

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaaudubon.org
March 2023 / Volume 32 Number 7

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting March 14

The regular monthly chapter meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road in Coeur d'Alene. The program will be a presentation on February's Skagit Valley Trip. Wear your favorite hat! (See President's Message, Page 5).

Birding Through the Years: Shirley Starts Reminisces

Shirley Starts has dedicated more than six decades of her life to birds: watching, recording, researching and reporting on species around the world. In the early 1960s, she joined the Spokane Audubon Society, as there was not a chapter in Coeur d'Alene at the time. In 1990, when Susan Weller organized the CDA chapter, Shirley switched membership to Coeur d'Alene's organization. She participated in the Indian Mountain Christmas Bird Count and the Coeur d'Alene CBC from its inception in the 1990s until last year. Shirley compiled CBC bird count information for the chapter from 2003 until 2019, when Doug Ward took over this work. She edited the Chapter newsletter for more than three decades, until 2022, and established its first webpage. Shirley participated in several important chapter activities and initiatives—she worked with other Chapter members in two state "Adoption" programs—to help care for the Mica Bay Wetlands as part of the IDFG's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife program, and the "Adopt-a-Highway" program, cleaning a stretch of US 95 near Mica Bay. Shirley

initiated the Chapter's Mica Bay Surveys, now run by Janet Callen and Ted Smith. These are just a few examples of her tireless work for birds and birders.

Shirley's work has been recognized by other birding organizations in Idaho: she's currently secretary for the Idaho Bird Records Committee, and has co-written a book on "Latilong Bird Species Distribution Maps" published by the Idaho Museum of Natural History in 1997. The book is now on the Idaho birding website at idahobird.net. Also on the website is a searchable database of bird records developed by Shirley and her husband Keith—its information dates back to the 1890s. Shirley has developed, and shared, a wealth of knowledge, not only about birds in Idaho and elsewhere, but about the CDA chapter. By any measure, she is a key figure in its history. Shirley was born and grew up in Coeur d'Alene, the daughter of physician Fred Horning and his wife Carolyn. Dr. Horning unfortunately passed away after a heart attack when Shirley was only 13.

"I didn't get to know him when I was an adult, which has always been a disappointment," she says.

Shirley's mother Carolyn Horning was a trained opera singer and presented several local concerts. After Dr. Horning's death she worked in the County Auditor's Office. Shirley recalls that her mother loved golfing and was out on the course until she passed at the age of 89. (Continued, next page)

Inside This Issue

President's Message.....	P. 2
Avian Awareness Quiz: Woodpeckers.....	P. 3
Fugitive Owl Adapts to Freedom.....	P. 4
Skagit Birding Recap.....	P. 4

She recalls that Tubbs Hill was her “outdoor playroom,” and that as a child she enjoyed swimming, boating, skiing and camping trips with her family.

Shirley married Keith Sturts in 1958 and graduated from the University of Idaho in 1959, earning a double major in Physical Education and Biology. She remembers tagging along on fishing trips with her husband and father-in-law, but not to fish—she was more interested in first, identifying plants, and then, birds. Shirley took her love of birds and birding to France in the 1960s, where she and her husband had teaching jobs at a US military installation in Verdun, France. They enjoyed birding trips around France and neighboring European countries during their stay abroad.

Shirley first taught PE at Falls Junior High, then worked as a librarian at both the Post Falls Junior and Senior Highs. Keith worked as the head librarian at North Idaho College for many years.

She retired after more than 38 years as an educator. Shirley and Keith have two adult children, a daughter Carrie, who is a professor at the University of Washington, and a son Kim, who is a chef in the Seattle area.

Shirley believes that one of the greatest contributions the chapter can make on behalf of birds is to raise young people’s awareness of birds in this area through educational programs.

She recalls that the CDA chapter had once purchased information packets designed for students from the National Audubon and donated these to local schools.

“The Audubon chapter has helped to make people aware of birds and their importance and their habitats and of saving habitats for the birds,” she says.

Last year the CDA Audubon Chapter participated in a Coeur d’Alene Library project to increase awareness and involvement in birding. The library put together birding backpacks for adults and children, including binoculars and a bird checklist developed by Shirley and her granddaughter Sara.

One of the changes Shirley has noticed over the years is that the active chapter membership is getting up in years, and younger folks don’t seem to be joining the group. New members of the chapter, she says, tend to be mainly retired folks.

“The chapter members all got older, and the people joining seem to be older.” She says. “Maybe younger people are too busy these days, but we still need to make everyone aware of birds and their habitats the importance of saving these habitats for the future.”

Shirley and Keith Sturts, 1967, Ragged Ridge



President’s Message

Greetings Coeur d’Alene Audubon Society Birders.

Here we are at the beginning March, but as I write this, the weather is a reminder that winter is not over and we can expect more cold temperatures and more snow. Weather is weather.

Have you noticed a few migrant birds have begun to show up? Several individuals have commented they did not see as many Robins during the winter as in past years. Whether or not that is the case I have noticed a few Robins showing up in the last week or so. Maybe you, like me, are anxious for the spring migration to
(Continued, page 3)

Test Your Avian Awareness: Weird and Wonderful Woodpeckers!

What do you know about these industrious birds? (Answers on Page 4.)

1. What is the approximate number of woodpecker species worldwide?
A. 500. B. 230 C. 75 D. 1500
2. Thirsty woodpeckers in Arizona may drink:
A. Livestock urine B. Water from garden hoses they've pecked C. Brains of baby birds D. Moisture from flower blossoms
3. A pair of woodpeckers in California
A. Stored more than 700 pounds of acorns inside the walls of a house. B. Pecked 1250 holes in an historic wooden statue.
C. Adopted a family of baby robins D. Survived the recent floods by pecking a hole in a wooden boat.
4. The "pilium" on a woodpecker is
A. Underneath its wings. B. The bands around its neck. C. The top of its head D. Tail feathers.
5. One species of woodpecker has moved its range more than 1000 miles in the past few decades—which one?
A. Flicker B. Black Woodpecker Andean Woodpecker D. Red-Bellied Woodpecker.
6. A woodpecker native to the Northwest was named for
A. Chief Joseph B. Meriwether Lewis C. Henry Spalding D. John Reed
7. In the Bible, the woodpecker is said to represent
A. The Devil B. Prosperity C. Vigilance D. Death
8. The "flap-flap-flap-fold" pattern of flight used by many woodpeckers:
A. Helps them to avoid detection by predators B. Allows them to glide through thick stands of trees C. Is used to help them catch insects D. Is a mechanism for conserving energy
9. Which of the following is something a woodpecker will NOT eat?

- A. Frogs B. Lizards C. Other woodpeckers D. Wood
10. Woodpeckers' feet are
A. Zygodactyl B. Covered with feathers C. Used to remove tree bark D. Five-toed

President's Message, Continued

begin so we can enjoy the arrival of our avian friends. Impatience is taking over for me so I'll probably be out there looking for some returning birds while they exercise wisdom and await warmer temperatures.

This past weekend (February 17-20) was the field trip to the Mt. Vernon, Washington area. More details will appear in another article in this newsletter. I mention it here to extend kudos to Ted Smith for organizing and leading a very successful and interesting field trip. We had to dodge a few raindrops but it was lots of fun.

One of the points of emphasis of Audubon is conservation. Our chapter is involved in conservation in what may seem insignificant ways. Let's review a few of those. Monitoring Blue Bird Houses for nesting results, participating in the Back Yard Bird Count, participation in the Christmas Bird Count are some examples of conservation efforts. The records from these activities sent to Audubon may, in some small way, contribute to calling attention to trends indicating species concern, if such trends exist.

The program at our February meeting was provided by Mr. Larry Van Ray talking about serving as Regional Director of Ducks Unlimited (DU) in Alaska and Hawaii. The point of the conservation efforts of DU on behalf of waterfowl came through loud and clear. DU concentrates its efforts toward the major migration flyways and related habitat conservation. Having grown up in North Dakota, I was personally interested in the point that DU refers to North and South Dakota as a "Duck Factory."

(Continued, Page 5)

Answers to Quiz: 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-C, 5-D, 6-B, 7-A, 8-B, 9-D, 10-A.

Owl Fugitive from NYC Zoo Adapts to Life on the Lam

You can take the bird out of the wild, but apparently you can't take the wild out of the bird.

"Flaco," a Eurasian eagle-owl, escaped from the Central Park Zoo in early January, and so successfully eluded captors that they finally gave up the chase. Wily Flaco was not fooled by their food traps. When he turned up his beak at their bait, observers worried the might starve rather than surrender.

Not to worry, Flaco quickly figured out how to catch his own meals on the fly and is living the dream of so many captives—freedom.

"He seems to be comfortable in the area of the park where he has been hunting, and we don't want to do anything to encourage him to leave this site," the Zoo said in a statement. "He has been very successful at hunting and consuming the abundant prey in the park."

Flaco's escape was made possible when vandals cut into his enclosure but couldn't lay their hands on the bird, even though he's one of the larger owl species. Eurasian eagle-owls have wingspans measuring six feet or more.

Flaco has developed a taste for the infamous New York City rats, an abundant owl delicacy in his new habitat. He's not likely to seriously deplete the rat population any time soon. The big bird has also been sightseeing in the Big Apple. He's gone window shopping along Fifth Avenue and surveilled skaters at the Park's ice rink. The only question remaining, according to Park officials, is if Flaco can endure the life of a lonely hunter. Observers wonder if he'll start looking for a mate. Maybe they can have an arranged marriage?

In any case, zoo officials have given up the chase and decided to declare victory and go home, at least for now.

Flaco feels the wind in his feathers.



CDA Birders Trek to Skagit

By Peggy Albertson

It was a wet but successful birding trip for 14 local Audubon Members. We stayed at Best Western in Mt. Vernon, starting out Saturday morning with Ted Smith as our exceptional guide! We travelled north to the Samish Wildlife Unit 90, stopping along the way to find Short-eared Owls and a variety of ducks, seabirds, and raptors. Pam Gomes suggested a stop at Padilla-Bay Estuarine Research Reserve to dry off. It was an impressive Interpretive Center and the perfect place to spend some time. We had lunch in Edison and spent the afternoon in and around Bay View State Park, observing thousands of Snow Geese and Trumpeter Swans. It was a breathtaking sight as they approached from Skagit Flats. Dinner was at "Temperate Habits Brewing Company" in Mt. Vernon where we celebrated Dick Cripe's 85th birthday!

Sunday started out a bit drier. We headed to Anacortes, birding along the way and finding Pintails, Buffleheads and Loons. Near Anacortes, at Rosario Beach, we found Harlequin Ducks and Cormorants. At Deception Pass we stopped to appreciate the beauty of the bridge and the power of the tidal currents. We stopped at North Beach where Ted had several Oystercatchers waiting for our viewing pleasure! We also found Red-necked Grebes and Scoters. The rain returned as we headed to Coupeville for

lunch and continued as Ted toured us around Whidbey Island, stopping at Fort Casey and giving us the history of its part in WW1. We returned to Best Western for a summary meeting and a consolidation of lists with a final count of 65 species. We enjoyed dinner in Mt. Vernon and we all mentally prepared to separate ways Monday morning.

Thanks to Ted for leading this trip and to everyone else for their birding input and good-natured social interactions.



Great Blue Heron, Bay View State Park
Photo by Peggy Albertson

President's message, continued

Now for a bit of Chapter business. The Chapter By-laws require the Board of Directors to form a nominating committee to nominate individuals for unfilled and/or expiring positions. The Chapter year ends at the end of June so the Board will soon be active with this administrative matter.

Each year the Chapter files an "annual report" with National Audubon. One of the requested items of statistical information is the number of hours Audubon members are involved in Audubon activities. These hours would include time spend with the Bird Counts, Field Trips, working for Audubon on programs, writing for the newsletter and Board Meetings, to name a few. You get the idea. I encourage you to keep track of your hours as I will send out a request

after June 30 inviting you to send your hours to me for accumulation for the report to national. I appreciate your assistance in providing this information.

Sometimes I come up with a crazy idea. During the above-mentioned field trip casual conversation about hats came up. Cowboy hats in particular. It sparked a crazy idea in my thinking. Why not have a Cowboy hat night at our March 14 regular meeting? Not everyone has a cowboy hat so what about broadening the style to any special hat you have, and wear it to our next meeting? This isn't a contest but only my crazy idea for a little fun at the meeting.

Speaking of our next meeting, the program will be a report, along with photos from multiple photographers, from our field trip to the Mt. Vernon area. If you were unable to participate, please come to the March 14 meeting and enjoy the program. Hope to see you there.

Maybe, just maybe, the weather will be warming up a bit, soon. No, I am not attempting to be a weather man, but with the anticipated migration and a bit warmer temperatures, more of you may want to participate in the monthly field trip on the second Tuesday morning. Please consider participating and enjoying our avian friends.

Good Birding
Ralph Kerr

Short-eared owl near Mt. Vernon WA



Photo by Ralph Kerr

CDA Audubon Chapter Officers

President: Ralph Kerr
208 660-3220
Vice President: open
Recording Secretary: Pamela
Gomes
Treasurer: Elli Emm
Board Members: All officers and
George Saylor, Ted Smith, Patricia
Beyer

Committee Chairs:

Publicity:
Field Trips: Ted Smith
Education: Barbara
Christofferson
208 667-3931.
Conservation:
Membership: Peggy Albertson
208 664-1616
Hospitality: Elli Emm
Newsletter: Alice Koskela
Mailing: Peggy Albertson
208 664-1616
Webmaster: Patricia Beyer
Historian:

Local Membership Dues

- Individual \$10.00
- Family \$15.00
- Individual \$25.00 - with hard
copy of the newsletter
- Family \$30.00 - with hard
copy of the newsletter
- Additional donation _____

Total \$ _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

Mail this form and your check payable
to: Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter c/o
Membership
P.O. Box 361
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

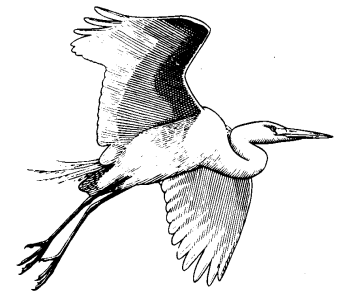
**National Audubon
New Member Application**

Join Online at:
<http://www.audubon.org>

or

Join by Phone:
1-844-428-3826

**Reference our Chapter
Code G06**



Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter
PO Box 361
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83816