

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society

Editor: Shirley Sturts - E4615 Fernan Lake Rd - Coeur d'Alene, Id. 83814 - 664-5318



MAY 1997

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CALENDAR CHECK

(Registering for a field trip is not required but if you register the leader will call you if the time or meeting place is changed)

MEETINGS

MAY 19 MONDAY REGULAR MEETING

Time: 6:30 Bird sharing and identification - Bring pictures, slides, video, stories etc. to share)

30 p.m Meeting starts

Place: First Presbyterian Church

521 Lakeside Ave. (enter through the door at the north end of the parking lot)

Program: Mike Roy, National Wildlife Federation, will give a program on the rehabilitation of Grizzly Bears in the Bitterroots.

JUNE 16 MONDAY ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC

Time: 5:30 dinner. Come earlier to bird and/or canoe

Place: Mica Bay, BLM boater's campground. You can boat across or walk on short trail from Loffs Bay road

OCT 17-19 AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING - HARRISON

Look for information in Sept. newsletter

JULY 6-12, 1998 AUDUBON'S NATIONAL CONVENTION

Place: Estes Park, Colorado

Program For all ages - Field Trips with Expert Leaders - Leadership Training - Learning Lab

Information: Write 4150 Darley Ave., Suite #5, Boulder, CO 80303

Phone: 303/499-3622

FIELD TRIPS

MAY 10 SATURDAY MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT

Leader: Susan Weller 682-3413

Activity: Join a birding team and let's see how many species of birds we can find in a day. For time and place, contact Susan or Kris 664-4739

May 20 TUESDAY BIRDING WITH A BROWN BAG

9TH in a series of noon-time birding

Time: 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.

Meet: French Gulch Road between 23rd and 24th Street

Leader: Roger Young 664-4179

Activity: Birding around Ponderosa Golf Course. Should see warblers, wrens, chickadees, finches and some ducks on the ponds.

MAY 21 AND JUNE 5 WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY MICA BAY SURVEY

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Meet: Cove Bowl Parking Lot

Leaders: Corinne Cameron 664-0344

Shirley Sturts 664-5318

Activity: birding area until 11:30 a.m.

Karen Wense's Lakeside Elementary Class will join us on June 5th

MAY 24-25 SATURDAY - SUNDAY FIELD TRIP: CRESTON VALLEY WILDLIFE AREA

Leader: Kris Buchler 664-4739

Activity: Exploring the visitors center, taking the guided canoe trip, hiking, canoeing on our own, birding along the many side roads and viewing areas are some of the activities that are planned. You have your choice of camping or staying in a motel. Call Kris for details.

TUBBS HILL BROWN BAG

Bill Gundlach, leader

At noon on April 22 a group of several brown bag birders, without brown bags, met at the 3rd Street boat ramp in Coeur d'Alene to check out the birds on the northwest side of Tubbs Hill. It was a beautiful sunny day with puffy clouds - just right for a walk on the hill. Before starting out, a Horned Grebe was spotted in the water at the docks, while a dozen Violet-green Swallows swooped overhead.

We followed the north trail up to the road listening to an American Crow cawing, but saw no other birds. At the road, the group spent a lot of time listening to many warblers and trying to find them. One finally did show, and some in the group caught a fleeting views of it - possibly a Nashville Warbler. Other birds seen in this area included a House Finch, a Ring-necked Pheasant, an Osprey circling high, a Northern Flicker, some more Violet-green Swallow, and a couple of American Crow.

Three of the group had to leave after this stop, so four of us continued on around the road past two houses and up the fire road for awhile before returning to our cars. In this area we saw an American Robin and heard more warblers, a Red-breasted Nuthatch and what we think was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Trip participants included Herb and Jan Severtson, Kris Buchler, Barbara Zimmer, LaRene Adkinson, Peggy Schnell, and Bill Gundlach. Although we didn't see a lot of birds, it was a pleasant time spent on "our hill".

We began the trip by heading north on the Rathdrum Prairie across Huetter Road where we spotted Western Meadowlark, Red-tailed Hawk, Savannah Sparrow and Killdeer. We then continued north/east of Spirit Lake through the Hoodoo Valley among meadows, forest, flooded fields and marshes. We saw a large variety of avian critters: Mountain and Western Bluebird, Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco, 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Kestrel, 2 Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, Red-tailed Hawk, Mallard, Violet-green/ Tree/ Rough-winged/Barn Swallow, Red-winged and Brewers Blackbird, Muskrat, Common Merganser, Canada Geese, Pied-billed Grebe, Green-winged Teal(pair), Bufflehead, Magpie, Wood Duck (pair), Townsends Solitaire, Kingfisher, Hooded Merganser and Osprey. We noticed that many Canada Geese are using the high nest platforms designed for Osprey.

We then decided to cut the trip short of our original destination of the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge and instead headed for Oden Bay on Lake Pend Oreille. We were treated to many wonderful birds there as well. Ring-billed Gull, 2-3 immature Bald Eagle, 1 pr nesting Bald Eagle, Green-winged Teal, Bufflead, Northern Shoveler, Grea Blue Heron, American Coot, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Hooded Merganser, Lesser Scaup, Redhead, Pintail, Horned Grebe, western Brebe and 6 Common Loon.

After we had spend 1-2 hours on this beautiful bay we called it a day. We had spent close to 9 hours pursuing our favorite hobby and felt it was a rewarding adventure

FIELD TRIP: HOODOO VALLEY - ODEN BAY

April 20

Cynthia Langlitz, Leader

Participants: Bill Gundlach, Herb and Jan Severtson, Nancy Mertz, Kris Buchler, Lynn Sheridan, Rick and Cyndi Langlitz

We were out birding hoping to see many of the birds we hadn't seen in months and we weren't disappointed. Of course, since the calendar says it's spring, it really wasn't difficult to see many species of birds both migratory and the familiar feathered friends we've had with us all winter.

I'm convinced that spring did indeed arrive that day by blowing in with the winds we had. Because of the wind, in many cases it wasn't pleasant to be outside of our vehicles for fear of being blown over ourselves, but we stuck to it, being the persistant birders that we are.



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COWBIRDS AREN'T EVIL

by Marlene A. Condon

Reprinted from LIVING BIRD Spring 1996

Enjoy them for what they are— unique creatures, doing their best to survive.



When I was the editor of my local bird club newsletter, a reader once asked me how to discourage Brown-headed Cowbirds from coming to feeders. I answered the question in the newsletter.

In my experience, these birds prefer white millet to sunflower seeds, so I recommended either feeding sunflower seeds exclusively or withholding all seeds for several days until the cowbirds dispersed.

I went on to say that, personally, I do not get upset if I see cowbirds around. As a naturalist, I am fascinated by their survival strategy. The cowbirds' means of reproducing—laying eggs in the nests of other bird species—was perfectly suited for their nomadic lives on the western prairies. The fact that this reproductive strategy creates problems in the East, where cowbirds are relative newcomers, does not make these creatures evil. Yet that is how most birders regard cowbirds, charging that they are responsible for declines in some of our songbird populations.

I care as much as anybody about declining songbird populations. Yet I can't blame the cowbirds at my feeders for doing what comes naturally. I enjoy the sounds they make, and I consider the males, with their shiny plumage, quite attractive. I do not try to attract these birds to my yard, however. I ended my reply by saying that we should minimize our assistance to cowbirds to help control their populations, but we could still enjoy them for what they are: unique creatures, doing their best to survive.

I was astounded by the reactions to my editorial. One birder in my area stopped speaking to me. Another told me my comments were totally irresponsible.

Finally, I heard that I was being described as a controversial writer.

People who love birds tend to hate anything that is a bird's enemy - not just cowbirds but raccoons, cats, and snakes. I know some people who kill cowbirds illegally (as a native species of the United States, cowbirds are protected). Should birders feel this much animosity toward cowbirds? Like jealous lovers, are we incapable of being realistic about the situation that has developed?

It helps to understand cowbird breeding dynamics. For the most part cowbirds parasitize species that are common and widespread. Red-winged Blackbirds are one example.

They are vital cowbird hosts simply because they are one of North America's most common bird species. They are not endangered by cowbird parasitism, however, because they are so numerous.

On the other hand, cowbirds have a big impact on Kirtland's Warblers—not because these warblers raise many cowbirds, but because their own numbers are so low that any breeding failure threatens their existence.

Cowbirds are not an introduced species. They spread east as humans cleared the forests, making the land hospitable to cowbirds. Today we can't do much about the presence of cowbirds in the east. Yes, we can kill cowbirds in a limited area, as researchers are doing in Michigan to save Kirtland's Warblers. But it is impractical to do this on a huge scale. Besides, the cowbirds would probably move in again.

People have a dangerous tendency to abhor animals that do not fit their notion of how the natural world should work. Birders should remember that not long ago, hunters slaughtered raptors because these birds killed animals that humans valued. But the hunters were not really evil, even though conservationists today often portray them that way.

The hunters believed- as many birders now believe about cowbirds—that the raptors were harming other animals and should be eliminated. There is no good and bad here; rather, these are misguided attempts to control nature.

COWBIRDS AREN'T EVIL

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Humans have altered their environment wherever they have gone, and cowbirds have adapted to the change. It is humans who (almost literally) paved the way for Brown-headed Cowbirds. We need to face the reality of this situation and deal with it scientifically instead of emotionally. Cowbirds are here to stay, regardless of the animosity birders may feel toward this species...or toward anyone who dares to say that she enjoys seeing a cowbird once in a while.

"Marlene A. Condon has been fascinated by the natural world for as long as she can remember."

WHY MIGRATORY BIRDS ARE CRAZY FOR COFFEE:

Migrants and Coffee: what's the Connection?

From: Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center Fact Sheet No. 1

In the midst of altered and shrinking habitat, both in North and Latin America, migratory birds have found a sanctuary in the forest-like environment of traditional coffee plantations. In eastern Chiapas, Mexico, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center biologists found that traditionally-managed coffee and cacao (chocolate) plantations support over 150 species of birds; a greater number than is found in other agricultural habitats, and exceeded only in undisturbed tropical forest. Even in very disturbed areas, coffee plantations support good populations of migrants and other species that prefer or are restricted to forest habitats, such as redstarts, black-throated green warblers, yellow-throated and solitary vireos, and residents including tinamous, parrots, trogons, becardas, toucans, and woodcreepers.

However, because of recent changes in coffee production and marketing, shade coffee plantations are a threatened habitat. In the past twenty years, coffee has begun to be grown with no shade canopy at all. While this manner of cultivation produces substantially increased yields, these cannot be

sustained for many years without intensive management (additions of fertilizer and lime); they are also subject to premature death in environments possessing a marked dry season and they need to be renovated (plants replaced) much more frequently than the shade varieties.

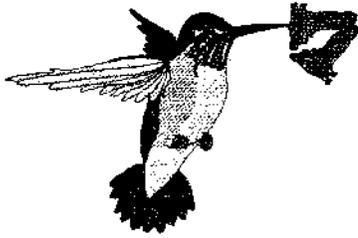
Aside from the agronomic risks, sun coffee production has resulted in major habitat change for migratory birds in the past two decades. Of the permanent cropland planted in coffee, the amount under modern, reduced-shade coffee systems ranges from 17% in Mexico to 40% in Costa Rica and 69% in Colombia. The few studies that have been conducted have found that diversity of migratory birds plummets when coffee is converted from shade to sun. One study found a decrease from 10 to 4 common species of migratory birds. As for the overall avifauna, studies in Colombia and Mexico found 94-97% fewer bird species in sun grown coffee than in shade grown coffee. This comes as no surprise since over two-thirds of the birds are found in the canopy of shade plantations and less than 10% are found foraging in coffee plants.

Grown in the time-honored manner, coffee bushes are cultivated under a forest overstory. Coffee is also commonly grown using indigenous agroforestry techniques, originally developed for growing cacao. This involves planting a mixture of nitrogen-fixing trees with other useful species to provide shade. Up to 40 species of trees can be found in some traditionally managed plantations and many of these are managed for household or commercial commodities such as wood or fruit.

Shade trees protect the understory coffee plants from rain and sun, help maintain soil quality, reduce the need for weeding and aid in pest control. Organic matter from the shade trees also provides a natural mulch, which reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, reduces erosion, contributes important nutrients to the soil, and prevents metal toxicities.

Traditional coffee plantations can be thought of as modifies forest habitats.

Continued on page 5



WHY MIGRATOR BIRDS ARE CRAZY FOR COFFEE

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Even where a single species of tree is planted as cover, the trees often produce flower and fruit crops used by omnivorous birds, such as Tennessee warblers and orchard orioles. It is possible that up-mountain and northward movements are timed to take advantage of the blossoming of plantation trees.

In the regions most heavily used by migratory birds—Mesoamerica, the Caribbean islands, and Columbia-coffee plantation "forests" cover 2.7 million hectares, or almost half of the permanent cropland.

In southern Mexico, coffee plantations cover an area over half the size of all the major moist tropical forest reserves, providing critical woodland habitat in mid-elevation areas where virtually no large reserves are found.

Birds are only one indicator of the role that coffee plays in protecting biological diversity. On going studies of insects, canopy trees, orchids, and amphibians show that coffee plantations are often critical refuges protecting forest species where there is no longer any forest.

More Than Just a Hill of Beans

Shade coffee presents a tremendous opportunity for both conservation and economic gain, in that such a relatively benign form of agriculture has been and continues to be so significant an economic engine for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Although coffee originated in the Old World, over 2/3 of the current world production is exported from Latin American and the Caribbean. It is primarily grown by families on small farms. Coffee is the third most common import in the U.S., behind oil and steel, respectively. The U.S. consumes about 1/3 of the world's coffee.

In dollar value, coffee is second only to petroleum as the most important legal export commodity in the world. Revenues exceed 10 billion dollars per year. It is the second largest source of foreign exchange for developing countries around the world and is particularly important for Latin America and the Caribbean, where it is the leading source of foreign exchange.

When New Isn't Necessarily Better

Productive sun coffee cultivation requires chemical inputs and year-round labor, placing financial demands and the need for credits on the growers. Consequently, most "technification" of coffee growing (conversion to sun plantations) is done by larger landholders.

While technified coffee may point to progress in terms of total crop output—a condition which may not hold true over the long run, and already proven false in some areas where sun coffee is being grown—the relentless push of agribusiness to produce more coffee per unit area may have serious environmental and social ramifications. Conversion to sun coffee appears to lead to greater soil erosion, acidification, and higher amounts of toxic runoff. In addition, conversion to sun coffee results in a loss of trees, which both provide "insurance" crops to the grower (e.g. fuel wood, timber, citrus, and other fruit trees planted in the canopy), and contribute to ameliorating climate change.

Where Conservation Meets Market Forces

Increasingly, the relationship between sound agriculture, the long-term health of rural farmers, and maintenance of biological diversity is more obvious. Because of its high profitability per unit area compared to raising corn or beef, coffee growing had been seen as a way for small landowners to obtain cash with relatively little investment. Traditional coffee farming reduces the farmer's dependence on expensive chemical applications, safeguarding growers and their families from the possible harmful effects of contact with pesticides.

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WHY MIGRATORY BIRDS ARE CRAZY FOR COFFEE

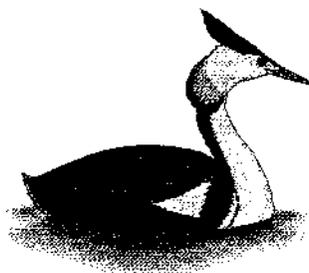
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However, the reliance on a single export commodity by farmers in many counties often ends in overproduction. The impact of a worldwide coffee glut was buffered by the International Coffee Agreement, which called for the stockpiling of stored coffee beans by participating countries. The collapse of this agreement (1989) and the trend towards free market economics has caused a crisis in coffee production. In the wake of the price collapse, countries such as Columbia have taken deliberate steps to modernize production, driving small and "inefficient" growers into alternative land uses. With a simultaneous reduction in access to agricultural credits, many farmers struggle to make ends meet and some have been forced to alter their coffee plantations by removing canopy trees for firewood or abandoning coffee as their cash crop altogether.

The conservation of migratory birds depends on conservation of habitats, but parks and reserves alone will not provide adequate space for protection. The fate of migratory birds and other wide-ranging species depends upon the quality of human-managed habitats. The health of temperate and tropical ecosystems is bound together by the migration of billions of birds each year—and shaded coffee plantation play a key role. This form of land use may itself be on the way to becoming an endangered species. Ponder this over your next cup of coffee: would you be willing to pay more for coffee if you know the extra money would be used for extension services and affordable credit for coffee farmers to survive and grow coffee in a more bird-friendly manner?

****You can order Shade Grown organic coffee from:
Royal Blue Organics
 P.O. Box 21123
 Eugene, OR 97402
 Phone: (541) 689-1836
 e-mail cafemam@aol.com

MICA BAY SURVEY



Observers:
 Kris Buchler
 Corinne Cameron
 Del Cameron
 Pam Comrie
 Bill Gundlach
 Jan Severtson
 Lynn Shenden
 Shirley Sturts

	April 5	April 24
Common Loon	-	3
Great Blue Heron	10	27
		<i>in heronry</i>
Red-necked Grebe	2	3pr
Canada Goose	20	18+
<i>on nest platforms</i>	5	6
Wood Duck	2 pr	3
Mallard	80	16+
Northern Pintail	5	-
Bufflehead	4	1pr
Common Merganser	4	-
Osprey	1	<i>on nest</i> 1pr
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1
American Coot	2	-
Killdeer	2	3
Common Snipe	-	1
Gull (sp)	1	-
Belted Kingfisher	-	1
Hairy Woodpecker	-	1
Northern Flicker	4	3
Pileated Woodpecker	-	1
Tree Swallow	7	34+
Violet-Green Swallow	29	20+
Cliff Swallow	-	10+
Steller's Jay	-	4
Common Raven	2	1
Black-C Chickadee	6	9
Mountain Chickadee	2	-
Red-b Nuthatch	3	4
Western Bluebird	2	1 pr
American Robin	23	24
		<i>1 on nest</i>
Varied Thrush	-	1
European Starling	13	2
Rufous-sided Towhee	1	1
Song Sparrow	13	7
Dark-eyed Junco	2	-
Red-winged Blackbird	10+	30+
American Goldfinch	-	2
Evening Grosbeak	-	1

OBSERVATION POST



Observers: Merilee Benson (MB), Kris Buchler (KSB), Janet Callen (JC), Gordon Comrie (GC), Pam Comrie (PAC), Bill Gundlach (BG), Kathryn Henderson (KH) Cindy Langlitz (CL), Rick Langlitz (RL), George Saylor (GS) Herb and Jan Severson (HJS), John Shipley (JNS), Lee Strelz (LS), Shirley Sturts (SHS), Judy Waring (JW), Phil Waring (PW), Roger Young (RY)

RBR Rare Bird Report for Northern Idaho - Eastern Washington - Northeastern Oregon Phone (208) 862-6195

or Internet-Web Site: <http://pimacc.pima.edu/~cwilliamson/index.html>

1. Common Loon: 2 Cougar Bay, CDA Lake April 14 (RY); 1 3rd Street Docks CDA Lake April 17 (BG); 1 Fernan Lake April 17 (BG) and April 18 (RL); 1 Beauty Bay, CDA Lake April 18 (PW); 1 Squaw Bay 1 Gotham Bay (CDA Lake) April 18 (BG)
2. Horned Grebe: 3 Harrison April 18 (BG)
3. Red-necked Grebe: 1 pr. Cougar Bay, CDA Lake March 29 (PAC,GC); 4 Harrison April 18 (BG)
4. Tundra Swan: 30-40 Cougar Bay, CDA Lake March 29 (GC,PC)
5. Cinnamon Teal 1st 1 male 2 female Cougar Bay, CDA Lake April 25 (RY); Cataldo Marsh April 30 (PW,JW,HJS,JC,SHS)
6. Northern Shoveler: 7 Cougar Bay, CDA Lake (RY)
7. Osprey 1st arrival Medimont March 28 (PW,JW); 1 Cougar Bay, CDA Lake (PAC,GC); 1 Twin Lakes April 11 (KH); 1 back at Blackwell Island area April 14 (HJS)
8. Bald Eagle: 1 Chasing an Osprey on Fernan Lake - They circled around several times before disappearing down lake May 1 (RL,SHS); 2 Higgins Point, CDA Lake (JW)
9. Turkey Vulture 1st arrival 1 Medimont March 28 (JW,PW); 1 Fernan Hill March 29 (PAC,GC)
10. Cooper's Hawk 1 Pottlatch Hill, CDA April 20 (KSB)
11. Northern Harrier: 1 Rathdrum Prairie April 16 (RL,CL)
12. Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 Blackwell Island April 14 (JHS); 1 Tubbs Hill April 16 (BG)
13. Wild Turkey 7 Squaw Bay, CDA Lake (BG)
14. Common Snipe 1st Fernan Creek March 30 (SHS); 2 Cougar Bay, CDA Lake April 25 (RY)
15. Snowy Owl: 2 CDA Airport March 28 and 1 March 31 (BG)
16. Calliope Hummingbird 1st at Emerald Estates, Hayden April 12 (LS); 1 Fairmont Loop Road feeder April 18 (HJS); 1+ Fernan Hill April 25 (RY)
17. Rufous Hummingbird 1st Fairmont Loop Rd feeder April (JHS); 1+ Fernan Hill April 25 (RY)
18. Red-naped Sapsucker 1st Thompson Lake April 18 (BG)
19. Pileated Woodpecker: 1 Fernan Hill April 25 (RY)
20. Tree Swallow: 1st Post Falls March 22 (JNS); Several Cataldo March 30 (JHS,SHS,JW,PW,JC); 1 Athol area April 18 (MB)
21. White-breasted Nuthatch: 1 Feeder Fernan Lake April 6 (SHS)
22. Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1st Fernan Lake April 4 (SHS); 1+ Rimrock area April 15 (KH)
23. Western Bluebird 1 fighting 5-6 Swallows over a bird house Athol area (MB); 1 male fighting with swallows for house (swallows won) Fernan Hill April 24 (RY)
24. Townsend's Solitaire 1 Coeur d'Alene home April 5 and 2 Tubbs Hill April 7 (BG)
25. Varied Thrush several heard road up Fernan Saddle March 30 (SHS)
26. Nashville Warbler 1st Tubbs Hill April 16 (BG)
27. Yellow Warbler 1st Blackwell Island April 14 (HJS); 1 Tubbs Hill April 16 (BG)
28. Yellow-rumped Warbler 1st Tubbs Hill April 17 (BG)
29. Rufous Towhee 1pr Fernan Lake Feeder March 26 (SHS);
30. Savannah Sparrow: 3 Rathdrum Prairie April 27 (GC,PAC)
31. White-crowned Sparrow 3 feeder Athol area (MB) and 2 yard CDA off Ramsey April 18 (JC); 1 11th and Ash CDA April 20 (GS)
32. Yellow-headed Blackbird 1st Cataldo Marsh April 30 (SHS,JW,PW,HJS,JC)
33. Brewer's Blackbird 1st Fernan Hill April 29 (PAC,GC)
34. Cassin's Finch: 1+ Feeder Pottlatch Hill (after being gone most of the winter May 1 (KSB)

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member in the National Audubon Society and my local chapter, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter (Chapter Code GO67XCH8).

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

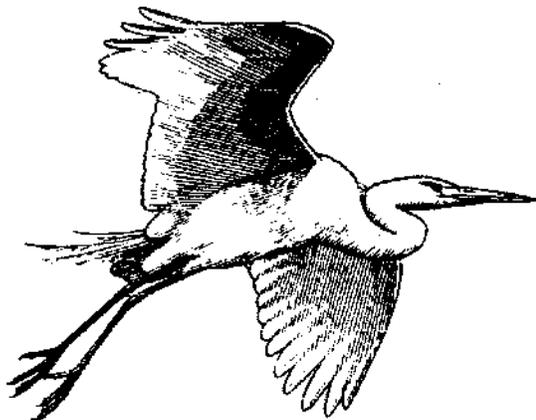
Introductory membership is \$20.00 for individual or family. Members receive 6 issues of Audubon magazine and the chapter's local newsletter. Please make check payable to the National Audubon Society and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Aene, ID 83816.

Subscription to the The Fish Hawk Herald newsletter only is \$10.00. Please make checks payable to the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816.

The Fish Hawk Herald

May 1997

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GREAT EGRET
Ardea alba