

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society

May 2004

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 9

COMING EVENTS **BOARD MEETING**

DATE: May 11, Tuesday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mt. West Bank-125 Ironwood Dr.

MAY PROGRAM

DATE: May 17, Monday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: First Presbyterian Church, 521 Lakeside
PROGRAM: As we go to print the program is still in the planning stage. Check our website.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

DATE: May 8, Saturday
TIME: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
PLACE: Mica Bay, Coeur d' Alene Lake
PROGRAM: Dedication of informational sign at 10:00 a.m., raffle (bluebird box, an Audubon Mountain Bluebird, books, posters), bird walks, activities for children.

ADOPT- A - HIGHWAY ROUND II

DATE: May 15, Saturday
See page 2 for information

CENTURY COUNT

DATE: May 30, Sunday
See field trips on page 3 for information

4TH ANNUAL CHAPTER GARAGE SALE

DATE: June 5, Saturday
See page 2 for information

AUDUBON CHAPTER PICNIC

DATE: June 21, Monday
TIME: 5 p.m. Social hour, 6:00 p.m. Dinner
PLACE: Mica Bay, BLM boaters' campground. Boat across or walk trail from Loffs Bay Rd.
ACTIVITY: Come to our annual picnic and end of year gathering. Bring your drinks and a dish to share along with something to put on the grill. Bring you own utensils. Dessert will be provided. Meet your new officers for the coming term.
NEXT NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER

PEREGRINE FALCON - OUR OFFICIAL STATE FALCON

George Saylor



Photograph by Wayne Tree

It wasn't as swift, but HB 714 flew through the legislature in good shape and landed safely on the Governor's desk, where it awaits his signature. What the HB 714 does is designate the Peregrine Falcon as the official state raptor. The bill was introduced by Rep. Mark Snodgrass from Meridian at the request of the Governor's office. It had been brought forth by students from St. Joe's School in Boise and Peregrine Elementary in Meridian.

There was some debate in the House about the need of designating a state raptor, and some grumbling about potential costs. In my debate I argued that those costs would be easily overcome by the money spent by those who would come to the World Birds of Prey Center, where the work of the Peregrine Fund continues. My family and I have been there several times and in their guest book are names of people from all corners of the United States and many other countries. All those visits translate into economic benefits to the Boise area and ultimately the entire state.

Most of you know of the successful story to save the Peregrine from extinction in the wild. The focus of the Peregrine Fund, which was started in 1970, was to breed falcons in captivity and release the young in the wild. The program has proven to be a remarkable success.

Peregrines are actually widespread, being found on all six continents and living at elevations ranging from sea level to 12,000 feet. They take their prey mainly by capturing it in the air, usually after a fast pursuit or a rapid dive at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour. They typically hunt other birds, including starlings.

Continued on Page 5

BIRD TRACKS



Audubon Members make a difference

ADOPT- A - HIGHWAY ROUND II

It's time for some spring housecleaning, including the two mile stretch of Highway 95 that our Audubon chapter has adopted. Last fall we tackled our assigned miles for the first time and came up with 34 bags of litter! So here we go again. We will meet at 8 a.m on Saturday, May 15 at the intersection of Hwy 95 and Fairmont Loop Rd, girding for our labors with muffins and juice. Be sure to wear long pants and have gloves along, though we will be using the best little device -- grabbers - saving us untold effort. Plan on about two hours for the clean up. Oh, what will we find this time? Surely something interesting. For more info call Judy Waring at 765-5378.

GARAGE SALE!!!!

Our yearly fundraiser will be June 5th, Saturday, 9:00a.m. - 2:00p.m., at Theresa Potts' house. We need help in organizing/pricing on Friday and selling/clean up on Saturday. A sign-up sheet will be at the May meeting. Call Jan at 667-6209 if you have items to donate and/or need help in delivering them on Friday. Also, let Jan know if you have any items that would be good to put in the newspaper garage sale add. THANK YOU!

CHAPTER CANDIDATES ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT OUR REGULAR MAY MEETING

President: Lisa Hardy
Vice-President: Pete Chase
Secretary: Lynn Sheridan
Treasurer: Ronn Rich
Board of Directors: Corrine Cameron, Jennifer Soules, Dick Cripe, Jan Severtson
 Mike Mihelich, Roland Craft
 Janet Callen, Laura Bayless
 Nominations from the floor will be taken.
The nominating committee:
Lisa Hardy, Janet Callen and Dick Cripe.

SANDHILL CRANE LURE CROP

Chuck Trost

An initial \$1,000 from Idaho Audubon Council (IAC) got this process jump started, and after several years, we have gotten a total of \$500,000 from the Dept. of Agriculture (APHIS) set aside in a trust fund. We only use the interest (7%) to pay farmers not to cut their barley and to post their land.

The process has expanded from a few acres initially (\$50/acre) to several hundred now, and I expect it will expand more as the money builds up. It is usually hard for me to say anything nice about Larry Craig, but by golly, he got us the money. To be sure, it is a subsidy for the farmers, which is what Larry does back there. Nevertheless, it is removing one of the pressures that initially called for opening a hunting season on the cranes.

Editors Note: Susan Weller, as president of the IAC and Chuck Trost initiated this program about 10 years ago.

THE HOUSE FINCH NEST SURVEY

Project FeederWatch Electronic Newsletter March 25, 2004

The House Finch Nest Survey (HOFINS) is designed to determine whether differences in the breeding biology of House Finches across their range are responsible for seasonal and geographic variation in House Finch eye disease. With the help of you and other citizen scientists observing nesting House Finches, we hope to identify geographical differences in nesting dates, numbers of eggs or young, and numbers of successful nests (nests that produce at least one House Finch fledgling). We will look for associations between these nesting patterns and geographic variation in eye disease prevalence (the proportion of infected birds in the population).

By monitoring House Finch nests, you can help us determine how many juvenile House Finches, susceptible to disease, are produced in your part of the continent. Our House Finch Disease Survey produced some ground-breaking results, thanks to the participation of caring birders like you. We hope you will help us make the HOFI Nest Survey every bit as successful.

To get involved, sign up at www.birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/nestsignup.html or call 800/843-2473 Or - report your nest to Shirley Sturts 664-5318



"If I were to make a study of the tracks of animals and represent them by plates, I should conclude with the tracks of man"

Henry David Thoreau

MAY FIELD TRIPS

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

1. Please register with the leader ahead of time.
 - a. It helps the leader plan the trip.
 - b. You will be informed if the trip time or location is changed or if the trip is canceled.
2. Fees: (to be paid to the driver of the car) \$5.00 - all day trips \$3.00 - 1/2 day trips.
3. We sometimes use radios to communicate between cars. If the radios are used we are asking participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries.

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: MAY 10 and 24, Mondays

TIME: 7:00 a.m. (NOTE TIME CHANGE)

MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

LEADERS: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739 - Corinne Cameron, 664-0344

ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours twice a month counting birds in the Mica Bay area.

Beginner birders are encouraged and welcome to join us.

SUMMER: The Mica Bay Surveys will continue through the summer. We will do them The 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, but this could vary so it would be a good idea to call one of the leaders to confirm the date.

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: May 18, Tuesday

TIME: 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

MEET: Blackwell Island (park at Fairmont Loop Rd and Highway 95)

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan - leave messages for Lynn with Kris Buchler 664-4739

ACTIVITY: To avoid the \$3.00 parking fee we will park at our usual Fairmont Loop meeting place and walk back to Blackwell Island.

CENTURY COUNT

DATE: May 30, Sunday

TIME: Dawn to Dusk

ACTIVITY: We will be out to count 100+ bird species in Boundary County. This will involve an overnight stay at The Nature Conservancy's Ball Creek Ranch on the night of May 29th and 30th.

Logistics require that you register for this trip (There are beds for only 10 people so reserve yours early or plan to bring a sleeping bag) Trip leaders: Lisa Hardy 682-4808 and Shirley Sturts 664-5318.

To volunteer to lead a trip or to suggest places to go, call or email Lisa Hardy 682-4808 or basalt@earthlink.net

The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession

A BOOK REVIEW

Harry Krueger



With greater stealth skills than a Yellow Rail in Farmer Bill's meadow, a seemingly innocuous, yet diabolically insidious malady has blasted into the rank and file of American birding.

Oh, make no mistake; we have seen it raise its ugly head before. Rumor has it that it was the prime mover behind an almost imperceptible shift from a nation of "proper" avian-awed "birdwatchers" to a cadre of organized and sometimes fiercely competitive "birders." It's ghostly presence hasn't yet appeared on the Centers for Disease Control radar screen, but this apparently untreatable contagion is responsible for countless days of missed work and a puzzlingly dazed, far away look on the faces of some of the previously most productive men and women in America's workforce. Lifetime relationship commitments are sometimes quickly, and often summarily, squeezed into their own boxes of convenience and forgetfulness, habitually resulting in an increased case workload for the legal profession and the court system. Vacations and business trips take on an often bizarre new life of their own as expected

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destinations mysteriously morph into places like a field outside Minot, North Dakota, or a fog-enshrouded ferry trip across the Bay of Fundy from Maine to Nova Scotia on something called the *Bluenose*, or even a remote, uninhabited island off Alaska named Attu, closer to Siberia than North America. Of course there are the still acceptable "normal" standbys like California, Florida, and Texas (although "Southern" in each case is the preferable prefix, to be sure).

Now, this disorder still doesn't have an official scientific name, but in case you're curious enough to investigate further and do a bit of reading, the telltale symptoms are all clearly enumerated, sometimes painfully so, in Mark Obmascik's *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*. In graphically fascinating detail, we see three otherwise mature, by and large semi-functional adults carried along by a force apparently beyond their control, habitually spending prodigious amounts of time, money and energy in the indulgence of a dependency so addictive it would eminently qualify for any 12 Step Recovery program and birth a new organization that could be christened Birders Anonymous.

While the story of these very different individuals in pursuit of a North America record Big Year in 1998 (i.e. seeing as many species of birds as possible within the prescribed area during one calendar year) is told with an uncommon measure of insight (Mr. Obmascik too is a card-carrying member of the "afflicted"), it also serves up a level of compassion and delicacy, blended with bluntness and realism, that makes for exceptionally informative and entertaining reading. The author has definitely done his homework

in researching the places, incidents, and most importantly the birds and birders that give the reader an uncanny and rare insight into the psyche of "conquer and compulsion" that drives otherwise normal and upstanding citizens of society to participate in the bird world's listing equivalent of the X-Games. (Maybe ESPN 2 would be interested.) In the process, the three hopelessly obsessed subjects of this tale each see over 700 different species in North America, crisscrossing the continent while listing more species in 365 days than the vast majority of people can hope to identify in a lifetime of more measured and sane birding.

Think you're immune to the impulsive ravages of such an unfettered listing mania? Don't be too smugly sure. If circumstances were just right...if resources were not an obstacle...if the pursuit of a day could be turned into the fantasy of a year, maybe every birder has the potential to helplessly lose themselves in a reoccurring whirlpool of chase, confirm, conquer, and catalog. Perhaps, just perhaps, this chronicle of a trio of the helplessly and hopelessly driven in 1998 has the undeniable seed of what lies in the heart and mind of each person that ventures to focus, look carefully, and say again for an audience real or imagined, "I see the bird."

Editors Note: Harry Krueger, a birder from Boise, is doing an Idaho Big Year for 2004. As of April 26 he has 206 species on his list. In a visit to Kootenai County in March he added 3 birds to our Kootenai County list: Glaucous Gull, Vesper Sparrow and Northern Rough-winged Swallow. See our website to read about his "Idaho Big Year".

PEREGRINE FALCON

Continued from Page 1

Not all would agree that the Peregrine falcon is the raptor of choice to be designated as our state raptor. In fact, when I first mentioned it to Janet Callen, her first words were: "It should have been the Red-tailed Hawk." Others would likely have their own preference, but on a positive note, this added status should only serve to further enhance the status and recovery of the Peregrine Falcon, and serve as a reminder of what can be done to save our endangered species.

On another note, I have been following the efforts of many of you and other groups around the state to develop a state birding trail. I think it is an exciting project and it is my intention, if I am in the House next term, to introduce a resolution making it the official state birding trail. This would gain publicity and include the trail in state tourist publications. What a great way to promote birding, rural economic development and habitat preservation.

NEW BIRD CONSERVATION ALLIANCE LAUNCHED

Taken From The BirdWire News Bulletin April 20, 2004

American Bird Conservancy announces the launch of the Bird Conservation Alliance, a new venture to champion bird conservation issues in the Americas. The Alliance is a network of organizations that focuses on bird conservation, study, education, observation and advocacy, representing millions of birdwatchers and concerned citizens united for the conservation of birds.

Despite the growth of interest in birds and bird conservation,

more U.S. bird species are in decline today than at any time in history. Outside the United States, more than 300 bird species in the Americas are listed as threatened with extinction, and breeding and non-breeding habitat for many migratory birds is in severe decline. There exists a tremendous opportunity to substantially increase coordination among the many diverse groups concerned with the conservation of wild birds to help reverse this disturbing trend.

Communication and dissemination of information are key elements of the Alliance. Using a broad range of tools, both traditional and internet-based, the Alliance will provide both a forum to help members collaborate better, and the means for them to act. Through representation of the Alliance in Washington, D.C. and by means of opt-in sign-on letters, potentially hundreds of organizations will be able to speak with a single voice, dramatically increasing their capacity to be heard by regulators and the public.

Rather than being the mouthpiece of a single organization, the Bird Conservation Alliance enables all its members to bring ideas and issues to the table. From regional concerns such as mountaintop mining, to national issues such as federal funding for bird conservation and defending America's wildlife protection laws from attack, to international issues such as preventing seabird bycatch from longlining, the scope of the Alliance will be as broad as its range of member groups.

To find out more about the Alliance visit:

www.birdconservationalliance.org.

BROWN BAG BIRDING

APRIL 20

Lynn Sheridan

On my way to the east entrance of Tubbs hill I stopped to look at McKuen Field. A Canada Goose pair was still nesting in one box (1st year I've seen). I saw a Osprey come with a fish for its nesting mate who was hidden from view.

Roland was my only participant. We walked the lower path, then up over the middle of the hill, then down a steep area to the swinging bridge. Bright yellow Arrowleaf Balsam and lacy white Serviceberry blooms were the most obvious flowers. But a few days ago we had joined the Native Plant Society on a walk, and had identified over 30 flowers and another 10 in leafy stage.

Birds seen and heard today were: Northern Flicker, Pygmy Nuthatch, American Robin, Common Raven, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco and Black-capped Chickadee.

Thanks Roland. It was a lovely walk.

=====

KICKING UP

I don't know what bugs

My feet kick up

As I cross the meadow.

But Frantic as a pup

A swallow follows

At my diligent heels

And eagerly accepts

My kicked-up meals.

Jane Yolem

WENAS CAMPOUT May 28-31, 2004



Fuertes' Bird Collection

This is such a special Audubon outing. And unique! There's no other place where Auduboners gather to camp out and do their birdwatching, botanizing, bugwatching and explorations of the countryside for three days!

For over 30 years Auduboners have gathered in the Wenas Creek Campground officially named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary by Boise Cascade, who own this open pine forest site SW of Ellensburg. This is a FREE "primitive" campground with portable toilets trucked in (paid for by our donations on site), and no other amenities to speak of. BUT the birding is exceptional and the wildflowers are exceptional! And, so is the company of about 200 Auduboners, including lots of families with kids and geezerly birders who've been making this breeding-bird-season trek for over 30 years!

The campground is at about 2,500' elevation, we bring our own water for cooking & drinking (the creek is beautiful and bountiful but not potable). There are organized field trips, natural history workshops, some of the state's top birders, WNPS botanists, and old-fashioned

campfires in the evening with singing, story telling and recapping the sightings of the day.

For details visit the Wenas Website, <http://www.nwlink.com/~cyrus/wenas.html>. There's a bird checklist, directions to the campground, and more. Bring friends, family, and join us at Wenas in 2004! See you there! Helen Engle.

HEYBURN STATE PARK MARCH 27

Lisa Hardy

Snow was falling on Fourth of July Pass as I drove to the meeting place for our Saturday trip. We set out to the south anyway. The weather was quite changeable during the day, alternating between mild sunshine and pelting sleet or rain. We used the trip to scout for a write-up for the Idaho Birding Trail.

We started birding on Conkling Park Road. A wet pasture concealed a Wilson's Snipe (formerly Common Snipe). As we studied the snipe's backside, we could hear a Western Meadowlark somewhere in the vicinity.

Bird life was sparse on the lake as viewed from the Conklin Marina, but we located 3 grebe species - Western, Red-necked and Horned.

At Heyburn State Park, we walked out on the bike trail to the Chatcolet Bridge, which was still being worked on. We set up our scopes at the west end of the bridge and checked out several rafts of American Coot. To the north, several pair of Wood Duck cruised the shallows. We watched in dismay as a blue bass boat passed under the bridge, and then aimed for a coot raft at top speed, scattering the birds.

Tundra Swan foraged in the marsh at the southwest end of Chatcolet Lake, along with Mallard, American Wigeon and Northern Pintail. We drove to the other end of the park, Benawah Lake, and found more of the same species, but in larger numbers. We found the only scaup of the day, along with a single Canvasback, just west of Rocky Point. We wound up our visit with a quick hike around Plummer Creek, and a visit with the park staff at headquarters. Oddly missing for the day were Green-winged Teal, Redheads and Ring-necked Ducks.

On our return home, we stopped at the elk farm across from the Fighting Creek landfill for a quick check of the gulls congregated in the pasture. Later, we learned that Matthew Moskwik had located several Rusty Blackbirds at this spot earlier in the afternoon. Rusty Blackbirds are quite rare in Idaho, and this was our biggest "almost highlight"!

Trip participants: Kris Buchler, Roland Craft, Lisa Hardy.
Complete trip list (Kootenai & Benawah Counties):

FISHTRAP RECREATION AREA APRIL 25, 2004

Janet Callen

Some eyes were on the skies and some were on the ground as Audubon members joined the Calypso Chapter of the Native Plant Society for a nature walk to Hog Lake and Fishtrap Lake.

Wildflowers such as Lupine, Arrowleaf Balsamroot, Camas and Serviceberry were in bloom. At Hog Lake a waterfall cascaded down basalt cliffs into the lake below.

We looked down on Cliff Swallow, Caspian Tern, Northern Shoveler, Double-crested Cormorant and American

Wigeon. Canada Geese were guiding their young across the water. At Fishtrap Lake we were treated to a pair of Northern Harriers in the process of nest building.

Audubon and Calypso members who enjoyed the beautiful sunny day and pleasant hike were Janet Benoit, Phil Hruskocy, Karen and Marv Williams, Bob Lee, Nancy Mertz, Roland Craft, Gloria Wurm and Janet Callen.

Birds seen were: Western Meadowlark, Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture, Pygmy Nuthatch, Northern Flicker, Caspian Tern, Osprey, Red-winged Blackbird, Gull Sp., Brewer's Blackbird, Great Blue Heron, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk, House Wren, Killdeer, Canyon Wren, Black-billed Magpie, Western Bluebird, Northern Harrier, Ruddy Duck, Vesper Sparrow, Redhead, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Shoveler, Hairy Woodpecker, American Wigeon, American Robin, American Coot, Cliff Swallow, Canada Goose, Violet-green Swallow and Double-crested Cormorant

Fishtrap Recreation area is 30 miles southwest of Spokane. The freeway exit is clearly marked.

CALLIGRAPHY

Duck

Duck

Duck

Duck

Four mallard on a pond

Write with the subtle

Tracings of their

backwash

A salutation to spring

Jane Yolem

OBSERVATION POST



Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Photograph by James Prudente
on April 25, 2004 along River
Road, west of the Cataldo
Mission.

2004 Kootenai County Big Year.
The chapter website list will be
updated weekly with the new birds
being seen. Our total to date is 134 as
of April 29.

Western Grebe, Conklin Park, March 27
 (Chapter field trip)

Turkey Vulture, Prairie Ave. Rathdrum
 Prairie, March 26 (Tom Davenport)

Greater White-fronted Goose, April 8,
 Thompson Lake (Lisa Hardy, Ellen
 Scriven)

Blue-winged Teal, River Road west of
 the Cataldo Mission, April 25 (James
 Prudente)

Cinnamon Teal, Hardy Loop Road
 Cataldo area, April 1 (Lisa Hardy)

Northern Shoveler, Mica Bay, CDA
 Lake, March 24 (Mica Bay Survey)

Ruddy Duck, River Road west of
 Cataldo Mission, April 5 (Lisa Hardy)

Osprey, Higgins Point, Coeur d' Alene
 Lake (Bob Wood)

Sandhill Crane, 4 Flying over Killarny
 Lake Farm, April 9 (Ellen Scriven)

Red-naped Sapsucker, Killarney Farm,
 April 1 (Lisa Hardy)

Brown Creeper, Mica Bay Survey, April
 14 (spotted by Bill Gunlach)

Calliope Hummingbird, Mica Flats just
 south of CDA, April 8 (Jean Retzler)

Rufous Hummingbird, Hayden Lake
 April 12 (Tom Davenport)

House Wren, Armstrong Hill, April 22
 (Kris Buchler)

Cassin's Vireo, Beauty Creek Road,
 April 27 (Kris Buchler)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Rimrock Road
 area April 8 (Kathryn Henderson)

Western Bluebird, Twin Lakes, March
 10 (Cindi Langlitz)

Mountain Bluebird, Twin Lakes, March
 21 (Cindi Langlitz)

Orange-crowned Warbler, Ocean Ave.
 CDA, April 16 (Janet Callen)

Nashville Warbler, Armstrong Hill, CDA,
 April 25 (Kris Buchler)

Yellow Warbler, Mica Flats, April 24
 (Jean Retzler)

Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tubbs Hill
 April 17 (Kris Buchler on Native Plant
 Society Field Trip)

Townsend's Warbler, Beauty Creek
 Road, April 27 (Kris Buchler)

Chipping Sparrow, Mica Bay, CDA
 Lake, April 26 (Mica Bay Survey)

Savannah Sparrow, just east of the
 CDA Airport, April 9, (Cindi Langlitz)

Fox Sparrow, Ridge between Twin
 Lakes and Spirit Lake, April 25 (Cindi
 Langlitz)

White-crowned Sparrow, Ocean Ave.
 Coeur d'Alene, April 13 (Janet Callen)

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Near
 Cataldo, April 1 (Lisa Hardy)

Rusty Blackbird, Fighting Creek Landfill
 - across the highway from it, March 27
 (Matthew Moskwik)

Brewer's Blackbird, Conkling Park,
 March 27 (Audubon Chapter Field Trip)

Red Crossbill, Farragut State Park,
 March 28 (Michael Woodruff)

Birds observed by Steve Lindsay that
we have not found yet.

Virginia Rail, Thompson Lake, March 28
Marsh Wren, Thompson Lake, March 28

Other Interesting Sightings

Osprey 3 pr nesting (2 at their locations
 from last year and 1 pr on the platform
 the Idaho Fish and Game gave us and
 KEC put up for us last year) Mica Bay,
 Coeur d'Alene Lake, April 14 (Mica Bay
 Survey)

Northern Harrier, 1 pr. Mica Bay, Coeur
 d'Alene Lake April 14 (Mica Bay Survey)

Bluebirds 2 pr Mountain and 7 pr.
 Western on the Hoo Doo Valley (Gertie
 Hanson) Bluebird trail, April 10 (Chapter
 Field Trip)