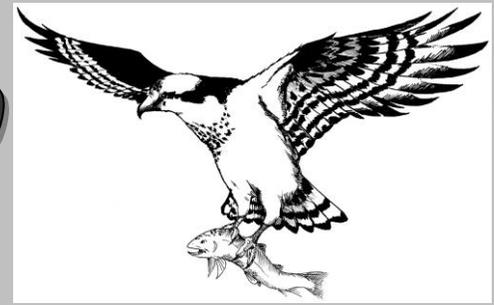


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

January 2002

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 5

Visit our website: [www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)

## COMING EVENTS

### BOARD MEETING

**DATE:** January 15, Tuesday  
**TIME:** 4:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Mountain West Bank  
125 Ironwood Dr.

### JANUARY PROGRAM

**DATE:** January 21, Monday  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** First Presbyterian Church,  
521 Lakeside  
**PROGRAM:** "Critical Habitat and  
the Kootenai River Population of  
the White Sturgeon".  
Did you know white sturgeon are  
believed to have evolved nearly  
400 million years ago? Idaho Fish  
and Game, Fisheries Biologist,  
Vaugh Paragamian, will present  
the latest knowledge of the largest  
freshwater fish in North America  
and the serious effects of the  
Libby Dam on its habitat.

## 2002 YARD LIST CHALLENGE

*Fuertes' Eastern Bird Collection*

*Lisa Hardy*



As the calendar year turns over, it is the bird species you see (and hear) in or from your yard, and then, at the end of the year, submit your list to be judged in categories to be decided at the whim of the judging panel. And don't worry about your list being small – every list adds to the big picture.

For those of you who find the lister approach a bit too "serious", think of it instead as a motivation to hone your observational skills. You may, for example, have to spend a little time with the book in order to sort out the Cassin's and House Finches so that you can tally both on your list. Also, many people add notes to

their lists of odd and interesting bird behavior.

Next January, we will compile the 2002 results, and publish them in the Fish Hawk Herald.

## THE 5<sup>TH</sup> GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT February 15-18, 2002

That's right, it's time to start planning for the next Great Backyard Bird Count. Last year's event gathered over 50,000 reports from every U.S. State and Canadian Province. Once again, we'd like to invite you to help "take a picture" of our winter bird distribution. This is a great opportunity for youth groups and schools to participate in a "Citizen Science" project. For information on how to participate either as an individual or with youth or school groups go to: [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

Last year GBBC was marked by northern owl species at more temperate latitudes and irruptive species out west. Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl and Boreal Owl were reported in a number of locations as they made their way south in search of food. Other species such as Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin traveled far and wide in the western U.S. Visit the GBBC map room on [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org) and explore the results.

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## MISTER STELLER COMES TO STAY

And grants me an honorary place  
within the jay clan

*Continued from the December Newsletter  
The Conclusion of this series*

Susan Weller

Photograph by Susan Weller



### 17 August

Jay seems to love the ponderosa pine on the patio. The open and evenly spaced branching is a perfect trapeze for a bouncy Jay. He loves to spring from branch to branch, spiraling up, and up, until his squawks of delight are the only indication he is still there. I'm not sure where he roosts, but he's always near the greenhouse first thing in the morning. He must be feeding himself well because he takes food now only to keep from hurting my feelings. He grabs a mealworm and flies to the rafters of the greenhouse to stash it. Crickets he swallows on the spot. He is looking rather sleek now, only a few errant baby feathers remain on his back. To his treasure trove in the greenhouse he has added numerous little plastic plant stakes. One identifies a plant I introduced to the garden ten years ago. Also, he has been collecting little colorful twist ties, with red seeming to be his favorite color.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

### 18 August

Jay has been spending time in the woods where we buried Lazarus. He has also been hanging out in the woods to the east of the house. I have to lose him before I can take my daily walk down to the slough. Today he was a glutton for my attention and seemed oddly unsettled. The other jay has been frequenting the feeders, and while they interact, Jay always stays behind. I feel he is seeking my permission to leave. I had a heart to heart with Jay and assured him it was okay - even expected - if he wanted to go off on his own. He displayed his usual bout of affection and tapped his bill around my glasses and my mouth. About seven in the evening I went out to say good night, but Jay was nowhere to be found.

### 19 August

I have not seen Jay all day. I am trying not to worry. His behavior yesterday indicated that something was up. I think he has flown the coop for good. I don't know if I'll ever see him again.

### 26 August

Almost to the hour, Jay turned up in the birch tree exactly one week after he disappeared. He accepted a few mealworms, then strutted up and down the deck rail to show off his resplendent new feathers. He folded back his crest and chortled, and allowed me to stroke his back. Then Jay turned, and flew vocalizing into the woods to the east--into his new life, and out of mine.

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## BIRD QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

*"The bird of paradise alights only  
upon the hand that does not  
grasp."*

*John Berry*

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## BATS EAT BIRDS EAT BATS

Science News Vol. 160, August, 2001

The biggest bat in Europe, the Greater Noctule, or *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, eats many birds during the spring and all migrations, says Javier Juste of Donanna Biological Station in Seville, Spain. He and his colleagues reached that conclusion after analyzing 14,000 bat droppings during the course of a year.

"It's the only bat known to get the profit of migrating birds," Juste says. Birds by the millions stream over Europe between winter havens in Africa and northerly breeding grounds.

Most of the world's bats dine on fruit or insects. A handful can take on other prey, such as fish, frogs or lizards. About a dozen bat species, mostly in the tropics, snatch roosting birds from their perches, says Juste. He suspects the Greater Noctule doesn't wait for its meal to come home to roost. Several lines of evidence suggest that this bat attacks birds on the wing.

As many as 45 percent of the analyzed droppings carried feathers during the March-to-May and August-to-November runs. In June and July, the bats went back to eating insects, and barely one percent of the droppings contained feathers.

A number of birds, on the other hand, are known to eat bats. Best known of these is probably the Bat Falcon, *Falco rugicularis*, of South America, which specializes in catching and eating bats.

# JANUARY FIELD TRIPS

## FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

1. Please register with the leader ahead of time.
  - a. It helps the leader plan the trip.
  - b. You will be informed if the trip time or location is changed or if the trip is canceled.
2. Fees: (to paid to the driver of the car) \$5.00 - all day trips \$3.00 - 1/2 day trips.
3. We sometimes use radios to communicate between cars. If the radios are used we are asking participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries.

## MICA BAY SURVEY

**DATES/TIME:** January 14 and 28 - February 11 and 25 Mondays / 9:00 a.m.

**MEET:** Canal Street (Fairmont Loop) and Highway 95

**LEADERS:** Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739

**ACTIVITY:** We spend about 3 hours twice a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area. Beginner birders are welcome to join us.

## BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

**DATE/TIME:** January 22, Tuesday, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

**MEET:** Independence Point, City Beach

**LEADER:** Lynn Sheridan (leave messages for Lynn with Shirley 664-5318)

**ACTIVITY:** We will look for wintering gulls at Independence Point and weather permitting walk around the board walk or walk along City Beach. If you want to learn how to tell the different gulls apart this and the half-day trip on January 20<sup>th</sup> are for you. Beginner birders are welcome. Our field trips - especially the gull trips - are learning sessions for all of us.

## GULL SEARCH

**DATE:** January 27, Sunday

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

**MEET:** K--Mart Parking Lot - Behind Fast Burger

**LEADER:** Shirley Sturts - 664-5318

**ACTIVITY:** We will bird City Beach, Independence Point and the Dike Road and other locations where wintering gulls can be found. Ring-billed and California Gulls are common year around. In the winter months Herring are also common. We will be searching for the uncommon visitors such as Mew, Thayers, Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Lunch in a local restaurant is optional.

## RATHDRUM PRAIRIE

**DATE:** February 10, Sunday

**TIME:** 12 noon to dusk

**MEET:** K--Mart Parking Lot - Behind Fast Burger

**LEADER:** Lisa Hardy 682-4804

**ACTIVITY:** Where we go depends on what is being seen on the Rathdrum Prairie. Snowy Owl, Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll, Short-eared Owl and Long-eared Owl are all possibilities.

## SANDPOINT

**DATE:** February 24, Sunday

**TIME:** 7:30 a.m. - all day trip

**MEET:** K--Mart Parking Lot - Behind Fast Burger

**LEADER:** Lisa Hardy 682-4808

**ACTIVITY:** We will bird from City Beach to Clark Fork.

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## BIRDING WITH A BROWN BAG

Lynn Sheridan



Roland Craft joined me at 12 noon and, after waiting for stragglers, we set off along Rosenberry Drive and the Spokane River, then onto West Lakeshore Drive, beside the lake and college. The weather was mild, about 30 degrees, and last night's snow was melting away.

We began a careful viewing for something unusual, finding Canada Goose (over 300), Mallard (over 200), dozens of Ring-billed Gull, and 15 Rock Dove. Behold! A male Wood Duck appeared! Is this the same one I saw on October 4 and 24<sup>th</sup>? Next we added 6 Bufflehead and a dark brown bird on a distant pole; we're thinking immature Bald Eagle (we don't have a scope). Coming to the rescue, Jason Hunt of the CDA Press, used the zoom lens on his digital camera and confirmed the ID. He told us he saw many eagles yesterday at Higgins Point.

Jason departed, and we two continued down the beach. Walking into Pygmy Nuthatch territory, we didn't hear a peep. Many have been seen at local feeders -- is there a shortage of pine seeds?

At City Beach we scanned every gull, and further out we saw some grebes, only one clearly - a Horned Grebe in winter plumage.

A female Downy Woodpecker caught our ears and then our eyes in a nearby tree. Finally we saw 2 large dark shapes on distant pilings. I had to leave, so Roland walked back to take a closer look. With the combined skills of Phil Waring, passing by, they confirmed the birds as three Double-crested Cormorants! Thank you, gentlemen.

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## SURF SCOTER AT HAYDEN LAKE

Lisa Hardy

For our December 9 field trip, ten Auduboners scoped out Hayden Lake on a mostly gray Sunday morning. Our first stop was Honeysuckle Beach, where Stephen Lindsay had reported a Surf Scoter the day before. We relocated the female scoter, and examined her closely for identifying features, as there had initially been some question as to whether the bird was a Surf or White-winged Scoter. Our books indicated that distinguishing the females of the two species is not trivial. Piper, with the youngest eyes in the group, was able to determine that the forward white patch on the face was more vertical than horizontal, a characteristic of Surf Scoters. Then the bird started to preen, eventually stretching and flapping her wings to show not a trace of white. From this we were able to conclude that the bird was a Surf Scoter. Honeysuckle Beach also yielded looks at a Common Loon and four species of grebe.

After a quick look at Avondale Lake, we headed for the north end of Hayden Lake. Along the way, we found a Northern Shrike on Rimrock Road, and then an American Kestrel on a power line along Lancaster Road. Near the English Point recreation area, a flock of about 50 Common Redpoll were feeding in a weedy field. At the Sportsman's Access, five white geese in a flock of Canada Geese were examined closely, in an attempt to make them into Snow Geese for Stephen Lindsay and his Big Year effort, but we finally decided that they were domestic geese.

As we made our way back to town, Janet, Shirley, Theresa and Roland (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> car) found a

Cooper's Hawk sitting high in a tree behind a home on Rimrock Road. It flew to another tree and then back to the original tree giving them both back and front views of its plumage.

A good mix of waterfowl and birds of prey made this another interesting day of North Idaho birding!

*Trip participants: Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Lisa Hardy, Piper Newby, Theresa Potts, Jan Severtson, Shirley Sturts, Phil & Judy Waring (and Tina). 38 species total. See the complete trip list on the website [www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)*

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## COEUR D'ALENE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Shirley Sturts, Compiler

*Photo by Wayne Tree*

The Coeur d'Alene CBC, established by Susan Weller



in 1991, is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. This year several records were broken. We tied the record for total number of species (71 set in 2000) but with our total of 7890 individual birds, we beat the previous record of 6725 (also set in 2000). The following species came out with highest numbers in the 11 years: Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Common Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, Rock Dove, Black-billed Magpie, Black-capped Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, American Robin, Varied Thrush and Common Redpoll. The American Robin took top honors with a total 783, beating the previous record of 350 in 1997. Common Redpoll missing from North Idaho last year, came on strong with 267

counted, compared to the previous record of only 85 in 1995.

The most exciting birds were the four new ones we added to our list. The team led by Lisa Hardy saw one Surf Scoter on Hayden Lake. This visitor from the coast has been there since October. Three teams counted Double-crested Cormorant. Three were seen off of the Dike Road by teams led by Shirley Sturts and Kris Buchler. A team, led by Janet Callen, saw two at Silver Beach, Coeur d'Alene Lake. We were on the look out for cormorants because they had been seen on the Brown Bag trip on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>.

The next two (new to the list) were complete surprises. Steve Lindsay and Phil Waring found a Hermit Thrush, a bird not normally here in the winter, north of Rathdrum. Kris Buchler's team found a White-winged Scoter around the boat docks across from the Cedars Restaurant. This was a rare find and a bird that Steve Lindsay needed for his Kootenai County Big Year List. A cell phone call to Steve brought him off the prairie long enough to add bird 199 to his list.

**Thank you for making our count a big success.**

**Coeur d'Alene field participants**

*Mike Blackbird, Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Kathy Erickson, Lisa Hardy, Eula Hickman, Steve Lindsay, Theresa Potts, George and Katie Saylor, Jan Severtson, Lynn Sheridan, Shirley Sturts, Jenny Taylor, Phil and Judy Waring*

**Feeder Watchers** - *Gloria Andrews, Zella and Jack Bloxom, Linda and Tom Bloxom, Ed Buchler, Corinne Cameron, Jim and Mickey McKahan, Herb Severtson, Bud and Mary Vanderbilt, Vera Weiniger, Roger Young*

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## BOOK REVIEW

Kris Buchler

**Call Collect, Ask for Birdman by James M. Vardaman**



*Photo by Wayne Tree*

Although this book was published in 1980, and

the story took place in 1979, the subject matter is timeless for serious birders and "listers".

James Vardaman attempted a "big year" with a mission of being the first person to sight 700 species of North American birds in that year. The previous record was 657 sightings in one year.

James Vardaman was a businessman and president of a forest management firm. He approached his adventure as a sport with a Strategy Council made up of birding professionals who helped chart the locations of 811 eligible species and to plan trips to see them. Support from his company was an important factor as expenses fell just short of \$45,000. James was also a husband and father of six children who sometimes accompanied him on his travels.

I found myself liking this man who did not exhibit the snobbery sometimes found in competitive birders. He was well aware of his personal limitations and place in birding society. His year brought him into contact with renowned birders (such as Kenn Kaufman) who often guided him and witnessed his sightings. No bird was counted without being witnessed by another birder. It may seem that such a task would leave no time for the enjoyment of observing avian life but there are many occurrences where the author makes time to wonder about the nature he is

experiencing. One such instance takes place on a trip to Digby Harbor, Nova Scotia. He went there to see a Lesser Black-backed Gull that had wintered there for seven years. He pondered many questions: is it the same gull every year? How does it know to go to Digby every year? How long do gulls live? If it isn't the same gull, how do the gulls arrange for only one replacement? And, the gull was there for him to find as planned.

This book is dated in light of the era of computers. The title would not be appropriate today. I wonder how much simpler the author's connections would have been if he did his "big year" today. People called him from all over North America, resulting in hurried trips to airports, sleeping a couple of hours uncomfortably in cars, and often abandoning plans for some new bird chase. Today we have numerous birding hotlines and list servers to learn about rare sightings. Birding has definitely benefited from the computer age.

Perhaps the most descriptive portions of the book are about Attu, the most western of the Aleutian Islands. You will get a good feel for the miserable conditions birders endure in order to see rare Asian accidentals that appear on the island.

This is not a long book with only 192 pages of text. It also contains several appendices, which are more interesting than you may think. I was fascinated to find out if he found a particular bird, and if so, who witnessed it and where it was sighted. It was somewhat gratifying to discover that he did not find the Berylline Hummingbird, a bird that several of us from Coeur d'Alene saw in Arizona a few years ago. What was that about birding snobbery?

This book will be available for lending by our chapter.

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## INDIAN MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Lisa Hardy

The 34<sup>th</sup> Indian Mountain Christmas Bird Count was held on December 29. Fair weather and diligent teamwork yielded 70 species. Four birds were new to the count: Northern Bobwhite seen by Don Heikkila on his property, a Thayer's Gull and a Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrid seen by Susan Weller at Harrison, and a Swamp Sparrow seen by Steve Lindsay and Judy Waring at Heyburn State Park. The Swamp Sparrow could have been Steve's 200<sup>th</sup> bird of his Big Year, but, alas, it was in the wrong county.

The Chain Lakes were frozen over and largely occupied by men in white suits surrounded by several paychecks' worth of plastic geese. Much of the St. Joe River was also frozen, and the waterfowl were concentrated in the open waters of Coeur d'Alene Lake. Gadwall were seen for only the second time in the count's 35 years, and Eurasian Wigeon for the third time. Ruby-crowned Kinglet was also seen for only the third time.

The big surprise came on the final day of count week, when Matthew Moskwik made a swing through the count circle to look for the Swamp Sparrow. In an apple tree in Harrison, Matthew found a very late (or early?) Western Tanager. This turned out to be the first winter record for Idaho, and in fact, for the Pacific Northwest east of the Cascades.

Matthew also found a Black-backed Woodpecker and a White-breasted Nuthatch at Heyburn State Park, for a total of three count week species. "Count week" is the three days before plus the three days after the count day. Species not seen on

count day but seen in count week are included in the count results in a separate category. So, all together, we had 73 species, a record number, and that does not include the feeder watcher results, which have yet to be compiled.

*A big thanks to the observers: Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Bill Gundlach, Lisa Hardy, Don Heikkila, Stephen Lindsay, Judy Waring, Susan & Greg Weller.*

Check out CBC results at [birdsource.cornell.edu/](http://birdsource.cornell.edu/)

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## YOU KNOW YOU'RE A BIRDER IF...

*Reprinted from Inland-nw-Birders*

1. You travel to a foreign country and the only words you learned to speak are names of birds.
2. Your idea of a great vacation is to travel to Brownsville to spend a day at the dump.
3. You have ten big bird photos on your wall at work and one small photo of your spouse.
4. Your vacation of a lifetime is spent at a place called Attu.
5. You spend your time on a Caribbean cruise looking for pelagic birds.
6. You spend your anniversary checking the ice flows in Churchill for gulls.
7. When shopping for new clothes, you check the pockets to see if they are big enough to hold a field guide.
8. After finding a second Boreal Owl, you refer to it as a trash bird.

9. The Rare Bird Hotline is number one on your speed dial.

10. All the magazine subscriptions you receive have the word 'bird' on them.

11. Only a fellow birder can decipher the license plate on your car.

12. You know the difference between pelagic and passerine.

13. Your New Year's resolution is to start a new millennium list.

14. When you talk about the World Series, you're not talking sports.

15. You own more optics than a college observatory.

16. You know how to pronounce Pyrrhuloxia and Phainopepla.

17. Your idea of an exotic dancer is a Japanese Crane.

18. When someone says there is more to life than birding, you question their sanity.

19. You only win Final Jeopardy when the category is birds.

20. These jokes make you smile.

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

*Carl Hanson, Elaine Hanzel, Nathan O'Bleness, Douglas S. Potter, Karen J. Williams, Cd'A Forestry Program, & Dan & Karen Olson.*

We look forward to meeting you and welcome you to our activities!

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## BIG SIT RESULTS

On October 14, 2001 we participated in our first "Big Sit". Thirteen of us counted birds in 1-2 hour shifts from 6:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The "Big Sit", was organized by the New Haven Bird Club. (See the article in our November, 2001 Newsletter or/and see the results of our count on our website [www.cdaadubon.org](http://www.cdaadubon.org))

The New Haven Bird Club has just put the results of the "Big Sit" on their website.

[www.members.aol.com/nhbirdclub](http://www.members.aol.com/nhbirdclub)

There were 31 states and countries participating, 116 circles, 460+ sitters and 609 species counted. The top circle was in Rotterdam, Netherlands with 107 species, followed by Elfin Forest, Los Osos, CA with 102. Being the only Idaho Circle, we easily won the State Pride Award ☺. Although we were toward the bottom in the number of species seen, we were not the lowest. We had 28 species. Arkansas had 26, New Mexico 25 and Alabama 20.

Next year the "Big Sit" will be held on October 13.

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## OBSERVATION POST

**OBSERVERS:** Janet Allen (JALL)  
Kris Buchler (KBUC), Earl Chapin (ECHA), Jerry Hanson (JHAN) Lisa Hardy (LHAR), Cindy-Rick Langletz (CLAN RLAN), Steve Lindsay (SLIN), Nancy Mertz(NMER), Matthew Moskwick (MMOS), Shirley Sturts (SSTU), Phil and Judy Waring (PWAR,JWAR)

**Yellow-billed Loon** 1 Nov.15 and 2 Dec.17 Pend Oreille Lake (ECHA)

**Pacific Loon** 1 Cave Lake and 1 Harrison Dec. 11 (LHAR)

**Great Blue Heron** 70 mouth of the CDA River on the ice Jan. 2 (LHAR,SSTU)

**Trumpeter Swan** 2 Beauty Bay, CDA Lake Dec. 17 (CCAM); 2 Cave Lake Dec. 27 (SLIN)

**Tundra Swan** 16 Harlow Point Road across from Harrison Jan. 2 (LHAR,SSTU)

**Hooded Merganser** 50 Harrison Marina Jan. 2 (SSTU,LHAR)

**Red-breasted Merganser** 1 female Harrison (off the Marina) Jan. 2 (LHAR)

**Merlin** 1 Dalton Gardens Dec. 28-29 (JALL)

**Gray Partridge** 18+ Rathdrum Prairie near CDA Airport on Atlas Jan.1 (SSTU)

**Thayer's Gull** 1 adult NIC Dike Road Dec. 23 and 1 imm Harrison Dec. 23 (SLIN)

**Bonaparte's Gull** 4 Harrison Dec. 11 (LHAR); 1 Harrison Jan. 2 (LHAR,SSTU)

**Snowy Owl** 1 Rathdrum Prairie (Prairie and Idaho) Jan.1 (SLIN, PWAR,JWAR,SSTU)

**Northern Shrike** 1 Mica Bay Survey Dec. 3 (KBUC, JHAN, SSTU)

**Blue Jay** 1 Dec. 30 at her feeder Coeur d'Alene (NMER)

**Steller's Jay** 2 Dec. 30 at her feeder Coeur d'Alene (NMER)

**Bewick's Wren** 1 Thompson Lake Dec. 11 (LHAR)

**American Dipper** 1 Beauty Creek, CDA Lake Dec. 23 (SLIN)

**Western Bluebird** 12+ Twin Lakes Feeding on Pine Stink Bugs around him home Dec.-Jan. (RLAN,CLAN)

**Western Tanager** 1 Harrison Jan.1 (MMOS) Jan.2 (LHAR, SSTU) 1<sup>st</sup> Idaho winter sighting

**Common Redpoll** 1-200+ at several feeders and on the Rathdrum Prairie many observers.

**Evening Grosbeak** 1 Mica Bay Survey December 3 (KBUC, JHAN SSTU)

## CHECK IT OUT

**Top Ten Tips for Bird-Friendly Living**  
**American Bird Conservancy**  
[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

The simple things you do