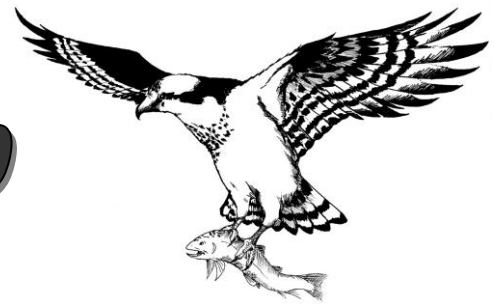


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



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

January 2009

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 4

## BOARD MEETING

DATE: January 7, Wednesday  
TIME: 4:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Mt. West Bank  
125 Ironwood Dr.

## JANUARY PROGRAM

DATE: January 7, Wednesday  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master  
4800 North Ramsey  
SPEAKER: Phil Hough and Jon Isacoff  
PROGRAM: "Wild Birds of the  
Scotchman Peaks Proposed Wilderness"

## YARD LISTS

Turn your yard list into Lisa Hardy at  
[basalt@earthlink.net](mailto:basalt@earthlink.net) during the month of  
January

Visit our Web Site:  
[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)



## WILD BIRDS OF THE SCOTCHMAN PEAKS PROPOSED WILDERNESS

Phil Hough and Jon Isacoff will team up for this exciting presentation. Phil will provide an overview of the wilderness benefits and potential for this wonderful corner of Idaho and Montana. Jon Isacoff will share his Scotchmans' birding experiences. Come enjoy the dramatic beauty of these wild lands and wild birds, through compelling slides and stories.

**Phil Hough**, Chairman Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, is a past president of the American Long Distance Hikers West Assoc (ALDHA-WEST), a past president of the Kinnikinnick Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society, and the former chair of the Bonner County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. His love of the wilderness has led him to thru hike the entire Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest trail (twice) and the northern half of the Continental Divide Trail, as well as to paddle the length of the Yukon river, among many other shorter trips to most of the corners of our continent. During the summer months Phil leads backcountry trips for the Galena Ridge School for

troubled teens. In May 2007 Phil was awarded the Idaho Conservation League's highest award for environmental activism for his work on the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area.

**Jon Isacoff** is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Environmental Studies at Gonzaga University. He received his B.A. and M.P.A. at Cornell University and his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. Jon has designed a unique Service-Learning course on Ecology and Environmentalism in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Jon served as Co-Chair of the Hiking Committee of the Spokane Mountaineers from 2006-2008. He is a Lifetime Member of the Spokane Audubon Society and a Regional Reviewer for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Ebird.org. Starting in 2009, Jon will be the Washington Birder County Year Lister for Spokane County. Jon has been birding, hiking, and backpacking for 27 years. He has hiked and backpacked in 10 states on both coasts of the US.

Jon does not have an official "favorite bird" but when asked the question, the Pygmy Nuthatch always seems to come to mind!

**COEUR D'ALENE  
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTED  
SUNDAY DECEMBER 14**

**Shirley Sturts**



**Trumpeter Swan on Hayden Lake - a first for the Coeur d'Alene CBC - photo by Lisa Hardy**

Fourteen of us braved the 3 degree weather, with a wind chill factor added on, to cover the 15 mile diameter Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count circle.

We started off with a hot breakfast at Michael D's Eatery. Our seven teams of 2-3 observers each were on their way by 7:00 a.m. to count birds in their assigned areas. One team drove around Hayden Lake. Two other teams divided up Rathdrum Prairie covering parts of Rathdrum, Post Falls and Hayden Lake (town). The team covering Cougar Bay and Kidd Island Bay used scopes to check for ducks and geese. One team checked out City Park, where a Black and White Warbler was found 2 years ago and then birded along the Spokane River from NIC to Post Falls. Two other teams had parts of the city of Coeur d'Alene and assorted areas such as Fernan Lake, Silver Beach, Dalton Gardens, Loch Haven Hills, and Nettleton Gulch. Helping us out in the warmth of their homes were 10 feeder watchers.

The cold weather kept the birds hunkered down, protecting themselves from the icy wind. Nevertheless, we came up with 57 species and 6570 individuals. Lisa Hardy and Linda Wright had the best bird of the day, two Tundra Swan. These are new to the Coeur d'Alene CBC.

Every team came up with a special species that no one else found. Theresa Potts, Judy Waring and myself, after several miles of seeing only starlings, found the 2<sup>nd</sup> best bird species of the day, a flock of 18 Horned Lark on Rathdrum Prairie. Laura Bayless found our only Brown Creeper, two of them. Hawks were very scarce on Rathdrum Prairie but Janet Callen and Lynn Sheridan found four Rough-legged Hawk. The other Rathdrum team, Theresa Potts, Judy Waring and myself found the only Red-tailed Hawk (2) and the only Northern Harrier(2). Kris and Ed Buchler and Roland Craft added our only Belted Kingfisher, Northern Shrike and Evening Grosbeak (12). Two teams found Varied Thrush (1 each), Herb and Jan Severtson and Laura Bayless and Roy Bell. Bill Gundlach and Derek Antonelli found our only Barrow's Goldeneye (2) and Herring Gull (5), along with the highest number of Bufflehead, 185.

Not to be outdone, two of our feeder watchers added 2 species missed by the teams. Steve Lindsay added a White-breasted Nuthatch and Doug Ward added a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Visit our Website to see the total results and how this year compares with other years.

<http://cdaudubon.org/cdacbcchart.htm> and <http://cdaudubon.org/Cbcount99.htm>

Herb and Jan Severtson hosted our traditional and always popular potluck. After sharing our birding adventures with the other teams and compiling the species and numbers, we sat down to a most enjoyable meal. I want to thank all the participants both team members and feeder watchers. A special thanks from all of us to Herb and Jan for hosting the potluck.

**Coeur d'Alene CBC Trivia for this year**

- **Lowest number of species in 18 years**
- **8<sup>th</sup> place out of 18 for number of individual birds**
- **First time we've missed having a Downy Woodpecker on the count.**
- **Waxwings and crossbills were also missing**
- **Cedar Waxwing were seen during count week**
- **26 species have been counted all 18 years**
- **The only bird beating the most seen record in 18 yrs was the Western Grebe with 13.**
- **The Canada Goose, with a count of 1980 was our most numerous bird**



## IDAHO BIRDING TRAIL SIGNS

See the article in our October/November issue about the Idaho Birding Trail Signs by Kris Buchler. In the October/November issue we featured the Red-naped Sapsucker sign that is going up in Mica Bay. The Eastern Kingbird sign will be placed at the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge.

The text reads:

## EASTERN KINGBIRD

This large flycatcher got the name "Kingbird" because of its aggressive nature. It defends its territory against all predators, even crows and large hawks. Kingbirds have been seen riding the backs and pecking at the heads of these larger birds. All kingbirds belong to a group called the "Tyrant" flycatchers.

The Eastern Kingbird often commands a high perch with a good view. Its large, broad bill, with bristles at the base, is made for snatching insect prey, mostly flies, in the air. While feeding, it is often seen perched on wires or fence posts. It always flies from place to place and is rarely seen hopping on the ground.

The male and female use soft materials such as weeds, moss and feathers to build their nest near the tip of a horizontal branch, in the fork of a tree, or a shrub over water. Some Eastern Kingbirds have been known to nest in the same trees with orioles.

A migratory species, the Eastern Kingbird spends winter months in South America where its expanded diet includes fruit.

To learn more or to sponsor a sign, call Kris Buchler 664-4739 or Jenny Taylor 666-9898



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# Pick a Plant for Wildlife – Quaking Aspen Populus tremuloides

By Carrie Hugo



Aspen are an often forgotten component of north Idaho forests. Although they have never been a dominant tree in Panhandle forests, there certainly are fewer aspen on the landscape now than there was historically. In other parts of the West, aspen can occur in stands of 100 acres or more. In the northern portion of the Rocky Mountains (like here in north Idaho), aspen form small groves that can be thought of as a **keystone cover type**. This is a fancy way of saying that the small stands have more value and greater use by numerous wildlife species than one would expect, considering how small the portion of the land is that they occupy.

Aspen are deciduous trees that survive where evergreen conifers are far more common. Interestingly, aspen bark has chlorophyll that is capable of photosynthesis in the late fall and early spring, making it a rather novel **deciduous evergreen** tree. Another notable trait of aspen is its longevity. Most aspen stands you see, even the

larger stands in Colorado and Wyoming, are not so much individual seedlings, but in fact they are clones whose source may be only a handful of trees. While the tree you see above ground may be short-lived relative to the conifers around it, the plant itself could be thousands of years old because of root sprouting.

Indeed, aspen may live longer than any other tree. Because most reproduction occurs as a result of suckering, seedlings are rarely encountered over much of aspen's range. Only a few successful seedlings are necessary to maintain the populations of such long-lived plants. In north Idaho, aspen stands rarely exceed 5 acres in size. A great exception to this 5 acre rule is the very large aspen stand along Highway 3 near Rose Lake. Just west of Rose Creek Road is a very large aspen stand, perhaps more than 20 acres.

Aspen are very shade intolerant, and they flourish in landscapes where fire is a regular occurrence. In lieu of fire, timber harvest may stimulate aspen suckering in areas where a few trees can still be found. If a few trees are present on the site after a disturbance like fire, they take advantage of the new sunny openings in the forest canopy. Hundreds and thousands of suckers that are genetically identical to the parent tree spring up around its base. You may have been frustrated by this adaptation if you have aspen growing in your lawn or garden area. The suckers just never quit!

Aspen appear to be declining throughout the western United States. And here in the Panhandle, the number of these small aspen stands is fewer than it used to be. This change can largely be attributed to the lack of fire on our forests. Without fire, sunny open spots in the forest canopy that aspen love are not created or maintained. Existing aspen stands are often eventually overtaken by more shade tolerant coniferous species. Drought that makes the trees more susceptible to insects and disease is thought to be responsible for some aspen declines. Other threats to aspen include grazing by livestock and wildlife. In many parts of its range, aspen is an important food source for livestock. Aspen forests can provide 1400-1600 pounds per acre of forage, whereas a coniferous forest generally provides around 100-200 pounds per acre of forage. Overgrazing of aspen stands can prevent the trees from successfully suckering, and too much use of the bark by wildlife, or drought and disease may seal the fate of stands that are also heavily grazed.

**Continued on page 5**

# Quaking Aspen

Continued from page 4

So what critters use this plant in north Idaho? Lots! Elk, in particular, have a taste for aspen bark, especially in winter. They'll also eat the leaves and shoots that they can reach. Moose, mule deer, and white-tailed deer enjoy the leaves, buds, and bark, as well. Porcupine love to eat the bark and beaver will preferentially choose aspen where it is available. Not only do beaver use the logs for their dams, but they cache and eat the saplings under water in the winter as well. Even bears will eat the catkins (the fruiting parts) and buds in the spring.

Aspen are particularly valuable to our local bird communities. Ruffed grouse are closely associated with aspen throughout their range. The buds provide a great food source for grouse throughout the winter and the catkins provide energy for those cold, wet days of early spring. Aspen stands seem to support larger numbers of insects than adjacent coniferous forests. As a result, insectivorous animals like bats and birds especially value aspen stands. Wood peckers make cavities for their nests in mature aspen trunks and numerous other birds and mammals take advantage of abandoned woodpecker holes for their nests. The pygmy, northern saw-whet, flammulated, and western screech owls all use cavities in aspen. Song birds, waterfowl and other birds use these holes for secure nesting sites as well. Some of these include western flycatchers, tree and violet-green swallows, all of the chickadees and nuthatches, brown creeper; house wren, and western and mountain bluebirds. Flying squirrels, red squirrels, and gray squirrels will use the cavities in winter and to raise their young in early spring. Pocket gophers and other small mammals will eat the soft bark of seedlings and saplings that are buried in winter under deep snows.

They may not look like much in winter, but an aspen tree or aspen stand provides a wonderful food source for critters at a time when they need it most. So if you are thinking of planting some trees around your property, consider aspen. Not only do they provide beautiful fall foliage, but they have great value for our local wildlife species!



**Northern Harrier (male)**  
Photo by Bill Linn

## RATHRUM PRAIRIE FIELD TRIP

Roland Craft

Our November 22 field trip to find raptors on the Rathdrum Prairie was very successful and enjoyable. Participants were Roland Craft, Bill Gundlach, Ed and Kris Buchler, Janet Callen and Jan Severtson.

The raptors sighted were 7 Rough-legged Hawk, 1 Northern Harrier, 7 Red-tailed Hawk (1 was a Harlan's), 1 American Kestrel. In addition to these birds, we also saw European Starling, Common Raven, Northern Flicker, Mourning Dove, Black-capped Chickadee, Black-billed Magpie, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, House Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Northern Shrike, Hairy Woodpecker, California Quail, and Rock Pigeon.

Bill Gundlach pointed out a new area on the prairie where we have not birded before. Standing on one spot we tallied 7 or 8 species!!

Did you know that even after most birds stop singing in fall, mockingbirds sing new songs? According to one study, their fall repertoire can be 99 percent different from their songs in spring.

[Listen to a song recorded in November.](http://animalbehaviorarchive.org/flashPlayer.do?catalogNum=11126)  
<http://animalbehaviorarchive.org/flashPlayer.do?catalogNum=11126>

Learn more about mockingbirds on:

[mockingbirds on our All About Birds website.](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Northern_Mockingbird_dtl.html)  
[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Northern\\_Mockingbird\\_dtl.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Northern_Mockingbird_dtl.html)

# Ornithography

by Billy Collins, U.S. Poet Laureate 2001-2003

(The legendary Cang Jie was said to have invented writing after observing the tracks of birds.)

A light snow last night,  
and now the earth falls open to a fresh page.

A high wind is breaking up the clouds.  
Children wait for the yellow bus in a huddle,

and under the feeder, some birds  
are busy writing short stories,

poems, and letters to their mothers.  
A crow is working on an editorial.

That chickadee is etching a list,  
and a robin walks back and forth

composing the opening to her autobiography.  
All so prolific this morning,

these expressive little creatures,  
and each with an alphabet of only two letters.

A far cry from me watching  
in silence behind a window wondering

what just frightened them into flight —  
a dog's bark, a hawk overhead?

or had they simply finished  
saying whatever it was they had to say?

## KINGFISHER TOURS

Go to: [www.KingfisherBirdTours.com](http://www.KingfisherBirdTours.com)

John Shipley, a past member of the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter now living in Bozeman, has just announced his tours for 2009. I highly recommend his tours. They are small groups, very well run and his enthusiasm for showing you new birds is contagious. (S. Sturts)

### Tour Schedule

<u>Tours</u>	<u>Dates</u>
	<b>2009</b>
<a href="#">Ecuador—Andes</a>	February 14-26 (Sold Out)
<a href="#">Pelee Island, Canada</a>	May 3-9
<a href="#">Pelee Island, Canada</a>	May 10-16
<a href="#">Pelee Island, Canada</a>	May 17-23
<a href="#">Pelee Island, Canada</a>	May 24-30
<a href="#">Ecuador—Andes</a>	November 8-20
<a href="#">Ecuador—Andes</a>	December 27-January 8, 2010

## ONLINE BIRDING STORE

email from Kathleen Cameron on IBLE

Dear Fellow Birders, Friends, and Family,

I am happy to let you know that my good friend Poo Wright-Pulliam has recently opened an online business that I am sure will be of interest to you. In Poo's store you will find lots of products that will be of interest to birders, and wildlife enthusiasts of all types. Yes I am talking binoculars, scopes and birding accessories.

As Poo's business grows she will be carrying more brands and more products so please add this site to your favorites to quickly check to see what she has added.

Please visit Poo's store today to see what she has to offer! Here's the link and happy shopping, birding, and nature observation to you all!

<http://www.binocularsandscopespro.com/home>

## BUILDING BIRD HOUSES

December 10, 2008

Shirley Sturts



With thoughts of next spring in our heads, 8 of us met at Roger Young's woodworking shop to build blue bird boxes for the three blue bird trails we monitor and maintain. We have some 80-90 blue bird boxes placed along roads and around two of the local golf courses. Weather damage, rodents chewing bigger holes, and horses and cows using them for scratching posts keep us busy repairing and replacing houses.

We used the last of the cedar boards that Roger had obtained some years ago for building bird houses. Roger was able to cut out enough pieces to make 22 houses. We divided up into teams of two and put the houses together in a couple of hours.

Workers were: Ed Buchler, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Bill Gundlach, Theresa Potts, Herb and Jan Severtson, Shirley Sturts.

A big thank you to Roger for helping us with our bird house project this time and many times before this.

## FIELD TRIPS 2008-2009

**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 share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver (see President's message in the September Newsletter).**

## MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: January 13, Tuesday

TIME: 9:00 a.m. 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. Everybody is welcome including beginner birders. We will help you with identification skills.

## WINTER BIRDING FIELD TRIP

DATES: January 24, Saturday

TIME: 10 a.m.

MEET: Independence Point

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan 765-2603

ACTIVITY: This is half day trip for beginning and experienced birders. We will walk along City Beach and NIC Beach. How long we stay out depends on the weather and the wishes of the group. Two years ago a Black and White Warbler was found in the City Park on the CDA Christmas Bird Count, so with any luck we could find something just as interesting.

## OTHER 2009 FIELD TRIPS

**January 24, Saturday**, half day for beginning and experienced birders alike. NIC beach, Fernan Lake and possibly Hayden Lake. Leader: Lynn Sheridan 765-2603

**February 14, Saturday**, Lincoln County WA winter bird drive. Leader: Roland Craft 457-8894

**March 7, Saturday**, Sandpoint area. Leader: Lisa Hardy 480-522-6056

**March 21, Saturday**, Newman and/or Liberty Lake, Leader: Roland Craft 457-8894

**April 18, Saturday**, Peone wetlands WA, Leader: Roland Craft 457-8894

**Late April**, 4-5 day trip to Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Leader: Eula Hickam 661-3228

**May 16, Saturday**, Phillips Farm and Steptoe Butte, Leader: Janet Callen 664-1085

**May 30, Saturday**, 1/2 to 3/4 day, Worley and Conkling Park area, Leader: Kris Buchler 664-4739

**Early June**: Century Count, Boundary County, Leader: Kris Buchler 664-4739

