

The Fish Hawk Herald



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society

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CALENDAR CHECK! -- PLEASE NOTE -- monthly meetings will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from now on!

- March 19, 1991
7 p.m. The March meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the basement room of the Security Pacific Bank in Hayden Lake. Wayne Wakkinen, Wildlife Research Biologist for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, will present a program on Grizzlies of the Selkirks.
- March 21, 1991
Noon Susan Weller will be giving a slide show on Declining and Increasing Bird Species at the KEA meeting, Ironhorse Restaurant.
- March 22, 1991
7 p.m. Idaho Fish & Game is considering a bird survey of Farragut State Park as part of a management program for the area. They have asked our Audubon Club for help. We are having a meeting of those interested in taking part in such a survey on March 22 at 7 p.m. at the home of Pam Gontz, 4301 N. Ramsey Rd., #A2-14, Cd'A (Oakcrest Mobile Home Park). If you can't make the meeting but are interested, call Shirley Sturts 664-5318 or Pam Gontz 765-1115.
- March 23, 1991
8 a.m. FIELD TRIP! Susan Weller will lead a field trip to the Cataldo Slough and adjoining wetlands. Meet at the Country Chef Restaurant at the Rose Lake Exit at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, 9:00 a.m. for the field trip. Bring a sack lunch and dress in layers.
- April 1, 1991 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for submitting articles, etc.
- April 16, 1991
7 p.m. April meeting date. Program details to be set out in the April newsletter.

The field trip to Creston, B.C. has been post-poned until late April or early May. Details to be included in the next newsletter.

MANY THANKS --

* To Judy Waring for the delicious cookies she brought to the February meeting! Don't forget to volunteer your culinary talents to Hospitality Chair Joan Sestak. Joyce Cicco has graciously offered to bring the goodies for our March meeting.

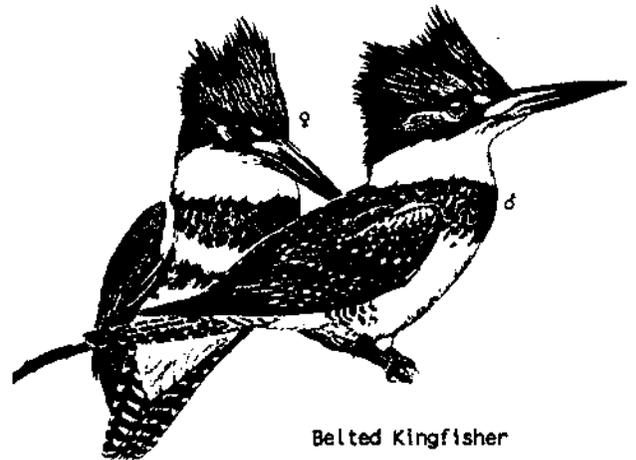
* To Roger Young for donating several items for our monthly meeting raffle. Roger, the birds appreciate your skill in the woodshop as much as we do! The Cicco's made out big time at the February meeting by winning one of Roger's suet feeders, and the calendar donated by the Sestaks. Mike Mihelich won a cedar feeder filled with sunflower seeds and Pam Gontz won the other suet feeder.

WELCOME -- new members Len Mattei, Mike Bundy, and Ed and Pat Hale. It won't be long before everyone in the Humanities Department at NIC are Audubon members. Also welcome new members Amy Kiesbuy and Lucy Diggins-Parker.

FEATHERED FACTS --

Belted Kingfisher [Ceryle alcyon]

The Belted Kingfisher is so-named because of the belt of slate blue feathers across its white breast. Kingfisher, derived from Anglo-Saxon, means "king of the fishes". Ceryle, the generic name of the kingfisher, comes from the Greek for "seabird" or "kingfisher". The trivial name, alcyon, is also from the Greek; a lady of that name so grieved after her drowned husband that the gods turned them both into kingfishers.



Belted Kingfisher

Characteristics of the Belted Kingfisher --

- 1) stocky, short-legged bird with large head and ragged crest
- 2) large bill
- 3) slate blue breast band on both male and female -- female has rust belly band and flanks
- 4) common along rivers and brooks, ponds and lakes
- 5) solitary except in nesting season
- 6) call is a loud, dry rattle

Kingfishers nest in a horizontal (or slightly upward-sloping) burrow in a vertical bank near water. They prefer soil with high sand and low clay composition. The male and female will alternately dig and remove debris. The burrow is usually 3' to 6', but may reach 15' in length. Nesting chamber holds a grass or leaf saucer. Occasionally kingfishers will nest in tree cavities. Incubation takes 23 to 24 days. Young are able to fly in approximately 23 days.

The primary food of the kingfisher, of course, is fish. It will dive from a perch or hover and dive for their prey. Birds that dive but are also accomplished fliers are quite buoyant because of their hollow bones, numerous air sacs, and the air that remains trapped in their feathers. These birds submerge much like buoyant human beings do -- by diving from a considerable height and allowing their momentum to take them well below the surface. Kingfishers seem to use a similar technique, but often take prey very close to the surface. They will also take aquatic inverts, amphibians, reptiles, insects, young birds, mice, and on rare occasions, berries.

Kingfishers will eject indigestible portions of food in the form of pellets -- a process also common in raptors. The Kingfisher has a rapid digestion system. When a fish fills its throat, this rapid digestion allows it to inch down the gullet.

Once fledged, parents teach fishing to perched young by dropping dead meals into water for retrieval. After about ten days of fledging, young can catch live food and are forced from parental territory. Solitary birds when not in breeding, Kingfishers will defend individual feeding territories.

John James Audubon noted of the Belted Kingfisher in his classic Birds of America, published in the early 1840's, that "the eggs are fine eating". An enormous variety of native birds or their eggs once found their way to markets and dining tables.

[The Birder's Handbook; Golden's Birds of North America]

DIAGNOSTIC DETAILS --

Is it a Western Grebe or a Clark's Grebe? They both occupy the same general range and habitat, but the Western Grebe is predominate in the northern and eastern part of their range. Until recently, these two grebes were formerly considered one species.

The primary distinction between these two species is the placement of the black cap. As you can see in the diagram to the right, on the Western Grebe the black cap extends below and includes the eyes. On the Clark's Grebe, the black cap does not usually extend to the eye.

Other key features are:

Western Grebe

bill is yellow-green

in flight, white wing stripe
is less extensive

call is a loud two-note kreek-kreek

Clark's Grebe

bill is yellow-orange

in flight, white wing stripe
is more extensive

call is a single loud kreek



[National Geographic's Field Guide to Birds of North America]

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP REVIEW --

Our February field trip to Wolf Lodge and on down to St. Maries turned out to be a beautiful day. Little did we know when we started out that we'd actually see 35 different species.

In the Wolf Lodge Bay area we spotted Buffleheads, Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Mallards, and Red-winged Blackbirds. Further down the lake road at the Mineral Ridge/Beauty Creek area we saw Steller's Jays, Northern Flicker, Song Sparrow, Pine Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, and Bald Eagles.

On the road towards our next destination, the wildlife management area near Harrison, we added a Raven and a Kingfisher to our list. At the Coeur d'Alene River Wildlife Management area we came across the highlight of the trip, a Eurasian Wigeon. This was the first one seen for many in our group, including yours truly. Also found in the same area were Northern Pintails, American Wigeons, Green-winged Teal, Redheads, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Trumpeter Swans, and a Golden Eagle [immature].

We continued south towards St. Maries and turned towards Avery, following the St. Joe River for a few miles. On this jaunt we picked up Magpies, Hooded Mergansers, a Rough-legged Hawk, and a pair of Osprey. One Osprey was feeding on the ice. Along another backroad near St. Maries we saw an American Kestrel, Shrike (probably Northern), Wild Turkeys, and American Robins.

We headed home via Rose Lake. Along that route we were able to add to our growing list Mountain Chickadee, Ring-necked Duck, Tundra Swans, and Western Bluebird.

To this great birding day we had a perfect ending. As the sun was setting we were viewing a truly magnificent sight -- a flooded field that had hundreds of Pintails, Mallards, Canada Geese, American Wigeons, dotted with several swans. Off to our left were two Bald Eagles standing in a dry part of the field feeding. It's birding days like this that makes us truly glad to be Auduboners!

BIRD BEHAVIOR - COMMENSAL FEEDING --

What is commensal feeding? While some birds dine alone, other choose specific dining partners and, in doing so, reap certain benefits. This feeding association is advantageous to the participants by enhancing foraging success while increasing protection from predators. An example might be that by standing close to a foraging White Ibis, a Great Egret can snatch stray prey scared to the surface by the ibis but beyond its reach. In return, the egret may warn the shorter, less wary ibis of predators. Not all foraging associations, however, are mutually beneficial.

In some commensal associations, particular species may assist the foraging of another, but receive no benefits. One of the more common commensal associations involves "beaters", which stir up prey, and "attendants", which simply follow in their footsteps taking whatever comes their way. Many waterbirds, marsh birds, and shorebirds attend particular beater species. For example, Great and Snowy Egrets will attend cormorants. Some attendants may follow more than one beater species. The diligent American Coot attends Canvasbacks, Tundra Swans, Mallards, Pintails, and Redheads. The Wilson's Phalarope will follow Northern Shovelers when in water of swimming depth; but, where they can wade they choose to forage behind American Avocets. Beater-attendant relationships are not restricted to waterbirds. An example of this association on land would be the Cattle, Snowy, and Great Egrets that attend cattle.

Three of the more common forms of commensal feeding in North American woodlands involve woodpeckers. Hummingbirds, warblers, and kinglets may drink sap oozing from sapsucker "wells" (holes drilled into trees by sapsuckers). Other species such as bluebirds and nuthatches follow insect-seeking woodpeckers to snap up the prey that got away. After Pileated Woodpeckers have cleared the outer bark from a section of tree trunk, Hairy Woodpeckers, which are not bark removers, seek insects which may have been exposed close enough to the surface.

We may have heard the expression "there is no free lunch", but there is some proof that certain species definitely gain from the actions of others with whom they forage without doing obvious damage to their benefactors.

THE OBSERVATION POST --

In addition to the wonderful sightings from our February 23rd field trip, we also had these reported sightings:

Black-capped Chickadees, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Mountain Chickadees, House Finch, Northern Flicker [Red-shafted], Evening Grosbeak, Steller's Jay, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ring-necked Pheasants, Pine Siskins, Varied Thrush, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker

Cooper's Hawk

Bobwhites

Western Meadowlark (2)

Tree Swallow

- Feeder of Walter & Roberts Knoles
- neighborhood of Joyce Cicco
- Ramsey Road, Lou Cicco
- 3/3/91, south of Harrison, Pam Gontz
- 3/3/91, Harrison, Pam Gontz

BRUCELLOSIS BRIEF --

At the February 20, 1991 meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society, a question was asked about Brucellosis. This disease is also called Bang's disease, infectious abortion, and in humans it is known as undulant fever.

Brucellosis is caused by five species of bacteria. The most widely studied species is Brucella abortus. This bacteria affects both wild and domestic cattle as well as members of the Cervidae (deer) family. The remaining four Brucella bacteria are: B. suis, which infects members of the swine family, B. melitensis that causes Brucellosis in the goat family, B. ovis is the Brucellosis pathogen of the sheep family, and B. canis produces infectious abortion in the dog family. Although these bacteria are rather specific in types of animals they infect, they have all caused infectious abortion in the animals listed above, plus horses, and chickens. Brucella abortus is the disease producing organism that brings about undulant fever in humans. A Danish researcher named Bernard Bang discovered Brucella abortus in 1897.

The disease is acquired mainly through the alimentary canal. Susceptible individuals pick up the bacteria from contaminated feed, water, or by licking infected animals. The most prevalent transmission occurs when uninfected animals lick aborted fetuses, placentas, or vaginal discharges of infected individuals. It is also believed that Brucellosis may be contracted through the mucus membranes of the eyes and nostrils. In 1947 it was found that ticks can spread Brucellosis. In conjunction with this finding, it is believed that ticks, acting as vectors, may conserve the bacteria between Brucellosis outbreaks and that small rodents may also be vectors.

Clinical symptoms are very illusive, and usually are observed only in pregnant individuals. The most common and easily noticed symptoms are premature births and weak offspring. There is no cure for Brucellosis. Antibiotics may beat the disease down, but as soon as treatment stops, the malady returns to it's original strength.

Brucellosis has been virtually eradicated from the domestic livestock population in the U.S. This feat was accomplished through vaccination. A live bacteria vaccine (Strain 19) was developed; and in 1940 a heifer calf vaccination program was initiated. This program has been very successful. At present many of the nations states are considered Brucellosis free.

Unfortunately, Brucellosis still exists in wild animals. For obvious reasons, no control program has been proposed. However, where wild species are kept under controlled or semi-controlled conditions, Brucellosis vaccination is practiced. The National Bison Range, at Moiese, Montana, maintains a vaccination program where every female bison calf is vaccinated at about six to eight months of age. This husbandry practice is an annual occurrence. In contrast, National Parks have not established a vaccination program.

Because the wild animal population maintains a reservoir of Brucellosis, there is a constant threat that the disease could spread back into the domestic animal community. Therefore, the vaccination program is being continued.

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Keeping Livestock Healthy, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942.

_____, Animal Diseases, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956.

Chandler, Asa C., Clark P. Read, Introduction to Parasitology, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1961.

Kagerer, Henry DVM, Lecture, Glenwood Springs Colorado: Colorado Mountain College, April 20, 1990.

[Walter Knoles]

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT TRENDS - BREEDING BIRD SURVEY 1980-89, IDAHO ---

The North American Breeding Bird Survey (BB's) is a part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Office of Migratory Bird Management. The survey was initiated in 1966 as an annual roadside survey of birds in the U.S. and Canada. The survey has been conducted in Idaho since 1968.

BB's data may be used to estimate population trends for about 370 of the more common species of North American birds -- from the Common Loon to the House Sparrow. These population trend estimates are based on counts conducted each June by experienced volunteers along over 2000 roadside "routes". The routes are picked randomly within latilong blocks, regardless of habitat type.

In Idaho, over a ten year period in the 1980's, approximately twenty-three species were found overall to represent a statistically significant trend of inclining and declining bird numbers. These numbers are reliably represented by appearing on ten or more routes. Estimates based on fewer than ten routes for a state are not reliable to estimate the variance of population trends.

<u>Species (Incline)</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number of Routes</u>
Red-tailed Hawk	+ 236	29
American Coot	+ 893	10
Long-billed Curlew	+1411	18
Clark's Nutcracker	+ 353	10

<u>Species (decline)</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number of Routes</u>
Vesper Sparrow	- 30	32
Audubon's Warbler	- 55	18
Brewer's Sparrow	- 59	21
Mountain Chickadee	- 65	17
House Wren	- 49	20
Spotted Sandpiper	- 72	24
California Gull	- 19	15
Mourning Dove	- 41	35
Great Horned Owl	- 40	10
Downey Woodpecker	- 74	10
Red-shafted Woodpecker	- 75	29
Horned Lark	- 69	26
Mountain Bluebird	- 54	20
Loggerhead Shrike	- 97	10
Rufous-sided Towhee	- 83	16
Red Crossbill	- 96	13
Song Sparrow	- 55	30
Oregon Junco	- 76	20
Brewer's Blackbird	- 34	33

According to Sam Droege, National BB's Coordinator, biologists do not "have a good handle" on why some permanent resident species are disappearing. Some reasonable explanations for declines in resident species, neotropical and temperate zone migrants, would include habitat loss and fragmentation, and disturbance from human activities in both North America and the neotropics.

According to Droege, "These activities are having dramatic impacts on the populations of migratory birds. Given the patterns of increasing forest destruction and fragmentation in both breeding and wintering areas of neotropical migrant birds, we predict that populations of migratory forest birds will continue to decline." [from population declines in North American birds that migrate to the neotropics. Robbins, Saver, Greenbury, and Droege. *proc. Natl. Acad. Sci USA* Vol 86, pp 7658-7662, Oct. 1989, *Population Biology*.]

That grim prediction should keep Idaho birders busy documenting the presence of permanent resident species like the Great Horned Owl; and should also keep us on the look out for neotropical migrants such as the Rufous-sided Towhee and the Audubon's Warbler. The marked decline in overall bird numbers in Idaho sends a message that something, indeed, is amiss.

[Susan Weller]

BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM -- Research Grants available.

Any individual wishing to do original research toward advancing and improving bluebird populations (western or mountain) can apply. Grants ranging from \$150 to \$1,000 are available for one year or two year projects. Examples of research topics: nest box comparisons, predator guards and controls, competitors, secondary influences such as chemicals, placement, temperature, etc. Public education and media projects specific to bluebirds would be considered. Research is encouraged in areas with potential but low or no bluebird reports. Applications due April 1, 1991. Contact Ellen Scriven or write Grants Committee, Bluebird Recovery Program, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, Box 3801, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

[Ellen Scriven]

INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE --

For those members who may be interested in increasing their knowledge on various topics, the following is a list of classes available through several institutions.

Clark Fork Enrichment Series Classes -- History of North Idaho - March 16th; Fishing for the Big Ones - April 13th; Animal Tracks and Big Game Animals - April 27th; For Bird Lovers Only - May 18th; Spring Mushrooms - June 1st; Ethnobotany - June 9th; Elderhostel - [Endangered Species, Old-Growth Forests, and Biodiversity] - July 14-20; Outdoor Photography - July 28th; Water Color Painting from Nature - August 24th; Fossil Collecting and Geological Tour - September 7 or 8; Astronomy - October 4-5; Writing Creatively - October 26-27; and Christmas Crafts - November 9th. For more information on the Clark Fork classes write to: Clark Fork Field Campus, Box 87, Clark Fork, ID 83811.

Yellowstone Institute -- The Yellowstone Institute has from 60 to 70 classes to choose from on many topics. A few examples are: Wildlife Observation in the Spring - May 30-June 2; Waterbirds of Yellowstone - May 31-June 2; Ecological Relationships of Birds - June 7-9; Lakes of Yellowstone by Canoe - June 17-21; Blossoms & Birds - June 21-23; Birding Yellowstone - June 21-23; Beetles, Bugs, & Butterflies - June 24-26; Horsepacking: Spring Flora & Fauna - June 25-29; Birds of Yellowstone - June 24-28; Yellowstone's Birds of Prey - July 5-7; Wars & Words Over Wildlands - June 27-28; Writing Workshop - June 26-30; Alpine Wildflowers - July 8-9; Ecology of Greater Yellowstone - July 11-14; Wolves of Yellowstone - July 13-14; The Art of Keeping a Field Journal - August 13-16; Wildlife Observation in the Fall - September 20-22; and Swan Identification & Ecology - October 25-27. For information on these classes and other classes offered write for their catalog at: The Yellowstone Institute, P.O. Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190 or call the Institute Office (307)344-7381, ext. 2384.

Community College Classes [Spokane] -- Birds of Eastern Washington - May 9, 16, & 18; Wildflower Identification - April 10 thru May 15 [Wed. nights]; and Backyard Haven for Birds - April 24th. For more information and a catalog, write to: Institute for Extended Learning, 3305 West Fort George Wright Drive, MS 3090, Spokane, WA 99204-5228, or call (509)459-3770.

North Cascades Institute -- Spring classes include Early Bloom: Spring Plants of Puget Sound - March 30-31 and In Peril: Endangered Species of Pacific Northwest - March 30-31. For more information on these classes and their summer class schedule, write to: North Cascades Institute, 2105 Hwy. 20, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284 or call (206) 856-5700.

SPRING CLEANING --

Time to clean out those bird houses! If you are building, buying or maintaining bird houses, make sure that they do not have perches on them. Little pegs placed below the entrance hole are a common addition to many bird houses. Unfortunately, these perches give predator species a convenient position from which to destroy eggs, nestlings and attack brooding parents. The nest box parents have greater difficulty defending their nests with a predator perched in the entry way of their home. They do not need a perch at the entrance.

[Ellen Scriven]

LETTER WRITING: EXPRESSING YOUR CONCERN AND OPINION --

Writing one's elected officials is the single most important thing a voter can do to influence the outcome of environmental issues. Here are some tips for effective letter writing.

- State your message precisely and clearly. Use the Bill name and number whenever possible.
- Explain your reasons for writing. In your own words, explain the personal or local impacts of proposed legislation. Demonstrate that you have thought the issue over before taking a stand. Describe personal experiences if you can, to illustrate the depth and sincerity of your concern.
- Ask for specific action.
- Ask for a response and write again if the response generates more questions.
- Be constructive and understanding of the opposing viewpoint.
- Be brief and discuss only one subject per letter.
- Concentrate on your own representatives and thank them when you feel that they have performed well.

Do not underestimate the importance of a personal letter. It will be read and counted. Exercise your wrist and your right. Make democracy work for you.

[Ellen Scriven - Annotated from Audubon Activist, Sept/Oct 1989]

ASQ AND IT'S EFFECT ON OUR FORESTS --

One of the reasons we are seeing so many of our trees fall before the chainsaw is that the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) and the local districts are being pressured "to get the cut out" by meeting the ASQ or Allowable Sale Quantity. For over a decade the ASQ has been established primarily through the Congressional appropriations process and dictated to the forests and districts by Congress. In all instances in Region 1 (Montana and N. Idaho) forests, these quantities exceed the timber harvests proposed by the Forest Supervisors. The proposal for the IPNF, for example, for 1991 is 210.0 million board feet, while the ASQ set by Congress is 254.5 million board feet. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and relevant court rulings make it clear that the Forest Service is not required to cut the volume of timber quantified in the ASQ. It is a ceiling, not a target. Within the Forest Service it is often regarded as a target which must be met if line officers are to be given favorable evaluations and the timber industry and its political allies are to be satisfied, all this at the expense of the environment. There is a lot of controversy within the Forest Service about the role of the ASQ figure in forest planning.

"How much timber should be cut on a national forest? Who should decide how much is enough? Should politicians in Washington tell a forest staff how much timber to cut and sell? Should the cut level on national forests be based on the ecological capabilities of the land? Or should cut levels be dictated by the wishes of the local timber industry and a desire to protect 'community stability'?"

If you believe that your forests are being overcut, your representatives in Washington need to hear from you. [Ellen Scriven - Based upon an article which appeared in Inner Voice publication of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, Summer/Fall 1990, Vol. 1, Issue #4]



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send the Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$20 payable to the National Audubon Society is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send this application and your check to

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Local Chapter
Coeur d'Alene G06

Local Chapter Code
7XCH8

Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society

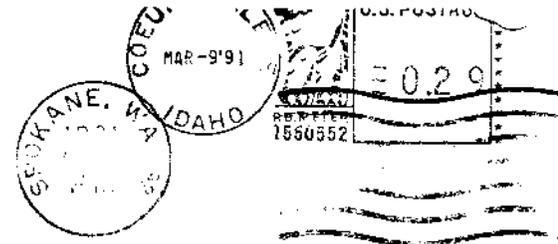
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