

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaaudubon.org](http://www.cdaaudubon.org)  
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## Northwest Birds of Prey Program at May Meeting

The May Chapter program will be presented by Birds of Prey Northwest. This organization, based in St. Maries, has been in operation for almost 30 years under the stewardship of its Executive Director and raptor biologist Janie Veltkamp. The mission of Birds of Prey Northwest is to "educate the public about birds of prey, through on-site and virtual live raptor presentations and other expanding outreach, and provide medical treatment to injured, sick, and orphaned wild raptors with the goal of returning them to the wild."

The presentation will include information about Birds of Prey Northwest 2021 rescues, and live bird specimens will be brought in for this event.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on May 10 at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey Road in Coeur d'Alene.

No board meeting has been scheduled for May but President Ralph Kerr may set a special meeting if schedules permit.

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## Letter from the Editor

As Ralph Kerr noted in his April President's Message, Shirley Starts has retired as newsletter editor. I will do my best to bring you interesting, informative, and maybe even humorous articles in the *Fish Hawk Herald*.

I hope that the *Herald's* readers will email me ideas for future newsletter articles, or write their own articles and send them to me. As newsletters are temporarily suspended for the summer, the next issue will be issued in September. Your bird/wildlife photographs are always welcome. My address is [koskelaalice@yahoo.com](mailto:koskelaalice@yahoo.com). - Alice Koskela

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### Wood Duck

Peeking out the hole  
Mom coaxing me from our nest  
Down I go—splash! Whew.

-- Haiku Submitted by Valerie Zagar



## President's Message

May, 2022

Spring is officially here, even though we got 7 inches of snow at our house on April 18! Weather forecasters report that mid-April temperatures are running below "normal." It seems to me that our cooler temperatures are affecting the bird migration schedule, that these migrations are somewhat later than usual.

I was pleased with the attendance (25) at our in-person April meeting. It was so good to see members and be able to talk with each other personally rather than on-line via zoom. Please feel comfortable to follow the masks optional policy as you attend the future meetings. I must confess I was particularly pleased with the cookies so generously provided.

An updated report has come out about Dan Hartman's research on owls near Yellowstone National Park (See April newsletter). His research is centered primarily on Boreal Owls. He has been successful in locating numerous Boreal Owls by hearing their sounds in the night. 2022 appears to be a successful Boreal Owl nesting year based on the numbers of songs he has heard.

I'm happy to report that for the fourth consecutive year the Audubon Magazine has been nominated for a National Magazine Award for General Excellence, the highest honor in the industry. The primary objective of the Audubon Magazine is to deliver news, advice and reporting on birds and bird conservation in a beautiful print package, and it does a great job.

As I was perusing the National Audubon Website, I noticed there are two new field guides published. One is the National Audubon Society Birds of North America. It references 800 species with over 3,500 full-color photos. The second field guide is the National Audubon Society Trees of North America. It contains 540 species with over 2500 photos. Both are available for purchase.

Our May meeting will be presented by Birds Of Prey Northwest. As mentioned in the April

edition of The Fish Hawk Herald, the subjects will be about rescues in 2021 and plans for 2023. The program will be highlighted by presentation of live bird specimens. Please join us for this exciting program.

There were several birding reports at the April meeting including wild Turkey activity, various varieties from a trip to the Southwest and several local reports. I continue to encourage you to share your birding experiences whether local or from your extended travels.

I recently had a first-ever birding experience at Lake Fernan. I watched an Osprey dive and catch such a big fish it could not lift the fish out of the water, in spite of four unsuccessful tries. The Osprey decided to swim for the shore, continuing to hang on to the fish and using its wings to stroke through the water. I was eager to see just how large that fish was! Unfortunately, the Osprey released the fish just before stepping out onto the bank. When I later checked my photos, I discovered the Osprey had lifted the fish out of the water far enough, during its four attempts, for me to get a photo showing the size of the Rainbow Trout. It is just another reminder that the more time one spends out there the more one is likely to see.

Good Birding!  
--Ralph Kerr

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Violet Green Swallow  
Photo by Ralph Kerr

## Citizens Join Scientists In Cornell Lab "Feeder Watch" Program

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds of Canada are partners in the "Project Feeder Watch" program for backyard birders to help collect data about birds across the US. The program, which began in the 1970s in Canada, analyzes data submitted by thousands of backyard birders every year and publishes an annual report on its findings. There are currently more than 20,000 participants from across the US and Canada.

Feeder Watch season runs from November-April, so now is the time to visit the Project Website to learn more about it and find out how you can participate in the 2022-23 season. The cost for joining is \$18.

Feeder watchers keep tallies of the birds at their winter feeders and submit these to Cornell Lab. The Lab compiles the data for its year-end report, made available to every participant.

Feeder Watch data can detect trends in where species locate in winter, and can provide early warnings of possible declines in populations. This was the case with the Painted Bunting in Florida, whose numbers have decreased since the 1980s. When these declines are suspected, scientists can more closely monitor the species to determine the cause of the problem and develop possible solutions.

A complete overview of the program including links to videos from backyard cams can be found at <https://feederwatch.org>. It's worth a look!

## Test Your Avian Awareness (With thanks to "Phun Pheasant Phacts," An online article of the US FDA)

1. Pheasants were introduced to the US in :  
A. 1881 B. 1915 C. 1939 D. 1952
2. The ring-necked pheasant is the state bird of:  
A. Nebraska B. Texas C. Kansas D. South Dakota
3. The average lifespan of a wild pheasant is  
A. 8 years B. 11 years C. 3 years
4. Pheasants can fly at speeds up to:  
A. 20 mph B. 40 mph C. 60 mph D. 90 mph
5. A group of pheasants is called a:  
A. Flock B. Gaggle C. Parliament D. Bouquet
6. Rooster pheasants have "harems" of up to  
A. 25 hens B. 7 hens C. 1—they're monogamous
7. Pheasant hunting season in Idaho opens in  
A. May B. November C. July D. October
8. How many pheasants did the Fish and Game Department stock in Idaho in 2021?  
A. 2000 B. 12,000 C. 26,000 D. 37,000
9. Pheasants can be found in how many US states?  
A. 40 B. 30 C. 20 D. 10
10. When startled, pheasants  
A. Chortle B. Flush C. Squeak D. Faint  
(Answers on page 4)

## Listen to "Bird Notes"—Anytime!

"Bird Notes," an excellent morning program on NPR, isn't just for early-birders. Programs can be heard anytime at [BirdNote Daily | BirdNote](#). These two-minute episodes are packed with interesting information and beautiful bird songs. More than 1,800 past programs are available for your listening enjoyment.



## Online Bird Stories for Summer

Summer can be the “off season” for some birders, a time after migrations are completed and backyard feeders (except those for hummingbirds) aren’t as popular with the feathered sorts. But it’s a perfect time to do some reading about birds. You may want to visit internet sites like listverse.com and check out their “10 of the Best Stories About Birds.” Here’s a sampling:

### *The Girl Who Befriended Crows*

A Seattle girl named Gabi Mann, of Seattle, who not only made friends with her backyard crows by feeding them, but collected amazing gifts from her grateful crow buddies.

### *Tom the Terrible Turkey*

Spoiler alert—this does not have a happy ending. It’s about a legendary wild turkey in Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, notorious for attacking people, even trapping them in their cars like in the Stephen King’s “Cujo.”

### *The Battle of the Backyard Cranes*

A couple in Florida was asked by “Operation Migration” to remove their backyard feeders to keep rare whooping cranes away from humans. Watching the cranes seemed to be good therapy for the husband, who suffered from Alzheimer’s. The work of Operation Migration is the topic of an NPR Radiolab broadcast, available at [Raising Crane | Radiolab | WNYC Studios](#).

### *The Greatest Pigeon of World War II*

A Pigeon named “GI Joe” is thought to have saved the lives of over 1,000 men in 1943 by flying a message to call off the bombing of an Italian town held by British troops. For his service, Joe was awarded the Dickin Medal for Gallantry, the highest award the British give to animals. More information on GI Joe and other war hero pigeons can be found at [The pigeon that saved a World War II bomber crew - BBC News](#).

## Bird Sightings in April

(Note: Please send all Big Year Sightings to Shirley Sturts at [shirleysturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirleysturts@gmail.com) for publication on the Audubon Chapter Webpage.)

Cliff Swallow-April 12-Mica Bay-Jenny Taylor

Evening Grosbeaks-3-April 6-Shauneen Terrell

White-winged Crossbills-3-April 13- Hayden-Doug Ward

Red Crossbills-“a few”-April 13-Hayden-Doug Ward

Townsend Solitaires-3-April 12-Hayden and Bayview-Doug Ward

Osprey-April 14-Hauser Lake- Rudy Verschoor/Alice Koskela

Great Blue Heron-April 17-Dalton Gardens-Rudy Verschoor/Alice Koskela

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

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## For Doug Ward, Birds Open A Window on Nature, A View of the Big Picture

In just two days—April 8 and 9—Doug Ward reported hundreds of bird sightings to Audubon Chapter webpage manager Shirley Sturts

Ward, who lives in Handen, “is an expert birder,” Shirley says. “He organizes and compiles our CDA Christmas Bird Count, does a hawk survey on the Rathdrum Prairie, and is on the Idaho Bird Records Committee. If any of us has a bird question, we ask him.”

Doug’s sightings for just two days are far too extensive to recount here. They include a Eurasian Widgeon, 15 American Widgeons, 20 Northern Shovelers, 10 Buffleheads, 150

American Coots, 200 Violet-Green Swallows, and 3 Yellow-Headed Blackbirds on April 8 alone. And that's just a sampling of the list. (Cont'd next pg.)

Don't be fooled by the numbers, though; Doug isn't the stereotypical competitive bird counter, beating the bushes for a rare sighting to add to his list. He's never entered a "Big Year" contest and worries that some rare avian species are harassed by overenthusiastic birders. He's an "amateur" scientist/ ornithologist, recognized as an expert by several birding organizations. He's a retired engineer who's never abandoned his boyhood fascination with birds and the natural world. Birds are, he says, "a window on nature," offering a way to recognize the local effects of climate change and even to witness the ongoing evolution of a species.

Because he sits on the Idaho Birds Records Committee and reads birding reports from the field, Doug knows that parts of Southern Idaho have become wintering grounds for shore birds from the Gulf of Mexico. This trend is part of an overall northward movement of birds and mammal species to places that were once too cold to support them.

"Birds are moving north as winters warm up," he says. Doug and his family spend part of the winter in his home state of Colorado, and they've witnessed this change first hand. "A lot of strange stuff is showing up there," he says. In Northern Idaho, birders can now see Anna's Hummingbirds, Bewicke's Wrens and Lesser Goldfinches—birds, "that until recently were pretty rare up here."

Because he reads the scientific literature and makes his own field observations, Doug knows that Red Crossbills, a common bird in Northern Idaho, have been evolving into 10 different types. Each of these prefers a particular kind of cone—Ponderosa Pine, hemlock, Douglas Fir, for example. Individual Crossbill types have actually developed different kinds of bills to work their particular favorite seed cones.

Genetically, though, these Crossbill types looked like the same bird, but now one of the types

has been "upgraded" to an entirely different species.

"They've been isolated long enough to have a bit of genetic difference," Doug explains.

Doug's mother was once the Vice President of the Denver Chapter of the Audubon Society,; his father was a mining engineer and an attorney.

"On one end of our coffee table was a copy of the *Audubon Society Magazine* and on the other end was my dad's issue of *Coal Age*," he recalls. "I had an interesting childhood."

Doug has lived in Northern Idaho for 22 years, and now that he's retired, has more time to bird watch along the rivers, wetlands, lakes and fields close to home. Doug says he might be tempted to travel to Louisiana to look for the recently re-discovered Ivory Billed Woodpecker—but only if this wouldn't be detrimental to the survival of this very rare bird.

"If it turned out that there was a population down there, as long as I would not disturb them, I might do it," he says. "But to chase a rarity just to see a rarity—that doesn't interest me much."

### Confirmed Sightings of Three Ivory Billed Woodpeckers in Louisiana

On April 18 news media outlets reported that the Ivory Billed Woodpecker may have been sighted by trail cameras, drones, and at least one scientist in isolated Louisiana bottomlands. This bird, long thought to be extinct, is the third largest woodpecker in the world and the largest north of Mexico.

Researchers from National Aviary and Project Principalis have been searching for evidence of the bird in Louisiana's swampland forests for years. Director of Conservation for that National Aviary in Pittsburgh, Steven C. Latta, reported that he observed an ivory-billed woodpecker in flight.

In 2004 there were reports of sightings of the woodpecker in Arkansas, but these were not definitively verified and the US Fish and Wildlife Service declared the bird extinct in 2021.

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