

# The Fish Hawk Herald



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society

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May 1991

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**CALENDAR CHECK!** --- PLEASE NOTE --- monthly meetings will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from now on!

May 21,  
1991  
7 pm  
Dick Rivers from the Spokane Audubon Society will present a program on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

June 1,  
1991  
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for submitting articles, etc.

June  
14 - 16,  
1991  
6th Annual Spring Meeting of the Idaho Audubon Council!  
A fun-filled weekend with Auduboners from around the State to be held at the University of Idaho Clark Fork Field Station in Clark Fork, Idaho. The Registration form and Schedule of events has been mailed to Audubon members. If you have not received one, I will have a few extra copies at our May 21st meeting.

June 17,  
1991  
Coeur d'Alene Audubon Potluck! Time, place and specific details will be in next month's newsletter.

July  
21 - 27,  
1991  
Audubon National Convention in Estes Park, Colorado. The theme will focus on wildlife, wetlands, and forests in the Americas. Neotropical bird migration will be a prime topic. Outstanding speakers and panels have been lined up. For detailed information write the Audubon Convention Office, 4150 Darley Ave., Suite 5A, Boulder, CO 80303 or call (304)499-3622. The next Convention will be on the East Coast so here's a chance to attend one that's fairly close to Idaho!

**Note:** There has not been a field trip scheduled for May and June due to weekend holidays and the busy weekend schedule of Susan and Pam, field trip leaders in the past. If someone would like to get together for a field trip during the week or if someone would like to lead a field trip, please bring your thoughts and ideas to the next meeting.

**MANY THANKS** --- To all those individuals who graciously donated items for our raffle last month and to those bringing our goodies -- your support is appreciated!

**WELCOME** -- new member, Rev. Richard Hermstad!

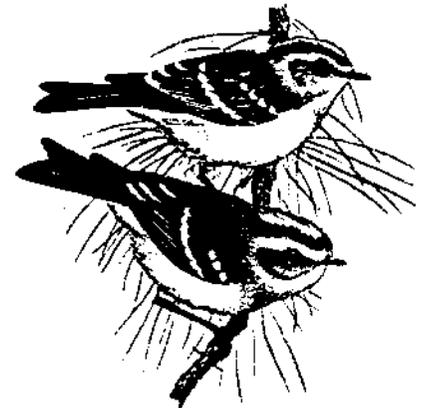
**AUDUBON - THE MAN BEHIND THE NAME** --

John James Audubon, born in Haiti on April 26, 1785, was a great American ornithologist who spent most of his life exploring the eastern United States and painting the birds he observed on these trips. His great work, The Birds of America, containing 435 hand-colored plates with 1,065 life-sized figures, did much to arouse people's interest in the spectacular bird life of North American.

[1001 Questions Answered About Birds]

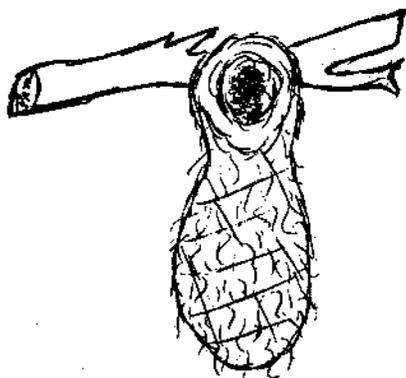
FEATHERED FACTS --Golden-crowned Kinglet [Regulus satrapa]

The Golden-crowned Kinglet, of course, is so named for the bright feathers of the bird's head. Regulus is Latin meaning "little king". Satrapa is taken from the Greek, Satrapes, "a ruler" who wears a golden crown.



## Characteristics of the Golden-crowned Kinglet --

- tiny, plump, short-tailed bird
- has broad white eyebrow and line below eye
- male has an orange crown patch bordered in yellow and black
- female's crown is yellow with black borders
- upperparts grayish-olive; underparts whitish; 2 white wing bars
- call is a high, thin "tsee, tsee, tsee, tsee"



Golden-crowned Kinglets nest in open coniferous forest. The pendant nest is located near the trunk, usually hung from branches. Nest is anywhere from 4 to 60 feet off ground. Nest materials include moss, lichen, spider web, plant down, dead leaves, lined with fine materials. The eggs are creamy white to muddy cream, variably spotted with browns, usually wreathed. Clutch size is usually 8-9 eggs, but can range from 5 to 11 eggs. The eggs are crowded into two layers in the nest. The Golden-crowned Kinglet will have two broods and the second clutch is often as large as the first. Incubation takes place in 14-15 days. Young fledge in 14-19 days. Both male and female attend the young.

Their diet consists of spiders, some fruit, and seeds. Young are fed only insects, but reject spiders. They will "hover and glean" which means they take insects above the ground while hovering. Or, they will use a technique called "hawking", where it sallies from a perch on short flights to capture flying insects.

The Golden-crown Kinglet winters south to Guatemala. It winters in mixed-species flocks with chickadees, Brown Creepers, and small woodpeckers.

DIAGNOSTIC DETAILS --

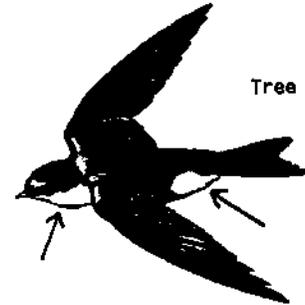
We have several swallows in our area. Two that look fairly similar are the Tree Swallow and the Violet-green Swallow. The major difference is the location of the cheek patch.

On the Tree Swallow the cheek patch does not extend above the eye. On the Violet-green Swallow, however, the white cheek patch extends above the eye.

The other definitive diagnostic detail on these two swallows are the large flank patches found on the Violet-green. These large white flanks on the Violet-green nearly meet over the tail, while the white underparts of the Tree Swallow extend a little onto the rump.



Violet-green Swallow



Tree Swallow

APRIL FIELD TRIP REVIEW [4/20/91] --

We were blessed with a beautiful day for our April field trip and it turned out to be one of "true observation".

Our observations started with looking at the difference between Violet-green Swallows and Tree Swallows. We also identified in the Wolf Lodge Bay/Mineral Ridge area -- Canada Geese, Red-winged Blackbirds, Buffleheads, Mountain Chickadee, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hooded Merganser, Song Sparrow, Northern Flickers, and American Crows.

In the Beauty Creek Bay area we were able to observe two Common Loons in two different visual displays -- bill-dipping and the splash-dive. When bill-dipping, the bird rapidly dips its bill in the water and may flick it sideways when bringing it out. Splash-diving is done when the bird dives quickly, creating a large splash with a sharp kick of its legs. Both bill-dipping and splash-diving are used in territorial and courtship displays. When these displays are used in territorial displays they are reducing aggressive tendencies when birds join each other. In courtship, these displays are considered part of precopulatory displays. Along our route south along the lake we counted a total of seven Common Loons in various bays.

Once we arrived at the Coeur d'Alene Wildlife Management Area near Harrison, nature's classroom unfolded. We were able to study the difference between Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaups, Mallards and Northern Shovelers, and we were able to watch and listen to the Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Other species logged in were:

Wood Duck  
Killdeer  
Northern Pintail  
Cinnamon Teal

Pied-billed Grebe  
American Wigeon  
Tundra Swan  
American Coot

Green-winged Teal  
Common Merganser  
Gadwall  
N. Rough-winged Swallow

Redhead  
Kingfisher  
Osprey  
Raven

BIRD BEHAVIOR - MASTER NEST BUILDERS --

What is the origin of nest building in birds? Ornithologists can only speculate that nest building developed from a shortage of natural cavities for use in sheltering eggs and young. Birds unable to find the necessary nest holes adapted and moved into crevices that were originally unsuitable. Because of a continued shortage, natural selection favored tendencies to excavate compartments in soil and decayed soft wood, to chisel new holes in firm wood, or to search for and assemble materials to augment otherwise marginal sites. Avian construction, from typical open cups and anchored platforms to mud or saliva structures plastered onto firm supports, is thought to have evolved from this simple beginning. The diversity of nests among bird species is evidence that there are many different designs that provide the necessary shelter. In contrast, the similarity of nests within a species indicates how highly ritualized nest-building behavior has become.

Ground-nesting birds often simply lay their clutch directly on the ground. Others make minimal scrapes or pile materials into a buffering pad beneath the eggs.



Red-shouldered Hawk



Vireo



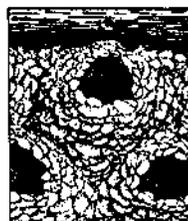
Oriole



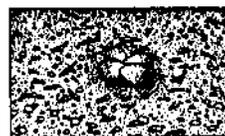
Finch



Woodpecker



Cliff Swallow



Killdeer



Kingfisher

The use of shallow scrapes and ground level natural cavities is thought to have led to scratching short burrows like those of the Rough-winged Swallow, and eventually to excavating the longer tunnels of kingfishers and puffins.

Generally, North American birds that do not place their nests under shelter keep their eggs just as warm as those that do. These birds spend more time on the nest, however, to compensate for the reduced insulation. They pay the price, though, by being a "sitting duck" and receive additional exposure to predators. The theory is that the shift from nesting on the ground to building elevated nests or moving breeding colonies to offshore islands, followed the evolutionary diversification of mammalian predators.

Cavity nests provide protection for the eggs and young from predators and harsh weather. Therefore, the location of the entrance may be intentionally selected to modify the temperature of the nest. Woodpecker hole entrances often face in a direction that increases solar exposure. Other birds such as Cactus Wren and Verdins place their nest for the first brood with entrances facing away

from cold winds, while second brood nests are oriented toward cool afternoon breezes.

Of the approximate 470 passerine species (perching birds) in North America, only twenty-three percent (23%) use holes or build domed structures while seventy-seven percent (77%) have open nests. Since enclosed sites offer more protection, why would passerines build open nests? It is possible that these smaller birds have shifted to open-nest construction since larger species could readily commandeer a tree hole from them by simply enlarging the entrance. Many of these smaller birds, however, have incorporated several protective features in constructing their nests. For example, Purple Finches use only nest materials that blend into the nest site. Pendulous nests (typified by those of orioles) may be obvious, but are often attached to the far end of slender branches where they are relatively safe from climbing predators or larger avian nest robbers. Some species nest in plants that have sharp thorns.

It is apparent that avian nest placement is undergoing a transition as human and bird populations increasingly interact. Common Nighthawks and Killdeers are opportunistic and adapt particularly well to urban sites, especially rooftops. Roof-reared Killdeer young have been known to survive falls from 50-foot heights and roof surface temperatures of 138° F. In the future, the abundance and distribution of many bird species will be determined by their ability to nest in human-created habitats.

[The Birder's Handbook]



### THE OBSERVATION POST --

In addition to the many sightings from our April 20th field trip, we also had these reported sightings:

Great Horned Owl nest and two owlets	-	Hayden Lake, Mary Brosky
White-crowned Sparrow [pair]	-	05/01/91, feeder of Pam Gontz
Red Crossbills	-	Hayden Lake, Phil and Judy Waring
Lesser Yellowlegs (4)	-	4/13/91, Hauser Lake, Pam Gontz
Ring-necked Pheasants, Rufous- sided Towhees, Pileated Woodpeckers Blue Grouse, Townsend's Solitaire, Juncos, Robins, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Mountain Chickadees, Black-capped Chickadees, American Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker, Varied Thrush, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Cassin's Finch, House Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	feeder and backyard of Walter and Roberta Knoles for observation period from 3/24/ to 4/14/91
Turkey Vulture	-	4/28/91, PF South Park, Pam Gontz
Great Egret [pair]	-	05/01/91, Cataldo Slough, Susan Weller
Boreal Chickadee	-	05/04/91, feeder of Susan Weller



THE EGG SORTING RATITE, She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not --

The Ostrich is a communal nester. A nest, which is a shallow depression scooped out of the ground, may contain 30 to 40 eggs from two to as many as seven birds. Some of the eggs are doomed from the beginning because an incubating bird, whether it is the male or female, can cover only 20 eggs.

As if this is not bad enough; studies have found that some of the eggs are intentionally thrown out of the nest by the incubating hen. Although the nest may contain eggs from several female ostriches, only one hen, assisted by the male, will guard and incubate the clutch. This incubating hen is referred to as the "major hen".

Studies in Africa show that the major hen will discard eggs laid by other or "minor hens". These discards are moved three to six feet away from the nest, which insures their demise. It appears that the major hen can recognize her eggs, but does not discriminate against any particular minor hen. The eggs of minor hens that are in the central portion of the clutch are not as likely to be evicted as those near the periphery of the group. By having additional eggs in the nest, the odds of the major hen's eggs falling victim to predation are reduced by about one half.

Of the small number of other bird species that utilize communal nesting, only the Ostrich practices egg sorting.

[-- Walter Knotes]

[Bertram, B. C. R. "Ostriches recognize their own eggs and discard others," *Nature*, 17 May 1979, pp. 233-34]

FEEDING HUMMINGBIRDS --

The hummingbirds are back! Time to bring the feeders out of the closet and mix up some sweet drink.

Instead of buying the instant nectar you can use sugar water, starting with a 1:4 ratio (sugar:water) and reducing it to 1:6 after they are coming regularly. Boil the mixture 2-3 minutes to completely dissolve the sugar. There is no need to add food coloring if the feeder ports and top are red. Sugar water is not nutritionally complete, as it doesn't contain the amino acids and vitamins normally found in the nectar of flowers, nor the insects which provide additional protein. Usually hummingbirds are not totally dependent on the feeders. Zymadrops (liquid vitamins) can be added to the sugar solution. One reason for reducing the sugar to water ratio is that too much sugar can enlarge their livers. Wash the feeder frequently using hot water only, no detergents or soaps.

The hummingbirds most likely to visit feeders in North Idaho are the Rufous, Black-chinned, and the Calliope.

[--Ellen Scriven]

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"The 'control of nature' is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man."

[--Rachel Carson]

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OLD GROWTH FORESTS - MANAGEMENT INDICATOR SPECIES --

Though the Old Growth forests of North Idaho lack the Spotted Owl to symbolize their need for preservation, there are at least 40 species of vertebrate species that are dependent in whole or in part upon these ancient stands of trees. Included in the list are Barred and Saw-whet Owls, Moose, Lynx, Wolverine, Goshawk, Marten, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Warbler, Harlequin Duck, Northern Flying Squirrel, White-tailed Deer, Little Brown Myotis (bat), Pileated Woodpecker, Boreal Red-backed Vole, Western Jumping Mouse and Cutthroat Trout. The Bald Eagle, which is endangered, uses Old Growth forest for nesting and roosting. The Grizzly Bear, also endangered, is found in the ancient forests of the Selkirk Mountains, as is the Woodland Caribou, which depends on Old Growth Cedar-Hemlock forests for winter thermal cover and spring calving.

Three species have been selected as Management Indicator Species for Old Growth forests in the Northern Rockies Region. They are the Pileated Woodpecker, the Goshawk and the Marten. Changes in their populations are believed to indicate the effects of management activities in the National Forests on other species in the Old Growth community. Each of the three species has habitat requirements related to stand structure or components which are most likely to occur in Old Growth habitats. Their population densities are generally higher in Old Growth than in younger stands. They also each have a relatively large home range size, which would include the home ranges of other Old Growth related species.

Pileated Woodpeckers require large diameter dead or live trees for nesting. Western Larch, Ponderosa Pine and Black Cottonwood seem to be preferred. The nest trees average 30 inches in diameter and exceed 90 feet in height. Nest cavities, which are excavated every year, are usually located at least 30 feet above the ground, in the canopy layer of the surrounding forest. Carpenter ants comprise 40-60% of the Pileated Woodpecker's diet. The ant colonies occur most often in decaying, large snags, logs and stumps, such as are found in Old Growth. A nesting pair of Pileated Woodpeckers will often cover 500-1000 acres in their daily feeding activities. They avoid open areas, preferring forests with significant Old Growth components.

The Goshawk is a good indicator of certain types of Old Growth habitat, such as park-like forests where underburning occurs frequently. They generally do not migrate, except altitudinally, in the case of some that nest at high elevation. They require a large tree (average 20" dbh) with an open structure, which will support their bulky nests. Douglas Fir and Larch are preferred. The two to five nest trees used by a breeding pair are consistently found in mature to Old Growth forests, on gentle to moderately steep slopes. Tree squirrels, ground squirrels, woodpeckers, grouse, jays and robins make up the bulk of their diet. Forests with small openings in the canopy and a fairly open understory are suitable for their hunting. Goshawks use large diameter snags and stumps for "plucking posts" (dismembering and consuming prey). Territories in the western U.S. are from 1-4 miles apart with a breeding pair using anywhere from 500 - 7,000 acres.

The Marten was chosen to represent species using the down, woody component in mature and Old Growth habitats. In the west, they are most abundant in mature to Old Growth true Fir or Spruce/Fir forests and avoid open, dry forests. They are nocturnal and are active throughout the year. Martens

require large snags, stumps and logs for dens and resting sites. Red-backed and Meadow Voles are their main prey. Red Squirrels, Northern Flying Squirrels and Snowshoe Hare may also be important in winter. Invertebrates, berries and passerine birds are taken spring through fall. Moist, coniferous forests have the greatest number of rodents. Martens seem to prefer dense stands and rarely will go more than 150 feet from forest cover. During the winter, logs, trees, and slash, which project above the snow may provide access routes to rodents living beneath the snow. Large down logs and stumps are especially important in winter for thermal cover. In good habitat there may be 1-3 Martens per square mile with home range sizes varying from 1/3 to 2 1/2 square miles. The home range must include resting and foraging areas with adequate cover.

The idea behind choosing Management Indicator Species as put forth in the National Forest Management Act and it's regulations, is not to manage forests so as to maintain the minimum habitat requirements for these species but to maintain viable populations of all existing native populations. The chosen species can be used to estimate the effects of the management activities on the entire Old Growth community. [Ellen Scriven]

[Sources: Warren, Nancy M., Old Growth Habitats and Associated Wildlife Species in the Northern Rocky Mountains, and Hempleman, Suzanne, National Audubon Society North Idaho Grant Proposal - Ecology Section]

### CONSERVATION TIPS --

--Use compact fluorescent bulbs; they require 75% less energy than incandescents.

--Buy paper, not foam plates and cups.

[Ellen Scriven]

### RIDDLES - BIRD NAMES AS VERBS --

Fill in the blank with the appropriate bird name.

1. To appear to touch water without actually doing so. Shearwater
2. To bend low to avoid a blow. \_\_\_\_\_
3. To complain. \_\_\_\_\_
4. To defraud (slang). \_\_\_\_\_
5. To dupe. \_\_\_\_\_
6. To elongate, as the neck. \_\_\_\_\_
7. To engage in frolicsome sport. \_\_\_\_\_
8. To flinch. \_\_\_\_\_
9. To fly about looking for prey. \_\_\_\_\_
10. To hunt vension. \_\_\_\_\_
11. To imitate without understanding. \_\_\_\_\_
12. To lead a suit that one's partner can trump. \_\_\_\_\_
13. To boast. \_\_\_\_\_
14. To protest. \_\_\_\_\_
15. To raise checks (slang). \_\_\_\_\_
16. To scintillate rapidly. \_\_\_\_\_
17. To shoot at. \_\_\_\_\_
18. To take through the gullet. \_\_\_\_\_
19. To talk in a familiar manner. \_\_\_\_\_
20. To tie tightly. \_\_\_\_\_

BIRDING TRIP TIP --

Looking for a good day trip or weekend trip to go birding? I just recently drove over to the National Bison Range and the Ninepipe Wildlife Refuge near Moiese or Dixon, Montana. By the end of the day I had 58 species of birds on my list and picked up a couple that I'd never seen before. One of the highlights was spotting two Short-eared Owls. Another species new to me was the Snow Geese. A couple others that I'd seen only once before were the Yellow-billed Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, and Great Horned Owl. I was actually able to observe a Great Horned Owl at its nest with two owlets.

One of the interesting things to see at Ninepipe is the nesting Double-crested Cormorants. The Cormorants nest in large trees on an island at the refuge while hundreds of gulls nest on the ground below. I also saw many species of ducks as well as several species of grebes and shorebirds. The National Bison Range is located near Dixon, Montana on Highway 200 (North of Missoula). Ninepipe is just a few miles northeast of the Bison Range. If you would like any more information about these two areas or have any questions, give me a call.

[-Pam Gontz]

BIRDS IN HISTORY --

What is the first record of birds having an influence on American history? On October 7, 1492, Columbus was threatened by the mutiny of his crew while still some 720 miles east of the North American mainland. A flight of migratory land birds helped Columbus to win the sailors from their determination to return immediately to Spain. Columbus turned the Santa Maria toward the southwest, followed the birds, and shortened his route to land by about 200 miles, making a landing at San Salvador instead of on the mainland.

What is the most ancient evidence of man's interest in birds? Paintings of birds on the walls of caves prove that ancient man took accurate note of birds and their habitats.

How old are the cave paintings? Paleolithic or Stone Age man spanned between 500,000 and 1,500,000 years of the earth's history. In certain parts of the world, Stone Age cultures persisted into the present century. In Europe this period ended about 10,000 years ago. It was during the upper part of the paleolithic period in Europe, or more than 100 centuries ago, that some of the cave paintings in both France and Spain were made. The oldest of these were merely etched or scratched in the stone, while the later ones had color added.

[1001 Questions Answered About Birds]

Answers to Riddles - Bird Names as Verbs:

1. Shearwater; 2. Duck; 3. Grouse; 4. Rook; 5. Gull; 6. Crane; 7. Lark; 8. Quail; 9. Hawk; 10. Killdeer; 11. Parrot; 12. Ruff; 13. Crow; 14. Rail; 15. Kite; 16. Flicker; 17. Snipe; 18. Swallow; 19. Chat; 20. Knot.

# NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



## CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send the Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$20 payable to the National Audubon Society is enclosed.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Send this application and your check to

National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Local Chapter  
Coeur d'Alene G06

Local Chapter Code  
7XCH8

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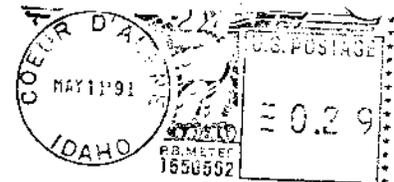
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