

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

www.cdaudubon.org

March 2014

Volume 23 Number 8

MARCH PROGRAM

DATE: March 11, Tuesday

PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master,
4800 N. Ramsey, CDA

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Gail Bolin -

Gail is currently the Vice President of the Pend Oreille Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalists and past president of the Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society. She has a Master's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho and is the owner of Earth Wise; a consulting company that specializes in ecological landscape design and wildlife habitat restoration. Her passion is native plants, their protection and use in home landscapes.

PROGRAM:

"Landscaping for Birds, Bees and Butterflies"

If you want to see more birds, bees and butterflies in your yard, you need to provide them with what they need to live and reproduce. Simple ecosystems, such as lawns provide very little in the way of habitat. Just putting out a bird feeder or planting a butterfly bush isn't enough to compensate for what nature can provide. Landscapes designed to attract our winged friends are sustainable, healthy gardens that are diverse and full of life.

PRESIDENTIAL POTPOURRI

George Saylor

Although potpourri is usually defined or thought of as dried flower petals mixed with spices to create a pleasant fragrance, another definition is "any mixture, especially of unrelated objects, subjects, etc." Be warned that this article uses the word in the last sense.

I begin with our mission statement: "The mission of the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society is to promote, perpetuate, and protect birds and other endangered species -while preserving and enhancing their habitats." Several months ago your board decided that a portion of the money we raise at our April fundraiser would go to a conservation project that would support our mission statement. Now we have decided that project would be the "Reel In and Recycle" program sponsored by the U.S. Boating Association.



Last year, Larry Krumpleman's photo of a dead Osprey entangled in fishing line was a harsh reminder of the danger that discarded or left behind fishing line can pose to birds. The number of birds, of all species, killed or injured each year by becoming entangled in fish-line is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. The "Reel In and Recycle" program creates an easy way for fishermen and others to

dispose of unused, left behind fishing line, which is then collected and turned in for recycling. **Continued on page 2**

PRESIDENTIAL POTPOURRI

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We are partnering with the Idaho Bird Conservation Partnership who has made this one of their priority projects. For complete details about the Reel in and Recycle Program please visit: www.boatus.com/foundation/monofilament/ You can help support this effort by coming to the fundraiser!

My recent renewal form from National Audubon included a list of “8 Actions to protect birds where YOU live.” Number two on the list was to plant native plants. The explanatory note said that native plants provide birds with food in the form of seeds and fruit and provide habitat for insects which many birds feed on. We have a chance to learn more about using native plants in our yards at our next meeting. Our speaker, Gail Bolin, is a master naturalist and former president of the Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society, and she will be talking about how to use native plants in your landscape –another way we can fulfill our mission statement. Hope to see you there.

My kudos to all of you who ordered organic, shade grown coffee this past month. We had well over 40 bags of Birds and Beans certified bird friendly coffee ordered. The result is a decent contribution to our finances but more importantly, we are helping to preserve bird habitat for many neo-tropical migrants, as well as indigenous species in Latin America, while at the same time supporting the local growers who live and work there. Protecting habitat there allows us to continue to see birds here, and you guessed it, it’s another way of supporting our mission statement. Stay tuned for future opportunities to order.

OK, so maybe there is a unified theme to this article. In short, it is that if we are to be true to our mission statement, Coeur d’Alene Audubon
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must be an environmental organization as well as a bird watching one. We love birds, and that implies we must do what we can to protect them. There are a myriad of ways that can be done, from the simple measures outlined above, to the more complex difficult work of engaging in major issues such as how we get and use our energy. In the middle are various citizen science projects that one could be involved in.

I am thankful for the ways that many of you are involved in protecting birds and supporting our mission. If you are not, please consider becoming involved. Join our meetings, go on our field trips, educate yourselves, and speak and act out for birds. Check out the National Audubon website at www.audubonaction.org for the many ways to become more involved. And if this article was not the best example of a potpourri, may it at least have left a positive “fragrance” in your mind

2013 Yard List Challenge

Doug Ward



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Προσκαλεση του Αμερικανου

We had a great year this year (2013) around our yards with folks seeing 117 species total!!! Part of this success comes from the number of participants this year with reports coming in for eleven (11) yards, but also with some really interesting stuff showing up. While a few yards had some misses with only four (4) species showing up at everybody’s place (Northern Flicker, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, and “Oregon” Dark-eyed Junco), we had a lot of diversity with twenty-five (25) different species showing up only once.

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Yard List Challenge

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*Λαζυλι Βυντινγ ρεπορτεδ ιν 2 ψαρδσ
Πηροτογαπη βψ Ωαψνε Τρεε*

With several yards having water views, or water on their properties, we had a record number of waterfowl reported this year with thirteen (13) species of geese, swans, ducks, loons, grebes, and coots, including Hooded Mergansers reported by the Hansons and Sturts which hadn't been seen in at least the past five years. While nobody had anything really rare show up, there were several notable sightings at nearly everyone's place. There was a Wilson's Snipe in the Sheridan's neighbor's field, a Red-eyed Vireo was nice at Lisa Hardy's place, Blue Jays at the Hansons and Sheridans weren't expected, the Hansons also reported Bewick's Wren, and the Wards had a couple of White-throated Sparrows.

The Buchlers had the only Northern Pygmy-Owl with the Krumpelmans having Great Horned Owls along with the Buchlers, Hansons, and Wards. Previously scarce Townsend's Solitaires made a showing in three yards (Buchler, Callen, and Hardy) this year, but White-crowned Sparrows were only seen in three yards. Also only seen in three yards were Ospreys (Hanson,

Sturts, and Waring) which usually are seen by most.

While the diversity that shows up around here is always fun, like the Gray Jay and Lazuli Buntings that showed up at the Moens, it is sometimes the regulars that make birding in the yard rewarding. This year, with construction all around their place, the Zagars had a pair of "Western" Flycatchers nest and fledge a family from their porch making for an exciting summer. See the table of what everyone saw in 2013 on our Website.....

<http://cdaudubon.org/Projects/yardlist2013.html>

Good luck in 2014:

Book Review:

Brushed By Feathers: A Year of Birdwatching in the West, by Francis Wood



George Saylor

It has been said that to make an omelete, you have to break an egg. So it is with decisions. They lead us in one direction at the expense of another, they offer up one opportunity but close off others. Such is the dilemma I face sometimes when trying to decide whether to read a really good book or to go birdwatching. They are both things I love to do, but can't generally do at the same time, and so one usually yields to the other.

A book I recently read is a bit of an exception to that rule. *Brushed by Feathers: A year of Birdwatching in the West*, by Francis Wood, is a worthwhile read, and the way it is written offers a vicarious experience of birdwatching which comes close to satisfying the real thing

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Book Review:

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I met the author at the National Audubon Convention this past summer, and attended her seminar on Nature Journaling. Wood is a Master Birder with Seattle Audubon, a naturalist and teacher who writes an award winning newspaper column. She has more than 100 published articles on birds and nature to her credit. I felt her seminar was time well spent, and thought it would be interesting to read her book to see how well she put into practice what she taught. In the end, I was not disappointed.

Part of the appeal of the book is the manner in which the subject of birdwatching is treated. The author takes the reader on a month by month journey of birdwatching as she experiences it from her home on Whidbey Island and her travels in the Northwest. For each month she lists the bird species likely to be seen, has a passage describing an outing where she has encountered one or more of them, tells interesting lore or scientific facts about them, and offers personal reflection about birds, our relationship to them, and to the natural world in general. Her writing is graceful, descriptive and warm-hearted. After reading each chapter covering one month you feel as if you have shared in her experience and gained more insight into the world of birds.

This beautifully written book will appeal to beginning birders and experts alike. It is filled with information about birds and their life styles, lore about birds, personal observations, quotes from well-known nature writers and stories of how birds contribute to the minds and spirits of those who watch them. It is nicely illustrated with the author's own drawings, and put together in a book that is a pleasure to hold in your hand.

I'm not saying that it is the same as going out in the field to watch birds, but when that option is

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not available, it is a great substitute. As a bonus, it motivates you to get out and enjoy birds in your own way.

Species Profile:

The Grasshopper Sparrow

Carrie Hugo



The Grasshopper Sparrow is a nondescript and secretive species that inhabits the open fields, agricultural lands, and prairies of Idaho.

It gets its name not only from one of its primary food sources, but also because of the simple insect like sound of its song. Like many sparrows, this small songbird has mottled brown streaking on its creamy white body. Its breast is unmarked and it's darkly striped crown has a pale inner stripe. Adult males and females have a small yellow superciliary stripe (eyebrow).

Grasshopper Sparrows are migratory. They arrive in North Idaho from the southern United States, Mexico and Central America in May. Usually by that time the grass has grown tall enough to conceal their nests. Males often sing from the highest point in their territory, which may be a clump of grass, a fence posts, or a bush. Territory size for most males is around 2 acres. The nest of a Grasshopper Sparrow is very difficult to find! The nest itself is built of stems and blades of grass and lined with fine grass and rootlets, and occasionally with horsehair. Sunk in a slight depression, the rim is level with, or slightly above the surface of the ground. The top is usually arched or domed at the back, giving it an oven-like appearance (Smith 1968).

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Raptor Run Update

Doug Ward

The 2013-14 winter season is the first full year for the Rathdrum Prairie Raptor Survey. This survey is part of a larger project organized by the East Cascades Audubon Society out of Bend, Oregon, to help determine population densities for birds-of-prey which spend their winters in our region. These surveys, affectionately known as “Raptor Runs”, are set up to transect areas which are known wintering grounds for primarily the larger raptors (principally the *Buteo* hawks). Last year, there were over 250 “Raptor Run” routes surveyed throughout the northwest (Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and parts of northern California).

Our contribution to this effort is the “Rathdrum Prairie Raptor Run”. We cover forty-three (43) miles of a predetermined route once a month during the winter; November through March. So far this year, we have had the following results:

| | <u>16</u> <u>Nov.'13</u> | <u>7</u> <u>Dec.'13</u> | <u>17</u> <u>Jan.'14</u> | <u>15</u> <u>Feb.'14</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Northern Harrier | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Bald Eagle | - | - | - | 4 |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 16 | 5 | 16 | 36 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 6 | 12 | 22 | 18 |
| <i>Buteo</i> sp. | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| American Kestrel | 2 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| Total Individuals | 30 | 24 | 50 | 65 |
| Total Raptors/mile | 0.69 | 0.55 | 1.16 | 1.50 |

Last year, the February survey produced the highest concentration to date with a total of 77 raptors counted (1.83 birds/mile). February's

survey this year was also a good run with 1.50 birds/mile counted. This “February spike” may coincide with the return trip north for birds that wintered further south in addition to our local birds. This is the sort of information the project seeks to determine.

To date, Doug Ward has led each of the “Raptor Runs”, but has been joined by Janet Callen, Darlene Carlton, Roland Craft, Jim & Sheila Lynn, and Shirley Sturts so far this season. We have one remaining survey which is currently scheduled for March 15th, 2014.

Due to the nature of the survey, traffic and all, we have had to limit the trip to one vehicle. If you are interested in joining one of the remaining surveys, please contact Doug Ward (dougward@frontier.com / (208) 699-9327 (cell)); we will fill the vehicle on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sparrow Continued from page 4

The female lays 4-5 creamy white speckled eggs that are incubated for 11-12 days. According to Smith (1968) the female alone incubates the eggs and broods the young. She sits very closely on the nest. When leaving, she slips off, runs a distance through the grass and then flies. On her return she never flies directly to the nest, but drops down into the grass some distance away and goes to it on foot, by one of the several paths. If flushed from the nest the female may dart off, run a short distance, arise in a short fluttering flight, then drop to the ground again where she spreads her tail and trails her wings as if injured. At other times the female may flutter directly off the nest as if crippled or may fly from the nest to a point 25 to 30 feet away and hide in the grass. Grasshopper Sparrows prepare food for their nestlings by shaking off each pair of legs prior to offering it to them. Now that's thoughtful parenting!

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Sparrow Continued from page 5

The first specimen of the western subspecies was collected in Latah County in 1947. While some believe that the spread of agriculture throughout the west, and the clearing of trees to make room for crops, has extended the range of this species, Breeding Bird Surveys over the last few decades indicate steep declines in their population. In Idaho, surveys indicate that Grasshopper Sparrows decreased by an average -7.3% per year between 1966 and 2004.

The primary causes of decline are not surprising. While the conversion of forests to agricultural lands may have extended the range of this species, Grasshopper Sparrows that nest in agricultural fields are at high risk of having their nests destroyed during harvest, pesticide spraying, and tilling. Early haying destroys many nests each year and use of pesticides also removes the primary food source of this species, insects.

While not particularly charismatic or spectacular to look at, the song of Grasshopper Sparrow, much like their cousin, the Savannah Sparrow, is an indicator of spring and warm summer days. Hopefully, conservation measures to reduce the loss of Grasshopper Sparrow nests will be implemented with enough frequency and in enough areas of our state to ensure that we continue to hear its simple song in the open fields and croplands and fields of North Idaho.

Pend Oreille River Field Trip

Lisa Hardy

Our February 1 field trip to the Pend Oreille River turned up the expected thousands of waterfowl. We started from the long bridge and travelled west along the south side of the river. Morton Slough was frozen, but the shallow bays

along the river held flocks of Canada Geese, as well as diving and dabbling ducks. Crossing the river at Priest River, we continued east to Sandpoint, and finished up at the Third Street dock. We were only pulled over once by law enforcement, and so the trip was judged a success.

Lincoln County field trip



*Merlin with Song Sparrow
Photograph by
Darlene Carlton*

Roland Craft

Our annual Lincoln County field trip took place on Saturday, February 22nd under cloudy skies and somewhat cool temperatures. We did not find a Snowy Owl or Peregrine Falcon, both having been spotted earlier. However, we found a large variety of other species. Chris Janett, a farmer in the Davenport area, told us some back-country roads where certain species could be found. Janet's knowledge of the roads was a great help on the tour.

In Reardan, Lisa scoped a Merlin in a tree eating a small bird. She Identified the victim as a House Sparrow. We saw thousands of Canada Geese on the ground and flying overhead, with several Cackling Geese among them.

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Lincoln County - Continued from page 6

The highlight of the trip was the number of birds of prey- 2 Bald Eagles, 5 Red-tailed Hawk, 3 American Kestrel, 5 Rough-legged Hawk, 2 Merlin, 3 Northern Harrier, 2 Short-eared Owl and 6 unidentified hawk species. Other species of note were 31 swans (most likely Tundra), Red-winged Blackbird, Eurasian Collared-dove, Horned Lark, 22 Pintail, 12 Ring-necked Pheasant and Varied Thrush. Also spotted were camel, reindeer and plastic owl.

Participants were Mike Blackbird, Ed and Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Darlene Carlton, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Mary Deasy, Kathy Goodwin, Lisa Hardy, Ellie Maitre, Theresa Potts and Matt Thurley.

Field Trips 2014

PLEASE REGISTER:

Watch the website 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: March 11, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Meet: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome. We will help you with identification skills.

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Chain Lakes

Date: sometime in the first 2 weeks of March

Time: 8:30 a.m. **Meet:** Rose Lake junction

Leader: Lisa Hardy 783-1262,

basalt@earthlink.net

We will try to hit the peak of the swan migration, which may only be a 3 or 4-day window. Contact Lisa with your email address (preferable) or phone number if you are interested, and Lisa will keep you updated on the field trip and migration status. Field trip may end up being on a weekday. Trip will be 3/4 day. We will enjoy the spectacle (and sound) of thousands of Tundra Swan, and scan the flocks for Trumpeters and the Bewick's race of Tundra Swan. We will also look for collared swans that were fitted with plastic neck collars on their breeding grounds in Alaska. Bring your scopes, and lunch/water. This will be a predominantly car-birding day.

Raptor Survey

Date: March 15, Saturday

Time: 9:00 a.m. **Meet:** K-Mart parking lot

Leader: Doug Ward 762-7107

We limit this outing to one car. If interested, register ahead of time with Doug.

We drive a set route across the Rathdrum Prairie and record hawk species and numbers. This a regional survey being coordinated by the East Cascades Audubon Society. Please join in the survey and help spot hawks. Beginners are welcome. This is an excellent way to learn hawk identification. The survey takes around 2-3 hours. Bring water and snacks if you wish. .

Rock Lake, Ewan, St John:

Date: March 22, Saturday

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet: K-Mart parking lot, south side

Leader: Janet Callen 664-1085 A full day trip from Sprague Lake south to Rock Lake and other locations.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

Become a member of the National Audubon Society, Join online at www.audubon.org or use this form.

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