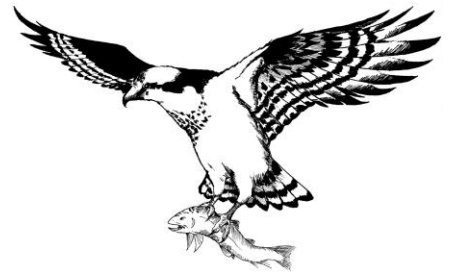


# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)

March 2019

Volume 29 Number 7

## March Program

**Date:** March 12, Tuesday

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

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

**Speaker:** Mark Hinders from CDA Garbage

**Program:**



Mark will discuss the history of recycling (particularly single-stream), how it has evolved as well as current challenges facing the recycling industry domestically and globally, followed by where he believes we are headed. Additionally he will touch on the differences in the public's perception vs the realities of the recycling industry and how they need to change in the future.

## President's Letter



As I write this, it is mid-February and we're under a blanket of snow. But the days are getting longer and, when you read this, it will be almost officially spring. That means another great migration is approaching. Soon the swans will be arriving in the lakes and along the Spokane River and the migrating ducks along with them. It will be time for some birding so we'll start to ramp up the field trips as described elsewhere in this newsletter. Also, in this newsletter is a list of bird festivals in our northwest region scheduled for later this spring. So, we'll have a lot of outdoor activity in the coming months.



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Also, there are environmental and educational events in which we will participate - Earth Day on April 22, and Migratory Bird Day on May 11. There will be more about these activities in the coming weeks.

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## President's Letter

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Song Sparrow – Photo by Wayne Tree

The song sparrow that nests in our juniper bush in our front yard is now singing his love song. Soon it will be time to check on my birdhouses, clean them, and make any repairs. By early April, the bluebirds that



always take the middle house in my fence row will be on their way as they always arrive

first. I don't know where they winter over or how long it takes them in their migration to get to this birdhouse, but I don't need to know. They know. I wish them a safe journey.

**Dick Cripe**

## Bird Festival in the Northwest

**Sandhill Crane Festival, Othello, WA.**

Dates: March 22 - 24., 2019

[www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org](http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org)

Contact: (966) 726-3445

**Olympic BirdFest April 12-14, 2019**

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction, raffle, gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker: John Marzluff, professor of wildlife science at the University of Washington and author. Join our festival

**Pre-trip:** a three-day, two-night

birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 9-11, 2019 or extend your festival with our Neah Bay **post-trip** on

April 14-16, 2019 Exploring northwest coastal Washington. To learn more and register, visit [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)

Contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, E-mail us at [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org),

Or write to us at: Dungeness River Audubon Center P.O. Box 2450 Sequim, WA 98382

**Creston Valley Bird Fest, Creston, BC**

Dates: May 10-12, 2019

Info: [www.crestonvalleybirds.ca/events/html](http://www.crestonvalleybirds.ca/events/html).

**Ladd Marsh Bird Festival, LaGrande, OR**

Dates: Late May, 2019

[www.friendsofladdmarsh.org/birdfestival](http://www.friendsofladdmarsh.org/birdfestival)

**Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival, Sisters, OR**

Dates: May 30 - June 2, 2019

[www.visitcentraloregon.com/event/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival](http://www.visitcentraloregon.com/event/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival)

Contact: Ken Hashigan: (541)548-4641.



## Winter Bird Sightings

### 2 Red-tailed and 5 Rough-legged Hawk - Doug Ward's

February hawk survey Feb. 24 -done by Bill Gundlach, Janet Callen, Judy Waring and Shirley Sturts

Cooper's Hawk and one other hawk - CDA feeder - February 9 - George Sayler

Mew Gull 1, Iceland Gulls (1 first-cycle Kumiens, and 1 Thayer's) - City Beach - February 16 - Carl Lundblad

Steller's Jay - 1 in her yard on Fairmont Loop Road - February 8 - Jan Severtson

Varied Thrush - along with our February snow, several have been showing up at many feeders.



**Varied Thrush photo by George Sayler**

White-breasted Nuthatch - 1 coming to feeder daily - Fernan Lake - Shirley Sturts

Snow Bunting -flock of 10-12 stopping at his feeder on Conkling Road - Decembern31 - Del Blackburn

Common Redpoll - flock feeding on Mt. Ash berries along Conkling Road - January 28 and 30 - Del Blackburn

Harris's Sparrow - at feeder in Hayden, first seen at feeder January 22 - photo by Midge Marcy-Brennan



## Why Are Big, Insect-Eating Birds Disappearing? Maybe We're Running Low on Bugs.

by Brandon Keim | Mar 14, 2018

From:

<http://www.anthropocenemagazine.org/2018/03/running-out-of-bugs/>

No guild of North American birds is declining so rapidly as aerial insectivores: acrobatic marvels whose maneuvers make our hearts soar, and who provide a vital ecosystem service. Why are their numbers plummeting? A leading explanation is a widespread decline in insect populations — a troubling possibility, hinted at by many studies but also one difficult to pin down. There are few records of historical insect numbers against which to compare our own.

## ...Insect-Eating Birds...

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In a study published in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, researchers led by biologist Philina English of Simon Fraser University describe their ingenious workaround: they used museum specimens of whip-poor-wills, a medium-sized insect-eater whose populations are falling by 3.5 percent each year, as biological time machines. By contrasting the chemical composition of their bodies with the composition of living whip-poor-wills, the researchers could extrapolate how the birds used to eat.

"These results are consistent with the hypothesis that aerial insectivore populations are declining due to changes in abundance of higher trophic-level prey," wrote the researchers. To translate that into normal speak: the birds are suffering

because there seems to be a lot fewer big bugs than there used to be.

If insect populations are indeed falling, surmised the researchers, it stands to reason that bugs higher up the food chain, who consume insects smaller than themselves, would be declining even faster. This would push whip-poor-wills, who prefer to eat larger, more nutrient-rich insects, to eat smaller and less-sustaining fare.

As it happens, smaller bugs and their insect predators accumulate subtly different forms of nitrogen in their tissues. The presence of these nitrogen signatures in bird bodies thus becomes a record of their own diet. When English and colleagues compared the chemistry of claw and feather samples from whip-poor-wills caught recently in Ontario to specimens collected for Ontario museums during the late 19th and 20th centuries, they found a "significant decline" in chemical traces of larger insects.

The pattern "is consistent with contemporary whip-poor-will populations feeding lower in the food web than in the past," wrote the researchers. While English cautioned that more testing is necessary to be absolutely certain that something else wasn't responsible for the chemical shift, the findings fit with other observations of insect decline.

An important next question is where the decline is happening: on southern wintering grounds, northern breeding grounds, or along migration routes? English noted the importance of the Gulf Coast, a crucial migratory stopover region. If insects are in short supply there, at a time when migrants need all the fuel they can get, it would be especially harmful.

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## ...Insect-Eating Birds...

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In addition to where, another question is: why are insects in decline? Climate change and habitat loss are possible culprits. Collisions with automobiles are also an underappreciated problem, says English. And hovering over it all is the issue of pesticide pollution, and in particular neonicotinoids, the world's most widely-used class of pesticides. Initially thought to be environmentally benign, they've been described accumulating in soil and water, where they're toxic to insects and linked to insect-eating bird declines.

The implications of this are not restricted to whip-poor-wills. They are, wrote the researchers, a "case study." The same may well be happening in other members of their guild, such as nighthawks and swifts and swallows. An entire way of being — and one that humans rely upon to control insects we consider pests — is threatened.

"Aside from admiring the beauty and grace of birds like swifts and swallows," says English, "I genuinely fear a world where we are compelled to rely on controlling agricultural and disease-carrying pest insects exclusively through the use of chemicals and technology because too many of their natural predators have been effectively eliminated." If people wait too long, the only aerial insectivores left might be in museums.

Source: English et al., "Stable Isotopes from Museum Specimens May Provide Evidence of Long-Term Change in the Trophic Ecology of a Migratory Aerial Insectivore." *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 2018.

About the author: [Brandon Keim](#) is a freelance journalist specializing in animals, nature and science, and the author of *The Eye of the Sandpiper: Stories from the Living World*.



## Field Trips

Go to our Website for april and May trips: <http://cdaudubon.org/fieldtrips.html>  
Please contact Dick Cripe 208-665-0010 to volunteer to lead a trip or make suggestions

### Rathrum Prairie Hawk Survey

This is a 2 two-hour fast paced one vehicle journey across the prairie once a month November-March. It is a good way to learn hawk identification. Call Doug Ward 208 699-9327 or 208 762-7107 to reserve a spot. We travel in one car for safety.

### Mica Bay Survey

**Date:** March 12, Tuesday

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Meet:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

**Leader:** Janet Callen, 208 664-1085 **Call** if you are coming

**Activity:** We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome.

### Lincoln County, WA.

**Date:** March 23

**Time:** 8 a.m.

**Meet:** Parking lot of former K-Mart

**Leader:** Dick Cripe - (208) 665-0010; Janet Callen - (208) 699-9747. This trip is dependent on weather and conditions, so check with leaders beforehand.

**Activity:** This is a popular annual trip.

Check on early waterfowl as well as owls and other predators. Reardon, WA including Reardon Ponds, Davenport, WA including cemetery, rural roads and Mill canyon.

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**National Audubon**  
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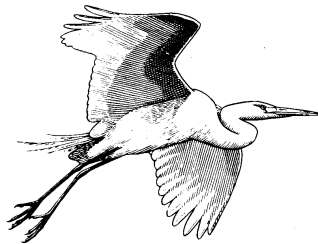
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