

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society



MARCH 2000

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 6

MARCH PROGRAM

Date: March 20, Monday

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: First Presbyterian Church
521 Lakeside

Program: "Great Missoula Flood"

Presented by Professor Andrew Buddington,
Spokane Community College

reestablish itself. The Yellowstone fire appeared catastrophic to the untrained eye, but well-seasoned birders delighted at the chance to view Eden being repopulated with avian life.

National Parks are important to resident birds and also provide reliable stopover and staging areas for migratory birds during fall and winter. While travel inside some national parks is limited to humans during the winter because of snow, others have good access year round. We are fortunate in Idaho to be within a day's drive to a number of parks. Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Glacier, and Olympic National Parks are all within reach for a weekend of birding in relative solitude during the off-season. Tourists can rarely be found in the previously mentioned parks unless it's summer. If you want to beat the crowds, fall and spring migrations offer great birding for resident and migratory species alike.

Olympic and Grand Teton National Parks were recently rated in National Parks Magazine as two of the best parks for birding. Grand Teton boasts a species list of 152; Olympic tallies 145. Waterton-Glacier and Yellowstone both fell into the high category with Glacier topping out at 159 species. Yellowstone listed the highest numbers of water birds with 38 species.

Some parks offer sightings of unique species that may not be found in other parks. Harlequin Ducks may turn up in Olympic, Mount Rainier, and North Cascades National Parks. Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets are found only in undisturbed tracts of coniferous forests like those in Olympic and Redwood National Parks. Most of us have thrilled at the gentle grace of the giant Trumpeter Swan plying the pristine waters inside Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

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BIRDING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF NATIONAL PARKS

By Susan Weller

National Parks have always provided birders the opportunity to pursue their passion of seeking out bird species in relatively undisturbed surroundings. Nothing disappoints and disheartens a birder like



Spotted Towhee

discovering the neat riparian area where you could always find a Veery is now the habitat of a clear cut, or the common house trailer. National Parks provide stable and undisturbed habitats because there is no logging, no grazing, and no

development within park boundaries. Rarely will you suffer pangs of loss inside the borders of a National Park.

Natural disasters like fires or earthquakes may occur and transform habitat, but these events provide new opportunities to watch wildlife

BIRDING - NATIONAL PARKS

Continued from Page 1

Unfortunately, the highest ranked park for total species is not within driving distance for even a four-day weekend. Big Bend National Park in Texas was ranked number one for possible species inside a national park with 450! But Point Reyes National Seashore and Redwoods National Park follow with 440 and 401 species respectively.



Black-capped Chickadee Photographed by Wayne Tree

Sadly, National Parks are microcosms of what the real world used to represent in terms of available habitat. They are harried constantly by the hounds of modern life barking at their doorsteps. Encroachment by development along park boundaries creates fragmentation that offers access to predators like dogs, cats, and raccoons. Fragmentation also allows competition from introduced species like the European Starling and English Sparrow, and parasitic species like the Brown-headed Cowbird.

Overuse by visitors may also create problems for highly specialized and sensitive bird species. By applying common sense and by practicing a strict code of ethics, birders may enjoy their experiences inside national parks without having a serious impact on birds. National parks in the U.S. and Canada are instrumental in protecting valuable habitats and fragile ecosystems for a variety of species. In bureaucratic lingo, birders are nonconsumptive users inside the boundaries of national parks. Ideally, we should "Take only, memories and leave only footprints." That is what preserving our national heritage is all about.

LOGGING ARTICLE A REBUTTAL

Susan Weller

An article by David Pace of the Associated Press was published recently by the Spokesman Review under the caption "Logging creates habitat for some wildlife." Unfortunately, the caption was far more accurate than the information contained within the story. Mr. Pace's quotes were taken from Jim Woehr, a senior scientist with the Wildlife Management Institute in Washington, DC.

Using Mr. Woehr's argument, Pace maintains that some species of birds utilizing brushy habitats are in decline because "too little logging and too much wilderness preservation is depriving some declining wildlife species of habitat they need to survive." On the surface, such an argument may be viewed as containing some truth, but the issue is far more complex than Mr. Woehr lets on. His contention that logging eastern forests to aid the survival of certain bird species is spurious, at best. Mr. Woehr misuses data gathered by the Breeding Bird Survey to prove his point, and ignores the historical evolution of eastern forest ecosystems.

First, the bird species he mentions, the Golden-winged Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-breasted Chat and Prairie Warbler have indeed been in decline for 30 years. That statement is also true of 50% of all neotropical migratory birds--species that breed and rear young in the United States and Canada that over-winter in Mexico, Central, and South America. To put Woehr's argument in proper perspective, one must first examine the ecological transformation that took place in the U.S. after colonization by European settlers.

When the first colonists set foot on the North American Continent, the eastern U.S. was covered with deciduous and coniferous forests. Indian tribes had manipulated the landscape twice yearly with fire, creating a mosaic of open, park-like forests that abounded with elk, deer, bear, turkey, quail and ruffed grouse. Because game was so plentiful, the forests also held many associated predator species like eagles, owls, lynx and wolves.

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SPRING ARRIVALS

Shirley Sturts

It is time to start looking for returning summer residents (of the feathered variety) and those just migrating through our area. I would appreciate your sightings of first arrival dates. Can you beat the record for early arrival? The dates include latilong 2 only (Kootenai /Shoshone/Benewah)

The median date is based on arrival dates I have collected over the past 30 years. The dates I use are the first date the bird was reported by someone. This isn't always the first arrival date but it does give us an indication as to when we should expect the species to show up in our area.

*see Observation Post

SPECIES	Median Date	Earliest Date
*Red-winged Blackbird	Feb. 14	Jan. 20
Killdeer	Feb. 26	Jan. 26
Western Bluebird	March 10	Feb. 16
Mountain Bluebird	March 25	Feb. 26
*Spotted Towhee	March 13	Feb. 22
Violet-green Swallow	March 5	Feb. 22
Tree Swallow	March 21	Feb. 25
Osprey	March 28	Feb. 23
Turkey Vulture	April 10	March 10
Common Snipe	April 6	March 15
Brewer's Blackbird	April 14	March 28
Common Loon	April 16	March 27
N.Rough-w Swallow	April 19	April 1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	April 6	March 4
Cliff Swallow	April 29	April 4
Red-naped Sapsucker	April 18	April 3
Cinnamon Teal	April 18	March 4
Blue-winged Teal	May 8	March 15
Barn Swallow	April 29	March 13
Chipping Sparrow	April 30	March 23
Y-headed..Blackbird	April 23	March 25
Yellow-rumped Warbler	April 24	April 11
House Wren	April 28	March 26
Bank Swallow	May 8	April 17
Savannah Sparrow	May 1	April 11
Vesper Sparrow		April 23

To be continued in April newsletter

MARCH FIELD TRIPS

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: March 7, Tuesday

TIME: 12:00 Noon to 1:00 p.m. for birding
Stay longer to play "Gone Birding"

MEET : Cove Bowl Parking Lot

LEADER: Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: We will look for birds along Coeur d'Alene Lake Drive and at Kris' feeder on Armstrong Hill. Kris has invited us to play the video game "Gone Birding" afterward.

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: March 13, Monday -

March 28, Tuesday - April 7, Friday

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

MEET: 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.

CATALDO AND CHAIN OF LAKES

DATE: March 19, Saturday

TIME: 8 a.m.

MEET: Cove Bowl Parking Lot (car pool)

LEADER: Lisa Hardy 682-4808

Kris Buchler (car pool coordinator) 664-4739

ACTIVITY: We will be gone most of the day so bring a lunch and water. We will tour the wetlands of the Coeur d'Alene River system to see Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler and other migrating waterfowl. We will be checking first arrivals of a variety of species: Bluebirds, Swallows, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-naped Sapsucker, Osprey, Turkey Vulture etc.

LOGGING ARTICLE REBUTTEL

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Colonists built homes and cleared forests for agricultural purposes and soon learned that timber was a valuable commodity, not just locally, but for lumber-starved England.

By 1694, deforestation, competition from livestock, and over-hunting caused some states to impose closed seasons on deer and other herbivores. In 1718, Massachusetts closed hunting season for a term of three years. Elk, moose, bears, lynxes, turkeys, eagles and migratory birds had disappeared over a large portion of their range. As eastern forests vanished from the landscape, plains species from the mid-west began to move into the unoccupied terrain and make use of newly created habitats. For instance, the Loggerhead Shrike never occurred east of the Appalachian Mountains until the eastern forests were cleared and the mid-west settled. Suddenly, Loggerheads moved into New England to occupy and take advantage of the open spaces. As the habitat began to grow back, shrikes started to decline and have virtually disappeared from New England.

As forests regenerate, some successional bird species have indeed begun to disappear in the east. As forests mature, bird species tied to prairie and shrubby habitats are being driven back to where they belong. Populations of formerly imperiled woodland species like the Hermit Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher are starting to stabilize. Bruce Peterjohn, coordinator of operational monitoring surveys for the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, stated "If you cut down the trees it will certainly improve the habitat for successional birds—at the cost of woodland bird communities that are just starting to recover and stabilize." Peterjohn also pointed out "The main issue for the Golden-winged Warbler is range exchange with the Blue-winged Warbler." Blue-wing populations have been steadily moving north and hybridizing with Golden-wings.

The bird species mentioned by Woehr as suffering from a 30-year decline are neither threatened, nor endangered. According to Peterjohn, "Birds

occupying mature habitat are the real issue because we've eliminated so much of their habitat. If you cut down the rest of it, these species will be gone—to the benefit of species that aren't in any trouble." Indeed, many woodland birds of the southern forests are either gone or in serious decline. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the largest



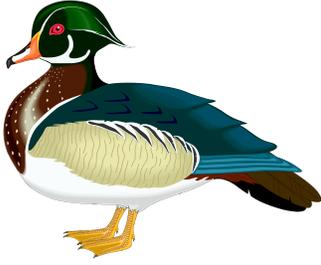
woodpecker in America and the second largest woodpecker in the world, is now considered extinct. The bird once occupied the vast forests of the southern United States and used as its main food supply the larvae of wood-boring beetles found in dead and dying trees. The Red-cockaded Woodpecker is currently struggling to survive in what remains of its habitat. The bird is restricted to nesting in southern long-leaf pine forests that now occupy 2-3% of their former range.

IVORY BILLED WOODPECKER

Trying to make an analogy between the management of eastern forests and western forests and their resultant bird communities is a serious non sequitur. According to Peterjohn, "Woodland trends in the east are exactly the opposite of those in the west." Mr. Woehr's argument that eastern forests need to be cut down to aid declining bird species sounds more like the rhetoric often spouted by the timber industry—not by scientists. Now that logging is being restricted in the west to aid the recovery of species that really are imperiled, the eye of industry is once again focusing on eastern forests.

The true reasons for nationwide declines in bird populations were identified long ago—habitat destruction and the ever burgeoning human population. These problems will only be solved by concentrating on the real issues, instead of diverting to the dilemmas of special interest groups. •

THE DUCK STAMP STORY



ART - CONSERVATION - HISTORY

"The Duck Stamp Story is a wonderfully told tale of the public's love for wildlife conservation....a marvelous job of bringing the world of duck stamps to life."

Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (from foreword)

This new book by Eric Jay Dolin and Bob Dumaine includes:

- The evolution of the program, including a history of waterfowl conservation.
- State, local, tribal, international and Federal Junior duck stamp programs.
- Collecting and displaying duck stamps.
- Profiles of famous collectors and rare stamps.
- The duck stamp art contest --"*the richest art competition in the world.*"
- Stories about artists and their artwork
- Appendices with statistics, fun facts, and images for all federal duck stamps, and the values for all stamps and duck stamp prints.

I am ordering a copy and will have it on display at the next meeting along with some flyers with order information. If you are interested but will not be at the meeting you can call me and I'll send you the information. (Shirley Sturts 664-5318) Visit Website: www.duckstampstory.com

A portion of each sale will be donated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to purchase critical habitat and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System. The sale of duck stamps has raised over \$500 million that has been used to purchase over 5 million acres of refuges, making this one of the most successful conservation programs in the world. .



BIRD SEED FOR SALE

**50 LB Black Oil Sunflower
Price Reduced to \$12.00**

Niger (Thistle) \$1.50 LB

**Available at Regular Meetings
Or call Janet Callen at
664-1085**

**Price includes sales tax
All proceeds benefit
Coeur d' Alene Audubon
Society**

NOTES FROM OUR CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Lynn Sheridan, Secretary

- We're nearing the time to make the decision for the wording on Gertie Hansen's Memorial plaque. On February 21, after the meeting we'll brainstorm, and try to finalize it.
- Would our chapter like to be involved in putting a radio program on PBS? President Susan Weller is working on plans. Possible format: a debate with a moderator.
- No progress yet on a Peregrine Falcon Project.
- National Audubon reports that countrywide membership is not growing, although our local chapter has a steady increase. Any comments from our membership-at-large as to faults or benefits they find with the NAS can be given to any of our board members.
- We received a complementary letter from Glenn Olson, NAS Field Office in Sacramento, on our 1999 chapter activities.
- Expenses approved: \$40.00 for a club coffeepot. Re-imburse our editor for computer related expenses, c. \$25-30. Osprey design: \$25 for our newsletter masthead.
- Our "FISH HAWK" newsletter will soon have a new looking masthead: full Osprey, wings spread.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE GREAT GRAY OWL

Kris Buchler

Reports of owl sightings lured eight Audubon members to the Moscow/Lewiston area February 19th. With the guidance of Charles Swift, Palouse Audubon Society, and Carole Vande Voorde, Canyon Birders, we couldn't lose. Add a dose of brilliant sunshine and you have a perfect day for birding. A Great Gray Owl had been seen a week earlier on the road to Pullman and this possibility was on all of our minds, even though it had not been spotted for several days.

Meeting at 5:45am was asking a lot but we were rewarded for our "enthusiasm" on our first stop in Moscow. A Pine Warbler (eastern species) had been frequenting a feeder in Moscow. Charles Swift met us at the Hoff residence at 8:00am, and true to his word, the bird showed up within a few minutes of our arrival. Not only did he show up, he showed off, giving observers great views of this "lifer" for many in our group.

Our next stop connected us with the Canyon Birders at the Potlatch mill ponds in Lewiston. This wetland gave us a great opportunity to listen to Virginia Rail, a small but loudly vocal marsh dweller. A few ducks such as Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Bufflehead and American Wigeon inhabited the small pond. American Kestrels and Red-tailed Hawks surveyed the area for prey.

SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

(Third annual) March 25-26

Othello, Washington

For information call 1-800-684-2556

AUDUBON CHAPTER WEBPAGE

www.Audubon.org (then click on Chapters/Idaho/Coeur d'Alene)

Try out the Photo Quiz



Northern Saw-whet Owl
Photographed by Wayne Tree

Shoreline along the Snake River in Clarkston was home to Common Merganser, Thayer's Gull, California Gull, Herring Gull and Gadwall. A Barred Owl has been perching here for some time and gave everyone perfect viewing and

photo opportunities. This was followed by a Saw-whet Owl spotted in a neighborhood in Clarkston. How do you find owls? Besides having good eyes, one has to think like an owl and pick suitable daytime perches. A good observer can locate these by evidence, which includes whitewash on the branches, trunk or ground, and even better, a collection of owl pellets on the ground that indicates the bird uses that perch regularly.

The slough along the Snake River had been home to a Black-crowned Night Heron since Christmas. This cryptic bird was unnoticed by most but could not hide from the eyes of experienced birders in our group.

After lunch and owl search at Hellsgate State Park, we headed to Lenore, 15 miles east of Lewiston. Here we were treated to our third owl, a Western Screech Owl who has taken up residence in a Wood Duck box on the edge of a tiny private marsh. At first glance, you might think a cat was peering out of the opening. The owl barely moved as the rather large group watched and then proceeded to make a bit of noise calling rails. This time, not only were we treated to their rather hefty vocalizations, but they appeared for us, darting out of the cattails or swimming across small waterways. This was the perfect end for a beautiful day, even though we still planned to seek out the Great Gray Owl.

Arriving a little too late for good light, we explored the Airport Road hoping to spot a large gray shadow sliding over the fields on its first hunt of the night. Our failure to find it was compensated by a nice dinner in Moscow before heading home. We tallied about 44 species for the day. Participants included Janet Callen, Lisa Hardy, Cynthia Langlitz, Shirley Sturts, Jan Severtson, Ken Eppler, and Kris and Ed Buchler. Judy and Phil Waring joined us on the first stop in Moscow to see the Pine Warbler. .



Observers:

Janet Allen (JALL), Ed and Kris Buchler (EBUC, KBUC), Corinne Cameron (CCAM), Ken Eppler (KEPP), Cynthia Langlitz (CLAN), Jan Severtson (JSEV), Stephen Lindsay (SLIN), George Saylor (GSAY); Shirley Sturts (SSTU), Susan Weller (SWEL), Barbara Zimmer (BZIM) RBA Rare Bird Alert for Northern Idaho-Eastern Washington-Northeastern Oregon
Phone (208) 882-6195 or Internet-Web Site:
<http://pimacc.pima.edu/~cwilliamson/index.html>

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 Armstrong Hill Feb. 17 (KBUC)

Bald Eagle 2 North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River Feb. 21 (CLAN); 1 Bayview Feb. (EBUC)

Ruffed Grouse 2 around her home Armstrong Hill in January (BZIM)

Ring-necked Pheasant 3 regular basis in her backyard near Coeur d'Alene Airport (CLAN)

Gray Partridge 4 regular basis in her backyard near Coeur d'Alene Airport (CLAN); 4 Feb.-Jan. near Silverwood on Hwy 95 (EBUC)

Herring Gull I saw a Herring Gull at Harrison on Sunday that I think was stealing fish from C. Mergansers. The gull was swimming close to several diving mergansers, and trying to swallow a small fish. When it accomplished that, it started to half-heartedly follow a merganser with a fish, the merganser was swimming away from the gull as though to evade it. I didn't see the gull take a fish away from a merganser, but my impression was that is what it was doing. January 26 (LHAR). This same behavior was observed on the Mica Bay Survey in January (SSTU)

Northern Pygmy-Owl 1 Armstrong Hill in January (BZIM,KBUC); 1 taking a bath in his birdbath in January (KEPP); 1 Dalton Gardens February 16 (JALL)

Pileated Woodpecker 1 Armstrong Hill Feb. 19 and 21 (KBUC)

Hairy Woodpecker 1 Coeur d'Alene 11th and Ash (GSAY); 1 pr. at my feeder all winter Fernan Lake (SSTU); 3 Armstrong Hill daily (KBUC)

Northern Flicker and Hairy Woodpecker

Witnessed a male No. Flicker duking it out with a female Hairy today. The Hairy has decided that the suet is just for her--no one else. They had a mid-air clash of claws (talons?) attacking each other as birds of prey might. The Hairy won--the Flicker flew. January 26 (JSEV)

Northern Flicker (male 1 Yellow-Shafted and 1 Red-Shafted, 1 female Red-Shafted) around yard (Indian meadows) all February (CCAM)

Northern Shrike 1 took a Robin to the ground in Bayview

Steller's Jay 6 West Eagle Creek (near Murray) February 20 (CLAN); 2 Armstrong Hill February 21 (KBUC)

Blue Jay 1 Coeur d'Alene 11th & Ash January 23 (GSAY); 1 hanging out with Steller's Jay February 20 (CLAN)

Clark's Nutcracker 12 February 20 Cataldo area (River Road) (SWEL)

Mountain Chickadee 1 Coeur d'Alene 11th and Ash February 12 (GSAY)

Chestnut-backed Chickadee 1 West Eagle Creek (near Murray) February 20 (CLAN)

Red-breasted Nuthatch 2 Coeur d'Alene 11th and Ash February 12 (GSAY)

American Dipper 2 West Eagle Creek (near Murray) February 20 (CLAN)

American Robin Although a few have been in flocks all winter they are now showing up in yards) 1st back in yard Fairmont Loop Rd, February 16 (JSEV); 2 CDA Airport area February 22 (last 2 weeks) (CLAN); 2 Armstrong Hill Feb. 21 (KBUC)

Cedar Waxwing 16 Dalton Gardens February 16 (JALL)

Song Sparrow 1st heard singing February 25 (Mica Bay Survey)

Spotted Towhee 1st spring arrival Canyon Road (Home) Cataldo area (SWEL)

Red-winged Blackbird (singing) 1st arrival at Mica Bay February 11 (Mica Bay Survey) (let me know if anyone has an earlier date)

Red Crossbill 6 West Eagle Creek (near Murray) February 20 (CLAN); 12 Fairmont Loop Road at feeder February 25 (JSEV)

House Finch 50+ in around and around neighborhood all winter (near) Coeur d'Alene airport (CLAN)

Pine Siskin 67 everyday Armstrong Hill Jan/Feb (KBUC)

Evening Grosbeak 35 daily Armstrong Hill Jan/Feb. (KBUC)

