

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaudubon.org

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Articles for the newsletters are welcome. Please submit to the editor, Shirley Sturts at: shirley.sturts@gmail.com by the 20th of each month. All submissions are subject to editing.

JANUARY PROGRAM

DATE: January 11, Tuesday
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 North Ramsey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
SPEAKERS: Sandy Kegley, a Forest Entomologist and John Schwandt, a Pathologist
PROGRAM: "A Tree, a Bird, a Bug, a Bear, & Blister Rust... *Whitebark Pine — a Special Tree in Trouble*"

BOARD MEETING

DATE: January 11, Tuesday
PLACE: Mountain West Bank, 125 Ironwood
TIME: 4:30 p.m.

WHITEBARK PINE ---A UNIQUE TREE

Carrie Hugo



Whitebark pine is a unique tree that grows on the harshest sub-alpine mountaintops in the northwest. It plays a critical role in watershed stabilization, and the survival and distribution of many wildlife species including the endangered grizzly bear. It depends on a bird, the Clark's

Nutcracker, to plant its seed. This tree is currently declining dramatically due to a combination of mountain pine beetle outbreaks, an exotic disease called white pine blister rust, and lack of wildfire that creates openings for regeneration and reduces competition from other tree species.

At our regular meeting on January 11th, information will be presented on all these topics and the challenges we face to protect and restore whitebark pine and its unique and critical habitat.

ARE LOVEBIRDS ENDANGERED?

Let's hope not! Coeur d'Alene Audubon is planning a midwinter banquet as a social occasion and fundraising activity. Here are the details so that you can mark your calendar:

➤ Monday, February 14, Valentine's Day



- Greenbriar Inn, 315 Wallace Avenue in Coeur d'Alene
- Social hour 6 p.m.; dinner at 7:00 p.m.
- Cost is \$35 per person, payable in advance by February 7
- Bring your checkbook or cash for our upcoming banquet to our meeting January 11th. Ronn Rich will be available to sell tickets .
- Or, mail your check payable to Coeur d'Alene Audubon, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816. Please provide your mailing address to receive a confirmation of payment.

➤ Call Ronn Rich (664-3139) if you have questions.

The Greenbriar Inn will be closed to the public and reserved for us on this night, making it an even more special occasion. However, seating is limited so be first to make your reservation. The buffet dinner will have a selection of entrees, including vegetarian, and a no host bar. We hope to have a little entertainment and a few silent auction items to make it interesting. We hope you will plan to come. As Carrie says, you either are a lovebird, or you love birds, so everyone is welcome.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Coeur d'Alene - December 18, 2010

Shirley Sturts, Compiler

The first Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count was organized and compiled by Susan Weller in 1991. That year 17 field observers counted 66 species and 5781 individual birds. This year we had 27 field observers and 7 feeder watchers. We counted 65 species, 6170 individual birds, and added 7 more species during count week. Count week is 3 days before and 3 days after the count day. Only species not seen on count day are included in the count week.



Northern Saw-Whet Owl
photo by Russ Hursrud

Doug Ward showed up at breakfast with the results of a little early morning owling to start us off with our first birds of the day. He added Northern Saw-whet Owl (a first for the CDA count), two Great Horned Owl and a Northern Pygmy-Owl.

Double-crested Cormorant made their first appearance in 2001 with a total of 7 being found off

the shore of North Idaho College beach. Increasing every year, 64 were counted by Kris Buchler and her team this year with Doug Ward adding another 10 and a team headed by Laura Bayless adding 3 from Silver Beach (a first for Silver Beach) .

There are two charts on our chapter website that show the results of the last 20 years. Go to: <http://cdaudubon.org/cdacbcchart.htm>
<http://cdaudubon.org/Cbcount99.htm>

Weather, food available, habitat changes, number of observers in the field and at feeders, and just plain luck are all factors in how successful we are on count day. Some species are hard to find. For example: Winter Wren and Brown Creeper are year-around residents but they do not visit feeders and do not hang out in flocks. One has to be in right place at the right time to find one. Theresa Potts and I found Eurasian Collared-Dove (a first for our count last year) on the Rathdrum Prairie. Although there is an established year-around flock on the prairie, we missed them this year. On the other hand, Common Redpoll has only been present on 5 out of our 20 counts. The Snowy Owl has been present on 2 out of our 20 counts. The

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Snowy Owl, Common Redpoll and most other finches are known as irruptive species. Instead of an annual migration, they only leave their breeding ground during harsh winters or when food supplies are low. Where and when and in what numbers they will be found is unpredictable.

Thank you field and feeder participants: (Field) Peggy Albertson Derrick Antonelli, Laura Bayless. Pat Bearman, Kris and Ed Buchler, Janet Callen, Darlene Carlton, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Mary Deasy, Bill Gundlach, Lisa Hardy, Eula Hickam, Cynthia Obriant, Theresa Potts, Tootie Reed, Lindsay Schromen-Warwin, Jan and Herb Severtson, Lynn Sheridan, Mark Shuler, Doug Ward, Judy Waring, Carolyn Wilcox, Valerie Zagar, (Feeder) Gloria Andrews, Del and Corinne Cameron, Jack and Zella Bloxom, Mary Vanderbilt, John Weber. Vera Weniger.

SPACE LASER SPIES FOR WOODPECKERS

By Jonathan Amos, Science Correspondent, BBC News, San Francisco

US SCIENTISTS ARE DEVELOPING TECHNIQUES TO MONITOR WOODPECKERS FROM SPACE.

An Idaho University team has been using a satellite-borne laser to try to predict in which part of a state forest the birds might be living. The instrument cannot see individual woodpeckers or trees, but it can determine the key characteristics of a woodland, like how dense it is.

Initial work has shown maps built from such data can locate areas favored by North American Pileated Woodpeckers. The scientists want to know where these birds are because they are seen as good indicators of overall bird diversity in a forest. "They create homes for lots of other species in the forest setting," explained Dr Kerri Vierling from the university's Fish and Wildlife Department. "They make cavities and those cavities are then used by other species for nesting and roosting."

"Woodpeckers are very sensitive to forest characteristics, and so they're very selective about where they decide to live." The Idaho research has been presented here in San Francisco at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting, the world's largest annual gathering of earth and planetary scientists.

Continued on Page 3

WOODPECKERS Continued from Page 2

The team assessed some 20,000 hectares of forest in the northern part of the state around Moscow Mountain. They used data acquired by laser altimeters flown on aircraft and on Nasa's Icesat spacecraft before its recent retirement (it was de-orbited in August). Originally conceived as a means to measure the height of ice surfaces in polar regions, the Icesat instrument has also proved hugely effective in gathering information about vegetation cover in other parts of the globe.

Because the way the beam of light sent down by the laser bounces back off canopy leaves, tree trunks and the ground, it is possible to make general statements about important forest characteristics.

Team-member Patrick Adam told BBC News: "We try to measure the diameter of the trees and their density. We can't do that directly from these instruments, but to get at diameter we can measure the height of the trees because tall trees are fatter than short trees; and we get at the density of the forest by looking at the relative amount of light that is returned from the foliage versus that which is returned from the ground."

"So by looking at the areas that have the tallest trees, we know that they also have the largest trees in diameter, and that there's a better chance of there being woodpeckers there. We don't just hypothesize that, we go out and we actually conduct ground-based woodpecker surveys in these locations to verify it."

Dr Lee Vierling from the university's department of forest ecology and biogeosciences added: "There's one species that needs to have high-density forest. That's the Pileated Woodpecker."

"It's a magnificent bird with a tall red crest on its head. It's a carpenter-ant foraging species so the denser the forest, the better for that particular bird."

Past surveys of forest structure have tended to be fairly labor-intensive endeavors, involving sending many people into an area on foot to make the evaluation. And while such assessments produce very detailed results, they are necessarily limited in their spatial information.

Allying remotely sensed data to the ground effort should make habitat surveys more relevant over much broader areas of forest.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

"If we are able to predict where woodpeckers are, just based on satellite data, then we can also surmise, based on some other vegetative characteristics, that we might also have higher diversity of forest songbirds or even some mammals and reptiles. That's useful in land management planning and biodiversity planning," said Mr. Adam.

"It's a lot easier to use satellite data. It's important to still to do some ground surveys at a few select points to make sure we're not totally going off base. But in general, yes, we can cover large areas with the airborne lidar (laser). We're hopeful we can use the space-borne lidar for global coverage."

The Icesat instrument is no longer in space, but it will be replaced later this decade. In addition, the US Space Agency is thinking of flying another laser instrument on its Deformation, Ecosystem Structure and Dynamics of Ice (DESDynI) mission.

Jonathan.Amos-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11867165>



FIELD TRIPS 2010

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 will share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver.

MICA BAY SURVEY

Date: January 11, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

Time: 9:00 a.m. 2-3 hours

Meet: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

Activity: Everybody is welcome, especially beginner birders. We will help you with identification skills.

PEND ORIELLE RIVER AND LAKE

Date: January 16, 2011, Sunday

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet: K-Mart

Leader: Bill Gundlach 667-3339

Activity: This will be a full day trip in search of waterfowl.

