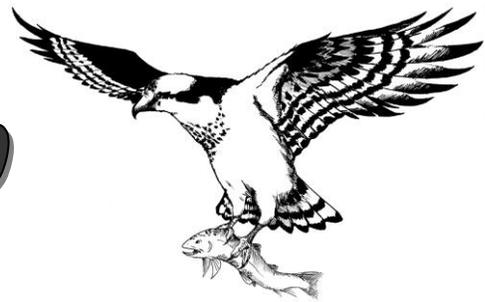


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

March 2005

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 6

## COMING EVENTS

### BOARD MEETING

DATE: March 21, Monday

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. West Bank-125 Ironwood Dr.

### MARCH PROGRAM

DATE: March 21, Monday

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: First Presbyterian Church, 521 E. Lakeside, Coeur d'Alene

SPEAKER: Suzanne Audet

PROGRAM: "Woodland Caribou Status in the Selkirk Mountains"

### COMING EVENTS

2005 YARDLIST - an ongoing event in your own yard. Keep a list of birds that you see in or from your yard between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2005. In January 2006 turn your list into Lisa Hardy.

APRIL 23 - "Earth Day": see page 2

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

## BLUEBIRD TRAILS

(Editors note: This is the fifth in a series of articles on bluebird conservation and bluebird trails)

Reprinted as is from "Bluebird Tales" the newsletter of Mountain Bluebird Trails, Inc. (MBT). (Their website is [www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com](http://www.mountainbluebirdtrails.com))

### PROFILE: ART AYLESWORTH 1927 — 1999

#### A PASSION FOR BLUEBIRDS

By Bob Niebuhr



Art Aylesworth, the "Bluebird Man" was a bigger than life kind of guy, and fun to be around. A raw boned man who always had a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye and a chuckle in his voice.

I first met Art at a party in 1975. I had been hearing about Art for years from my hunting and fishing partner who had hunted and fished with Art. The stories weren't about bluebirds, but the typical hunting and fishing stories and the goose nests Art and other

volunteers were building and putting out in the Mission Valley in western Montana.

Art had noticed that Canadian Geese would nest near irrigation ponds in the early spring when the water was low, but when the run off came out of the mountains to fill the ponds it would flood the nests. Art's group built nesting platforms in the ponds so they would be above the high water mark. Their efforts were a phenomenal success and today thousands of geese are raised in the valley each year.

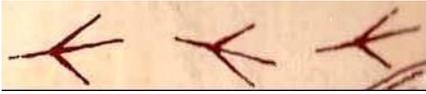
I had heard Art mention building nestboxes for bluebirds, but it wasn't until the spring of 1981 that I learned about his dedication to bluebird conservation. A friend and I went to Ronan to learn about the goose nests and ask Art if he would bring one to Great Falls to display at our Ducks Unlimited dinner. We spent twenty minutes looking at goose nests and the next two hours driving around his bluebird trail hearing about the plight of the bluebird and his bluebird conservation efforts in western Montana.

When he and his friend, Arnie Armstrong, showed up at the Ducks Unlimited dinner, they brought a goose nest, but they had bluebird nestboxes, too, and Art had asked **Duncan Macintosh**, a bluebirder from Lethbridge, AB to meet him at the dinner. **Tom Matsko** and **Rod Spencer**, Great Falls also attended the dinner and met Art for the first time that night and the next morning the six of us met for breakfast.

At that time the Montana group did not have a name, but the group in Alberta was called Mountain Bluebird Trails and Art and Duncan agreed to put the same name on the Montana group and the two groups worked together closely with the same name until 1994. A copy of Art's slide show was made after the meeting so the story of bluebird conservation could be told east of the Continental Divide.

Continued on page 4

## BIRD TRACKS



**Audubon Members Make a Difference**

**CELEBRATE EARTH DAY**  
Janet Callen



April, 2005 marks Earth Day's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Join Audubon and other environmental groups and businesses for the EARTH DAY FAIR on April 23, 2005, at the Harding Center in Coeur d'Alene. More details to follow in the April newsletter.

## 2004 YARDLIST CHALLENGE RESULTS ARE IN!

**Lisa Hardy**

A big thank you to all the 2004 participants: Kris & Ed Buchler, Janet Callen, Robert Hanson, Stephen Johnson, Stephen Lindsay, Lynn Sheridan, Shirley Sturts, Judy & Phil Waring. And thank you for all your interesting notes.

Nine yards reported a total 125 species for 2004, more than all previous years except 2000. Three new species were added in 2004. Stephen Lindsay tallied two of the new species,

Rough-legged Hawk and Western Screech-Owl, and I saw a third, Lincoln's Sparrow.

Four species were reported from all 9 yards, Northern Flicker, Black-capped Chickadee, House Finch and Pine Siskin. Thirty-two species, or 26%, were reported from only a single yard.

Robert beefed up the waterfowl numbers from his yard overlooking Cave Lake. He enjoys the annual "coot-and-eagle" show, and tallied the only Pied-billed Grebe and Black Tern sightings. Kris & Ed also overlook the water - Fernan Lake - and picked up Common Loon, and Western and Red-necked Grebes.

Raptors were well represented, including Stephen Johnson's Merlin. Red-tailed Hawks showed up on a surprising number of city yard lists. Great Horned Owls appear on 3 yard lists, and Northern Pygmy Owls on 4.

City yards turned up some interesting passerines. Janet had Hermit Thrush and Wilson's Warbler. Lynn was visited by a Steller's X Blue Jay hybrid, as well as a "plain" Blue Jay. Judy and Lynn both reported Common Redpoll.

Recorded subspecies this year are the Oregon and slate-colored races of Dark-eyed Junco (4 yards), and a Northern Flicker (yellow-shafted race) from Stephen Lindsay's yard.

Bluebirds and shrikes were missing from the 2004 lists. Robert mentioned several species that he used to see regularly, but have not been seen in years - American Bittern, Townsend's Solitaire and Western Meadowlark.

In the 5 years of the Yardlist Challenge, a total of 159 species have been recorded. Ninety-five

species have been reported in all 5 years, 6 in 4 years, 17 in 3 years, 15 in 2 years, and 26 species have been reported in only one year each.

Species are sorted by AOU checklist order: See our website for the list of birds seen

## SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR "THE FISH HAWK HERALD"

Starting in September, 2005, an annual subscription fee of \$15 will be charged for *The Fish Hawk Herald*. In the past, the cost of the newsletter has been covered by dues-sharing funds received from National Audubon, but as those funds have been reduced, the board has decided to make the Herald self-supporting. All local Audubon members will receive the September issue containing meeting and field trip schedules as well as the annual summary, but the remaining 8 issues will be sent only to subscribers. See subscription information in next month's issue.

## "AUDUBON AT HOME" OFFERS NEW RESOURCES

With spring planting and the arrival of spring migrants to our gardens just around the corner, it is a perfect time to encourage healthy landscaping and gardening practices. The *Audubon At Home* program has developed new resources to promote the simple message: Reduce Pesticide Use, Conserve Water, Protect Water Quality, Remove Exotic Plants, and Plant Native Species.

**Continued on Page 6**

## **MARCH 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 be 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.

### **PEND OREILLE RIVER**

DATE: March 5, Saturday

TIME: 7:30 a.m.

MEET: K-Mart parking lot, south end

LEADER: Dick Cripe 665-0010

ACTIVITY: 3/4-Day Trip, Drive up Hwy 41 to Oldtown, and drive along north side of river east to Sandpoint. Stop at several points along river where we rarely visit. We are designating this as an Important Birding Trail. Check Sandpoint sites as time allows. Bring lunch.

### **MICA BAY SURVEY PLUS...**

DATES: March 15 and 29, Tuesdays NOTE THE CHANGE DAY AND TIME

TIME: 8:00 a.m.

MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

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

ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area. Starting this month we will take one of our survey days and visit other areas.

### **BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP**

DATE: March 22, Tuesday

TIME: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

MEET: Tubbs Hill - 3<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan - leave messages for Lynn with Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: Bird for an hour on the trail around Tubbs Hill.

### **WOLF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTER BIRDING IN LEWISTON**

DATE: March 19-20, Saturday and Sunday.

TIME: 8:00 a.m.

MEET: K-Mart parking lot, south end

LEADERS: Dick Cripe 665-0010 and Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: This is a two-day, overnight trip. We will drive to the Wolf Education and Research Center in Winchester, Idaho, south of Lewiston. Randy Stewart, Education Director, will be our guide. We will spend the afternoon watching wolves and learning about the center. We plan to stay at the Holiday Inn Express in Lewiston Saturday night. On Sunday, we will bird around Lewiston with members of Canyon Birders and Palouse Audubon Society, leaving late Sunday afternoon for home. Please register with a leader ahead of time and in order to make travel plans and because tour size is limited. Participants need to make their own arrangements with Holiday Inn Express in Lewiston (208 750-1600). There is a \$5.00 fee for the wolf tour.

*To volunteer to lead a trip, or to suggest places to go, contact Dick Cripe or Roland Craft.*

## ART AYLESWORTH

Continued from page 1



Art's interest in bluebirds began in early spring 1974 when he and his wife, Vivian saw a flock of males sitting in a snow covered pine tree. "They looked like big blue Christmas ornaments." Art said. He remembered seeing them as a child, but had seen very few in recent years so he built five nestboxes and one was used and fledged five. He had similar results the next couple of years, but because of his experience with these birds, he became inspired to spread the word. He got lumber mills in the area to donate scrap wood and recruited volunteers to build and put out nestboxes. By 1980, they had fledged a total of 1,000 babies. In the next 20 years Art and his MBT volunteers built over 35,000 nestboxes and delivered or sent them throughout the northwest and fledged over 200,000 bluebirds.

During the 80's, Art and **Duncan Macintosh** lead the campaign to get the North American Bluebird Society to recommend a larger nestbox and 1-9/16" hole for Mountain Bluebirds. In 1989 under Art's leadership MBT built the Centennial Bluebird Trail 700 miles across Montana along Highway 200 from Idaho to North Dakota. These accomplishments brought great notoriety to Art, both within Montana and nationally.

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Newspapers and magazines wrote articles about him and many books mention his name. Authors consulted him on Mountain and Western Bluebirds and photographers came from across the nation to take pictures along his trails. But Art wasn't interested in the publicity, just the preservation of his bluebirds.

Art loved Montana and all its splendor, counting himself lucky to live here. From trout fishing in the spring, to the last hunt of the fall, he embraced nearly every outdoor pursuit available and excelled at most. His appreciation for the wildlife of his home state led to his involvement in many conservation organizations. But his love for the bluebird became the passion of his later years.

Donna Hagerman writes about the extreme measures Art would go to for his bluebirds. "One late summer day in the early 1980's, Art called my dad, **Clarence Hagerman**, and explained his problem. He had a late brood of five abandoned baby Western Bluebirds and was looking for a foster box in which to place his little orphaned nestlings. The orphans needed to be placed with other nestlings of approximately the same age in order to expect a successful fledging of all involved.

"Fortunately, my dad kept close tabs on his northern Idaho trail, and a quick review of his records showed that he had a box which was a good match for Art's orphans. So Art packed up his babies and met my dad at a halfway point between their homes. Each drove about 150 miles round trip for those little bluebirds! All of the nestlings fledged without a hitch, thanks to Art's determination to find a new home for his abandoned babies."

To hear Art talk about bluebirds was one thing, but to travel the back roads along a bluebird trail with him was a fascinating and memorable experience. He knew not just about bluebirds, but all the plants and creatures that inhabited their world. He was a great student of nature and loved sharing it with others. This experience taught me and others that we are part of nature, and that we, as well as the bluebirds, receive great rewards for what we do.

Besides spending countless hours promoting bluebird conservation, Art also had a very successful career in the life insurance business for over 30 years. But when the insurance interview was over, if the opportunity arose, he would put in a good word for the bluebirds and if the people seemed interested he always had a nestbox or two in the back of his pickup to get them started.

When Art was asked why he put out nestboxes for bluebirds he replied with that smile on his face and chuckle in his voice, "Because they need our help."

## ANNUAL GULL SEARCH

January 22 - Field Trip

**Dick Cripe**

We had fine spring weather on Saturday, Jan. 22, to look for gulls around the CdA area. We made stops at NIC Beach, Blackwell Island, Cougar Bay and the Fighting Creek landfill. In addition to our usual winter gulls - Ring-billed, California, and Herring, we found one Thayer's Gull at NIC Beach that met all the criteria. Thayer's Gulls may well be fairly common winter visitors, albeit overlooked. We do seem to find one whenever we make the effort. Lisa Hardy

and Kris Buchler had seen a Mew gull on Wolf Lodge Bay the previous day, but Lisa couldn't find it again Saturday morning.

One car proceeded to Fighting Creek where they saw a flock of 135 Herring Gull at the elk farm across the highway from the landfill. No other species were seen at this locale. We used this flock as a good opportunity to examine variations in the Herring species.

The most striking find of the day, however, was a veritable squadron of Red-breasted Merganser. After we located the female that Lisa had seen on Monday at the same spot at the start of the Spokane River, we found another 5 birds in Cougar Bay (3 males and 2 females), for a total of 6. This is a minimum number as the birds were actively diving.

We had nine participants: Janet Callen, Roland Craft, Stephen Johnson, Collen Nadauld, Bill Gundlach, Robert Scott, Lisa Hardy, Dick Cripe, and Phil and Judy Waring.

## **WINTER BIRDING**

### **FIELD TRIP FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**Bill Gundlach**

I became leader on this trip because Roland Craft and Dick Cripe were going to be out of town. The trip was originally scheduled for birding the lower Coeur d'Alene River starting at Rose Lake, but concern that all the chain lakes would be frozen prompted me to start with the east side of Coeur d'Alene Lake first. Stephen Johnson and I met Lisa Hardy at Wolf Lodge Bay and decided to take two cars since Lisa could only bird for half a day. We birded the bays along the lake, including

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Wolf Lodge, Squaw Bay, Gotham, Turner and Powder Horn and then drove along Harlow Point Road and along Thompson Lake in the Harrison area. We enjoyed observing Bald Eagles at their nest in Turner Bay. We also saw Western Grebe on the lake in various places. Thompson Lake did not have much ice, which was surprising considering how cold it had been.

After Lisa left us at Harrison, Stephen and I checked out the lake below Harrison but there were no waterfowl, so we continued on east to bird the upper Chain Lakes. There was a little ice on most of these lakes and there were very large flocks of Canada Goose on most lakes and marshes in the area.

From Rose Lake we drove east along River Road and checked out the flooded fields for Tufted Duck but didn't see any. We also checked the Mission Slough area where we saw a Red-winged Blackbird, the first for us this year. Our best bird for the day was probably the one Cackling Goose we spotted in a large flock of Canada Goose on the marsh at Lane. Stephen sure has a good eye. (editors note - this is #88 on our Kootenai County Big Year)

We saw 31 species on this trip. (go to our website for the list) It was a nice way to spend part of my birthday.

### **FIELD TRIP FEBRUARY 27th**

**Roland Craft**

The Audubon field trip to Hayden Lake was very interesting and educational. Our first stop was at Honeysuckle Beach where the Northern Lakes Fire Department was training for water rescue on thin ice. They used a variety of techniques for extracting people

who have fallen through the ice and cannot get out by themselves.

We spotted two Long-tailed Duck but they quickly flew away. To get a better view, we followed them to where they landed and got a better view and verification.

Our next stop was at the Sportsmen's Access where much of the lake was frozen over. We did see some waterfowl on the little open water that was available. The height of luxury was spotted when we saw two ice fisherman with Barcaloungers for resting in comfort.

The day started with a slight overcast and below freezing, but later the sun came out and it was a beautiful day. The last stop was at Pat Bearman's place. The participants were Lisa Hardy, Dick Cripe, Janet Callen, Lynn Sheridan and Roland Craft.

## **BROWN BAG BIRDING**

**FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>**

**Lynn Sheridan**

It was a cool, sunny day, as we gathered at the west end of Fernan Lake. There was a lot of thin ice, but in the open water the resident Mallard and barnyard hybrids noisily awaited a handout. The dozen Ring-billed Gull were nicely reflected in the watery ice "floes".

Overhead we scanned the rookery and saw only 2 Great Blue Heron, although nearly 30 had been seen recently. Pygmy Nuthatch were in plain view in Ponderosa Pine.

Along the lake, as we went to look for the eagle nest, we saw 15 goldeneye and a Belted Kingfisher.

**Continued on page 6**

## BROWN BAG BIRDING

continued from page 5

The lake still had a lot of ice on its surface. The nest was found with Bill's help, but was unoccupied.

When we got back to the parking lot about 15 Great Blue Heron flew in, then perched and settled on their bulky nests.

Thank you Judy Edwards, Laura Bayless, Bill Gundlach, Roland Craft.

## BIRD TRACKS



*"Each year, we dump tens of millions of pounds of fertilizers and pesticides*

*on our own backyards, thus poisoning birds and wildlife while creating one of the largest sources of pollution runoff in our lakes and streams."*

John Flicker, President

## "AUDUBON AT HOME" OFFERS NEW RESOURCES

Continued from page 2

To encourage people to take an active role in making neighborhoods and communities safer, cleaner, and greener, we need up-to-date, scientifically sound information on environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening methods and their value to wildlife conservation.

Through its website [www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home), Audubon At Home is committed to delivering timely, accurate information and resources to Chapters and the general public.

The following articles are reprinted from this website. Visit

the Audubon website for more information.

## Take Action! Reduce Pesticide Use

*Suggested below are a number of actions you can take to reduce your use of pesticides. Check off each as you complete it or incorporate it into your land-care routines. Set a target date for accomplishing all of the recommended activities. Explore the Resources and Links on the website for further guidance.*

**1. ASSESS your use of pesticides.** How often do you use them and for what purpose? Do you use an herbicide to remove weeds from your lawn? Do you use an insecticide to get rid of slugs in your garden? Do you apply a fungicide to combat black spot on your roses? List the pesticides you use, the "pest" you are targeting with each, and your frequency of use. Be sure to include those pesticides that are applied by any lawn care or pest control professionals you hire.

**2. QUESTION yourself.** Think about why you turn to chemicals — is it because you know of no other methods? Do you really have a "pest" or just a minor irritant? How severe is the problem — a few leaves or the entire plant? Do you have a spider or two, or an infestation of roaches? Can the "problem" be overlooked? Chart the answers to these questions for each pesticide you've listed in #1 above and see where you can immediately decrease the amount and frequency of pesticide applications, or eliminate them altogether.

**3. INVENTORY the pesticide products you have on hand.**

Safely discard those that you've identified in #2 as being unnecessary, as well as any products that are poorly labeled or discontinued. Contact local solid waste management or health agencies for disposal guidelines. State and local laws may dictate stricter guidelines than those provided on the label.

**4. RESEARCH alternatives** for those pesticides you've identified as still being needed. The aim is to use the least-toxic method possible. Visit our **You Have a Choice!** web pages to identify your options ([http://www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/alternatives.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/alternatives.html)). Pick at least one option and give it a try. As you find success, cross the pesticide you'll no longer need off your list and safely discard any remaining product.

**5. PRACTICE PREVENTION.** Pests are usually a symptom rather than a source of a problem. Prevent problems that can lead to pest infestations by incorporating the following activities into your land-care routines:

\* Remove pest hiding and breeding sites — inside and out. Remove trash and standing water from outdoor areas. Keep indoor areas clean and dry.

\* Maintain healthy soil with the help of compost. Healthy soil contains beneficial organisms that keep disease and pests in check. Healthy soil also breeds healthy plants, which resist disease and are less likely to succumb to pests. This week, start collecting kitchen and yard waste and begin a compost pile.

\* Grow the right plant in the right spot. Take stock of the plants in your yard; if they are not in the appropriate place,

transplant them to a more favorable site. For instance, if the plant needs sun, put it where it will receive the right amount of light. If it likes wet conditions, plant it near water. If it's an acid loving plant, make sure the soil's pH is appropriate. The stronger the plant, the less susceptible it will be to disease and pests.

\* Plant native species. They are more resistant to pest problems because they have evolved under local environmental conditions. Explore ways to begin incorporating natives into your yard. Start by adding one or two native plants to your existing gardens.

\* Make natural pest enemies welcome. Toads, dragonflies, nematodes, bats, numerous species of birds and other insects are your natural allies in pest control. Learn who they are and support them.

\* Monitor your outdoor space regularly and look for early warning signs of problems. Determine whether damage was the result of insects, disease, nutrient imbalance, or mis-application of chemicals. Take the time to identify suspected pests and the reason for their presence: Was the fungus a result of poor watering habits or was the insect issue due to a plant weakened by poor soil? Correct the source of the problem rather than resorting to pesticides.

### LAWN PESTICIDES

#### AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK

Each year, American homeowners use approximately 70 million pounds of pesticides to maintain their lawns, mostly for aesthetic purposes. Yet as the use of these chemicals continues to grow, researchers continue to uncover the links

between pesticide exposures and serious human health problems, including several types of cancer, neurological and reproductive disorders and birth defects. Regulations concerning the marketing and use of these potentially harmful products do little to protect consumers. Every pesticide on the market carries an EPA registration number, but this only means that the active ingredients are listed and instructions for its use are given, including warnings of acute health effects. Warnings about potential long-term or chronic health effects from the active ingredients are not required.

### PESTICIDES AND WILDLIFE



The use of lawn pesticides by homeowners accounts for the majority of wildlife poisonings reported to the EPA each year. Birds are particularly vulnerable, as they feed on the ground and often mistake pesticide granules for food. It is estimated that approximately 7 million wild birds are killed each year due to the aesthetic use of pesticides by homeowners. Pesticides are also routinely used to control weeds and vegetation along roadsides and borders which are used by wildlife as habitats for nesting and raising their young.

When a bird or small mammal is sickened by pesticides, they neglect their young, abandon their nests and become more susceptible to disease and predators. Wildlife specialists are becoming increasingly alarmed by the presence of pesticides in lakes, rivers and streams which are essential food and water sources for so many species. A recent study by the U.S.

Geological Survey (USGS) found at least two pesticides in every stream sample and one or more pesticides in every fish sample.

Even minute amounts of the chemicals that make up these pesticides have been shown to have a profound effect on the reproductive viability of aquatic life. The most common pesticides found were those typically used for lawn treatments.



"If I were to make a study of the tracks of animals and represent them by plates, I should conclude with the tracks of man"

*Henry David Thoreau*

### OBSERVATION POST

Shirley Sturts

**2005 Kootenai County Big Year - as of Feb. 23 we already have 89 species on our list (go to our website for a complete list)**

**#84 Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 1 female Ocean Ave. CDA, Jan. 25, Janet Callen

**#85 Northern Pintail** 1 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake, Jan. 17 Lisa Hardy and Kris Buchler

**#86 Long-tailed Duck** Hayden Lake, Feb. 11, Lisa Hardy

**#87 Red-winged Blackbird** 3 Cataldo Mission area, Feb. 2, Lisa Hardy

**#88 Cackling Goose** 1 Lane Marsh, Feb. 5, Bill Gundlach, Stephen Johnson

**#89 Killdeer** 1 Mica Bay, CDA Lake, Feb. 23, Mica Bay Survey

**#90 Barn Owl** 1 Rathdrum Prairie, Feb. 27, Stephen Johnson

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***Down in the forest something stirred:***

***It was only the note of a bird***

***--Harold Simpson, "Down in the Forest"***