird he also authored and published a number of scientific papers. Cassin also became a lithographer and engraver for the business who produced *Audubon's Birds of North America*. The Cassin's finch and Cassin's sparrow are two species named to commemorate John Cassin.

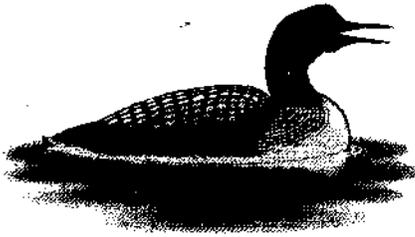
William MacGillivray was a Scottish medical doctor and naturalist. During his lifetime he was appointed Professor of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen, and he served as Curator of the Museum of Edinburgh. MacGillivray is credited with writing most of the text for Audubon's *Ornithological Biography*. He produced a number of his own books, the *History of British Birds* is often considered his most important work. Audubon named the MacGillivray's warbler after him. However, the scientific name of the warbler is *Oporonis tolmiei*, as John Townsend is credited with the discovery of the bird that he named after Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, the Scottish medical officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. Because Audubon was unaware of Townsend's discovery, the bird's common and scientific names commemorate both MacGillivray and Tolmie. (All of the aforementioned gentlemen lived from about the mid-1700's to about the mid-1800's.)

## NEEDED: A LOCATION TO STORE AND SELL BIRD SEED

Is there anyone in our membership who would store, and sell 50 lb. bags of sunflower seeds for Coeur d'Alene Audubon on a continual basis? The Boise Audubon chapter has been selling bird seed this way for many years, with the seed stored in a location where all club members have access to it. Payment is left at a preassigned location and is on the honor system. Whoever would take on this project for the club would not need to be on site all of the time. If you are interested, please call 664-1085 for more information and details.

## NORTH IDAHO LOONS

The second of a 3 part series from the Panhandle Loon & Wetland project



Loons are more than just a symbol of the wild. The birds are excellent indicators of the health of our natural world. Evolving sixty million years ago, loons are reasonably adaptable but cannot tolerate too much human activity or radical disturbance to their habitat.

According to Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene tribal elders, loons were once abundant on North Idaho lakes. Over the years, loons lost valuable habitat due to logging, mining, and shoreline development. As human populations grew, loon populations plummeted.

Today hydroelectric dams, housing developments, and increased recreational use make it difficult for loons to nest and breed in North Idaho. But there is hope for the loon's future here, especially on Pend Oreille and Priest lakes. Working hand in hand with state and federal wildlife officials, citizens can help loons thrive once again with educational, research, and management activities.

### LOON FACTS

The predominant loon species on North Idaho lakes is the Common Loon. They are goose-sized birds but sit lower in the water. Loons weigh between 9 and 12 pounds, are 28 to 35 inches long, and have a wingspan of almost 5 feet. Males and females are identical in appearance with the male slightly larger in size. Only the male gives the yodel call.

The loon's body is well adapted for its underwater pursuit of fish, its primary prey. Its torpedo-like shape, large webbed feet, strong legs placed far back on its body, and solid bones make it an excellent diver. Loon dives range between 6 and 120 feet in depth

and usually last less than a minute. There are, however, reports of dives up to 10 minutes in length and depths in excess of 200 feet. Loons can travel long distances underwater, surfaces with just the bill exposed to take a breath, and resubmerge. Fish-eating mergansers and red-necked grebes are often mistaken for loons.

Loons are also efficient flyers reaching speeds of up to 100 miles per hour. Scientists believe loons live between 15 and 30 years but they don't breed until age three.

### THE LOON'S PLUMAGE

In summer, the loon's dress is black and white. Its head, daggerlike bill, and neck are solid black showing white, vertical bars around the throat known as the "necklace". The chest and underside are white and the back and wings are black with white spots and white barring. The eyes of the adult bird are deep red which help them see underwater. Deeper than 15 feet, their eyes turn grey.

In winter, or with juvenile birds the plumage is a drab, brownish-gray with white chest and underside. Juvenile birds have brown eyes.

### LOONS ARE WATER BIRDS

Loons are superb divers, but on land they have difficulty. Going ashore only to mate, lay eggs and incubate eggs, it pushes itself clumsily along with its feet. A loon needs water to take flight. Up to a quarter mile of open water is needed to achieve lift off. If stranded inland or on ice, it will likely die.

Loon chicks take easily to water, but will ride the backs of the adults for protection, warmth and rest. North Idaho loons migrate in the fall out to the Pacific Ocean or Gulf of Mexico, although a few might stay the winter on the big lakes. At sea, juvenile birds will float and fish for up to three years before migrating back to within 15 miles of their natal territories. Adults that successfully breed will return each year to the same nest site unless its been destroyed.

Continued on page 5

North Idaho Loons continued from page 4

## NESTING LOONS

Loons migrate through North Idaho, visiting or lakes in March and April and again in the fall. If there is suitable habitat, adult pairs will build their nests at the water's edge in May or June. They prefer marshy areas or backwaters protected from wave action constructing their nests from aquatic plants. Mates probably don't winter or migrate together, but return to their breeding lake independently.

Most loon nests have two eggs, although one or three eggs is also possible. If the first nest is destroyed early in the season, the birds can build a second nest. Loon eggs are large, olive green in color with dark spots and incubated for 26-29 days. Adults will usually raise one chick, a two-chick brood being indicative of high-quality nursery habitat.

A pair of loons needs a lake about 10-50 acres in size for nesting and raising chicks with its average territory being 100 acres. Boaters should stay about 50-200 yards away from nests or adult loons may eventually abandon the eggs or leave the young to die.

## THE CALL OF THE LOON

The loon's four different calls are its most distinctive feature.

**Yodel** This call is used by the males to identify and defend territory. Each unique, aggressive cry is heard usually during spring and consists of a slow, rising note followed by several undulating phrases.

**Wail** This call is similar to a wolf howl. It is used to locate a mate and chicks across distances and is heard throughout the spring and summer, day and night. The wail can carry for miles despite the bird's closed bill.

**Tremolo** Referred to as the loon's quavering laugh, it's message is anything but funny. It indicates alarm due to human disturbance, a predator, or presence of another loon. It is the only cry uttered in flight.

**Hoot** This one-syllable call sounds like the word without the "t". The birds use it when in close proximity with each other. Chicks give a high-pitched, thrice-repeated cry that sounds like "wheet" when begging for food from their parents.

## THE PENGUIN DANCE

This spectacular display looks like the loon is standing on the water's surface. But this posture is really a frantic call of disturbance to nests or young and meant to frighten intruders. It's best to leave the area immediately.

If you are interested in joining the Panhandle Loon and Wetlands Project, see the application in the January, 1997 newsletter or write to Panhandle Loon & Wetlands Project, PO Box 2218, Sandpoint, ID 83864

See more about Loons in the March Newsletter - to be continued

## "WHAT BIRD??" ANSWERS

-Look at Jan.'97 Newsletter for questions

1. flycatcher
2. sparrow
3. robin
4. prairie chicken
5. kingfisher
6. tern
7. bluejay
8. chat
9. swift
10. cuckoo or raven
11. bunting
12. knot
13. roadrunner
15. goldeneye
15. swallow
16. cowbird
17. Killdeer
18. shearwater
19. merlin
20. Canada goose or Turkey
21. redpoll
22. parrot
23. snipe
24. spoonbill
25. limpkin
26. crane
27. creeper
28. skylark;godwit
29. oldsquaw
30. peewee
31. skimmer
32. sandpiper
33. jaeger
34. yellow warbler
35. kingbird
36. monk parakeet
37. kinglet
38. rail
39. whippoorwill
40. nightingale
41. turnstone
42. canvasback
43. grosbeak
44. cardinal
45. kittiwake



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## MYSTERY FIELD TRIP

January 17, 1997

Gordon Comrie

It was a grim winter day when six brave souls including Shirley Sturts, Janet Callen, Bill Gundlach, Marilee Benson and Pam and Gordon Comrie gathered in the Rosauer Parking lot and began another exciting birding adventure.

The first stop was down to city beach where we were treated to the sight of a Tundra Swan swimming along a short distance from shore. Other species seen were Red-necked Grebe, Western Grebe, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, Bufflehead, Canada Goose, Ring-billed and California Gull.

After leaving city beach we headed up Northwest Blvd. and bingo we spotted about 100 Bohemian Waxwings feeding in some deciduous trees alongside the road.

Continuing on our next stop was at the Ramsey Road transfer station. This was perhaps the most rewarding stop of the day. Although Sunday is not the best day to see birds at this spot, they are not moving garbage, we were rewarded with a long look at a Mew Gull. This was a life lister for many of us and is the type of sighting that makes birding in weather exciting. Other species at this location were Ring-billed and Herring Gull, Raven, Starling, Red-tailed Hawk, House Sparrow, House Finch.

We now headed toward the Rathdrum Prairie in search of the Snowy Owl. After driving around for a couple of hours we were able to find two Rough-legged Hawk, two Bald Eagle and a few Raven. Since we are still in the prairie part of the narrative we did see the elusive Snowy Owl on our way home late in the day. It was seen hunting on the east side of Atlas Road near the airport.

Heading north once again we decided to buzz through Spirit Lake in search of the Pine Grosbeak we had seen a week earlier. No Luck!!

Next we were invited to Marilee's house to check out her feeders. There we found many Black-capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee and a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

We next went to Bayview where we saw Coot, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, American Wigeon, Mallard, Common Merganser, one Great Blue Heron

and a Townsend's Solitaire

Although the middle of winter is not the most comfortable time of year to be out in the field this trip made it all worthwhile.

## MICA BAY SURVEY

Observers: Corinne Cameron, Bill Gundlach, Rick and Cynthia Langlitz, Shirley Sturts

Jan. 18 Gordon and Pam Comrie sightings.

The bay is mostly frozen but you can see some waterfowl in the open water beyond the ice and open areas back in the marsh.

	Jan. 18	Jan. 22
Pied-billed Grebe	1	-
Red-necked Grebe	1	-
Canada Goose	30	-
Mallard	30	5
Common Goldeneye	3	1
Bufflehead	-	1
Common Merganser	-	4
Ring-billed Gull	-	2
Gull Sp (flying over)	-	10
Downy Woodpecker	-	2
Northern Flicker	-	1
Common Raven	-	2
Black-C Chickadee	-	15
Mountain Chickadee	-	1
Red-b Nuthatch	-	2
Winter Wren	-	1
Song Sparrow	-	4

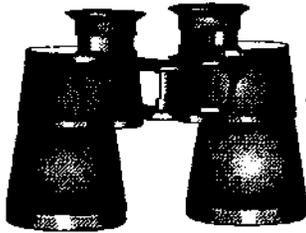
## CITY BEACH BIRD WALK

### January 16

(Birding with a Brown Bag)

Shirley Sturts was joined by Lynn Sheriden and Dick Johnson both on their first outing with our Chapter. The first of what we hope will be many. We walked from Independence Point to the end of Dike Road and counted the following birds (numbers approx.): Horned Grebe 1, Canada Goose 60, Mallard 60+ (many hybrids), Lesser Scaup 1, Common goldeneye 3, Barrow's Goldeneye 2, Common Merganser 30+. Bald Eagle 1 imm, Herring gull 1+, Ring-billed Gull 50+, California Gull 1+, Northern Flicker 1, Rock Dove 10+, American Crow 2, European Starling 2+

## OBSERVATION POST



Observers: Ed Buchler (ED), Kris Buchler (KSB), Cliff Cameron (CLC), Corrine Cameron (CC), Gordon Comrie (GC), Pam Comrie (PAC), Bill Gundlach (BG), Rick Langlitz (RL), Cynthia Langlitz (CL), George Saylor (GS), Jan and Herb Severtson (JHS), John Shipley (JNS) Shirley Sturts (SHS), Susan Weller (SDW).

RBR Rare Bird Report for Northern Idaho - Eastern Washington - Northeastern Oregon Phone (208) 882-6195

or Internet-Web Site:

<http://pimacc.pima.edu/~cwilliamson/index.html>

1. Pied-billed Grebe 1 Silver Beach Jan 21 (CC,CLC)
2. RedHead 50 Heyburn State Park Jan. 25 (GC,PAC)
3. Ring-necked Duck 3 Hayden Lake Jan. 11 (GS); 80 Heyburn State Park Jan. 25 (GC,PAC)
4. Barrow's Goldeneye 1 City Beach Coeur d'Alene Jan. 12 (GS)
5. Hooded Merganser 1 female Fernan Lake overflow Jan. 21 (CC,CLC)
6. Northern Goshawk 1 immature found dead Blackwell Hill Jan. 15 in freezer at the Idaho Fish and Game office
7. Northern Harrier 1 Rathdrum Prairie (Arrow Rd) Jan. 9 (SDW)
8. Gray Partridge 7 Rathdrum Prairie (Meyer Rd) Jan. 7 (CLC,CC)  
8+ Rathdrum Prairie (Meyer Rd) Jan. 8 (BG)
9. Ruffed Grouse 1 Lightening Creek (Clark Fork) Jan. 26 (GC,PAC)
10. Ring-necked Pheasant 6 (1 male) Rathdrum Prairie (Meyer Rd. Jan. 7 (CLC,CC)
11. Glaucous Gull 1 1st year, 1 2nd year Fighting Creek Landfill Jan. 25 (GC,PAC)
12. Pygmy Owl 1 Potlatch Hill Jan. 10 (EB,KSB); 1 Thompson Lake Jan. 25 (GC,PAC)
13. Snowy Owl 1 Rathdrum Prairie (North Atlas Road) (CLC,CC)  
1 Sandpoint area Jan. 20 (RL,CL)
14. Hairy Woodpecker 1 male 1 female, Feeder at Fernan Lake (SHS) and 1 male 2 female Potlatch Hill feeder (EB,KSB)
15. Downy Woodpecker 1 female, Feeder at Fernan lake (SHS)
16. Northern Flicker 1 Backyard Feeder, Fairmount Loop Rd. CDA (JHS)
17. Pileated Woodpecker 1 Tubbs Hill Jan. 7 (BG)
18. Horned Lark 1 Rathdrum Prairie (Huetter Rd.) Jan. 9 (SDW)
19. Pygmy Nuthatch 4-10 at feeder all Dec./Jan. Fernan Lake (SHS)
20. Brown Creeper 2 Twin Lakes Jan. 16 (CL)
21. Siberian Accentor 1 Ketchum (a Eurasian bird casual fall visitor in western and northern Alaska - Idaho State Record) January (many observers including JNS)
22. Northern Shrike 1 Mica Road Jan. 5 (GS)
23. Northern Cardinal 1 (A State Record) Lewiston January (many observers)
24. Bohemian Waxwing 30 Potlatch Hill Jan. 11 (EB,KSB)
25. American Dipper 1 Lightening Creek (Clark Fork) Jan. 26 (GC,PAC)
26. Western Meadowlark 2 (singing) Rathdrum Prairie Jan. 9 (KSB,EB,RL,CL)
27. Song Sparrow 1 backyard feeder Fairmont Loop Road (JHS)
28. Dark-eyed Junco 2 Twin Lakes Jan. 20 (CL) feeder)

## ARIZONA BIRDS

Kris and Ed Buchler recently took a trip to Phoenix, Arizona to see their son Todd play hockey. However they didn't spend all their time at the hockey arena! You guessed it - they went birding and saw some great birds (we're all jealous). On Jan. 17 they went to the Boyce Thompson South West Arboretum. Some of the birds seen there were: Cactus Wren, Curved-billed Thrasher, Inca Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Green Heron, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Hermit Thrush and many Northern Cardinals. They heard Verdin and Rock Wrens. On Jan. 18 they visited the Hassa Wampa River Preserve. On their way there they saw a Phainopepla. At the preserve they found: Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Green-tailed Towhee, Brown Towhee. They saw some familiar feathers as well - many Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers.

## Board of Directors

**President** - Ronn Rich 772-4512, **Vice President** - Susan Weller 682-3413, **Secretary** - Janet Callen 664- 1085, **Treasurer** - Corinne Cameron 664-0344, **Field Trips** - Gordon Comrie 664-1050, **Conservation** Mike Mihelich 664-4741, **Education - Librarian** - Kris K. Buchler 664-4739, **Membership** - Jan Severtson 667-6209, **Hospitality** - Nancy Mertz 765-5254, **Newsletter** - Shirley Sturts 664-5318, **Board Member** - George Saylor 664-2787.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member in the National Audubon Society and my local chapter, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter (Chapter Code GO67XCH8).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Introductory membership is \$20.00 for individual or family. Members receive 6 issues of Audubon magazine and the chapter's local newsletter. Please make check payable to the National Audubon Society and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Aene, ID 83816.

Subscription to the The Fish Hawk Herald newsletter only is \$10.00. Please make checks payable to the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816.

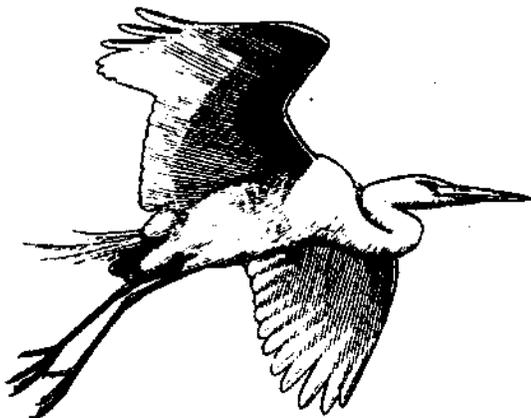
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The Fish Hawk Herald

February 1997

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National Audubon Society  
Coeur d'Alene Chapter  
P.O. Box 361  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816



**GREAT EGRET**

*Ardea alba*