



The Fish Hawk Herald  
Vol. 3 #5

November 1993

Calendar: November Meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Chapter will be at the Iron Horse in Coeur d'Alene, 7 P.M. November 16.

The Conservation Committee will meet at 5:30 P.M. on November 16 at the Iron Horse.

Guest speaker for November meeting will be Bryan Rowder of Farragut State Park. He will have a slide presentation of the 3 Ice Ages and the slides will include views the geology of eastern Washington, north Idaho and western Montana.

Christmas Bird Count: We urge anyone interested to come for part of a day or all day on Sat. Dec 18. The count circle is divided into 4 areas. You can sign up at the meeting or call the leader you wish to go with as to time and place to meet. Leaders are: Gertie Hanson, 667-9389, Sue Weller, 682-3413, Dan Svingen, 245-2282, Shirley Sturts, 664-5318. Call Shirley or Sue for more information as to what areas the leaders cover.

Indian Mountain Count (near Harrison)  
Date has not been not set yet. It is usually after Christmas. If interested call Shirley and she can let you know time and date.

#### Field Trips:

Nov. 21 Sunday: This could be a 1/2 day or a full day depending on what birds are in the area. For time and meeting place call Shirley 664-5318.

Dec. 5 and 12: Local scouting trips for the Christmas Bird count. Call Shirley 664-5318 for time and meeting place.

Rare Bird alert: 1-208-882-6195. It is run by the Palouse Audubon Society.

#### Sept. and Oct. Rare Birds:

Bonaparte's Gull - St. Maries Sewage Ponds, Shirley Sturts and Walt Draeger, 10/17/93. Earl Chapin saw a flock of about 65 on the Sandpoint City Beach.

Palm Warber - Hayden Lake, John Gatchet 9/17/93 and Dan Svingen 9/12/93 near Heyburn State Park.

White-Throated Sparrow - Garwood East, Cathy Wilson, 9/25/93. Also, Dan Svingen, Sept in the St. Maries Area.



# Biological Diversity: Can We Live Without It?

**"To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering."—Aldo Leopold**

We share the Earth with an incredible variety of living organisms. Scientists estimate that 5 to 50 million species—animals, plants, and microorganisms—exist on Earth. Of these, only 1.4 million have been discovered and named.

This wealth of species and the variety of ecosystems they make up provide the life-support system for our own species. Yet we are in the midst of destroying large parts of that system.

A burgeoning human population—expected to reach 10 billion by 2050—is eliminating or altering natural habitats all over the globe, with devastating consequences to species diversity. We risk losing one-quarter of the world's species in the next 20 to 30 years. Many species not on the verge of extinction are being diminished in numbers. As subspecies and diverse forms are wiped out, species are also losing internal genetic variability, which threatens their adaptability and ultimate survival.

## **Why Preserve Species Diversity?**

Some people argue that extinction is a natural process, that species have always come and gone. But today species are vanishing from the Earth at a rate of one a day, surpassing even the mass extinctions 65 million years ago when the dinosaurs perished. And there is a major difference: today's extinctions are being caused by humans. Do we have the right to destroy a quarter or more of the Earth's species and consequently shift the course of evolution forever? And what price will we pay?

## **WHAT IS BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY?**

Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the variety and variability of living organisms—all species of plants, animals, and microorganisms and the ecosystems they comprise. Biodiversity is generally described in three ways:

- Diversity of species: the different types of living organisms.
- Diversity of ecosystems: the variety of ecosystems as well as the variety of ecological processes and interrelationships within each type of system.
- Diversity within species: the variety of genetic information held in the genes of individuals of a species.

## **The Cost of Species Loss**

Our lives depend in myriad ways on the Earth's great diversity of species, subspecies, and ecosystems. Collapsing biological diversity threatens our food supplies, medicinal advances, the development of new industrial products, and many other practical needs. Even greater is the price of losing all the indirect values of rich, diverse ecosystems—including water and soil protection, climate regulation, pest control, as well as such intangibles as recreational, scientific, and spiritual values.

### **Agriculture**

The world's more than 5 billion people are precariously dependent on a handful of crop plants: Fewer than 20 plant species produce 90 percent of the world's food. We have made great advances in breeding crops for greater productivity and for resistance to diseases, pests, and drought. It couldn't have been done without the genetic traits of

wild relatives of crop plants. For example, after a fungus wiped out 15 percent of the U.S. corn crop in 1970, biologists bred resistant hybrids from a species of Mexican wild corn.

Without infusions of genetic material from fast-vanishing wild crop species and strains, we won't be able to keep ahead of rapidly evolving pests or adapt crops to changing environmental conditions, such as the temperature and rainfall shifts likely to come with global warming.

**Medicines**

Half of all prescriptions written in the United States contain a drug of natural origin. Some of the most promising treatments for cancer come from vanishing species. Two examples are the Pacific yew of the endangered ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest and a soft coral (called Hana's deadman seaweed) found only in a few places on Hawaii's reefs. Medical researchers have discovered that certain skin compounds in frogs are potent antibiotics, but with amphibians declining planetwide, we may lose a whole new generation of antibacterial products.

**Industrial materials**

Wild plants and animals supply us with oils, gums, resins, construction materials, and other raw materials. As our ever more sophisticated technology allows us to develop new products, we are losing the raw materials from which to make them.

**Fisheries**

Habitat loss and overfishing are imperiling numerous fish species that are a crucial food source and the mainstay of many regional economies. The U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that the destruction of U.S. coastal estuaries cost the nation more than \$200 million a year in revenues lost from commercial and sport fisheries. In the U.S. Northwest, commercial and sport fisheries for salmon, steelhead, and trout provide 60,000 jobs and contribute \$1 billion in personal income to the region. Each "run" or type of salmon is adapted to its

**WHY PROTECT SUBSPECIES?**

Within species there is a great deal of genetic variability. Different varieties, races, and geographically distinct populations have genes for somewhat different traits. Genetic diversity maximizes the survival of the species by allowing it to adapt to environmental changes.

unique river habitat and holds the secrets to its remarkable ability to journey thousands of miles upstream to spawn in the place where it was born. Already, more than 100 native runs of salmon and steelhead have been lost, and 200 more are at risk.

**Water cycling and purification**

Rich, diverse ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, protect watersheds, filter out pollutants, prevent erosion, and avert floods by absorbing stormwater. For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimated that preserving a wetland near Boston, MA, saved \$17 million a year in flood control.

**Natural environmental controls**

Diverse ecosystems provide homes for species that control pests, pollinate crops, and disperse seeds. Widespread destruction and alteration of habitat upsets the delicate natural balance of ecosystems and allows some species to expand their populations to a point where they become nuisances.

**Ecological warning signs**

Like the canary in a coal mine, species can indicate when the entire ecosystem is in trouble. In the Everglades, for example, some of the last few Florida panthers are succumbing to mercury poisoning—sounding a warning about toxics permeating the Everglades aquatic ecosystem. "We probably would have known nothing about the dangers until people showed up ill in the hospital," wrote a Florida newspaper.

**For more information contact:**

**Endangered Species Campaign, National Audubon Society, 666 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, D.C. 20003**

FIELDTRIP

AUG. 31, 1993 SANDPOINT AND NORTH

Gertie Hanson, Nola Mileck, Judy Waring and Shirley Sturtz headed north at 6:30 AM. Our goal was to find migrating shorebirds and unusual gulls that frequent the City Beach at Sandpoint and at the McArthur Wildlife Management area. Another goal was to find the Boreal Chickadee which would be new to all of us. The range of the Boreal Chickadee includes Alaska and stretches across Canada from Coast to Coast. A few dip down into the United State and we have a resident population in the Selkirk Mountains near the Canadian boarder.

Our first birds of the day were about 20 Ring-billed Gulls in the parking lots of Ward's. On the way to Sandpoint we counted several Mourning Doves on the utility wires.

In Sandpoint we met Carole Vande Vorde and Winifred Hapher well known Canyon Birders from the Lewiston area and Earl Chapin from Sandpoint who offered to take us to his birding hot spots. Our first stop was the City beach where the majority of the birds were Ring-Billed Gulls but among them we found many California and Herring Gulls. The real treat at the beach were 3 Bonaparte's Gulls, 1 Franklin's Gull, at least 2 sanderlings and 1 Semi-Palmated Sandpiper. ( 2 of these were life listers for Shirley) More common birds included 2 Common Mergansers, 14+ Common Loons, 14+ Killdeer, 6 Yellow-Rumped Warblers, Chickadee sp. and several Crows and Blackbirds.

Our next stop was the McArthur Wildlife Management area north of Sandpoint. Here we added a Bald Eagle, Osprey, 12+ Least Sandpipers, 6 Pectoral Sandpipers, 2 Solitary Sandpipers, 2 Belted Kingfishers, 3 Eastern Kingbirds, 2 Yellowthroats, several Wood Ducks and Mallards and at least 1 Ring-necked Duck. We could probably have found more duck species but all our efforts went toward identifying the shorebirds which unfortunately kept their distance from us making identification very challenging.

In the Bonners Ferry area we found several House Sparrows, 2 Cedar Waxwing, 12 Turkey Vultures (circling over a field), 20 Ravens, 1 Mourning Dove, 1 + Violet-Green Swallow, 10+ Cliff Swallows

20+ Barn

Swallows, 2+ Northern Rough-winged Swallow, 1 Northern Harrier, 1 Red-Tailed Hawk, and large flocks of Blackbirds probably Brewer's but they could have been mixed with Red-winged and Starlings

North of Bonners Ferry we crossed the Kootenai River at Copland and headed up the Smith Creek Road to look for the elusive Boreal Chickadee. On our way up the road we stopped several times to check out the bird population. We found 1 Pileated Woodpecker, 6 Ravens, 2 Western Wood-Pewee, 1 Yellow Rumped Warbler, 1 Orange-Crowned Warbler, 1 Nashville Warbler, 2 Clark's Nutcrackers, 4 American Robins, 1 Cedar Waxwing and 4 Gray Jays. We found a couple of flocks of Chickadees but our quest was not totally successful. The light was bad and the birds remained high up as they flitted among the trees giving us only brief glimpses. We saw at least 1 Black-Capped Chickadee and 1 Chestnut-backed Chickadee but only Carole and Earl could add the Boreal Chickadee to their list as they were able to get a good view of one or two of the birds as they flitted through the trees

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limbs.

Our mammal list included 3 Mule Deer (a male with antlers and 2 doe), a snowshoe rabbit and coyotes yelping in the distance.

We left Carole, Winifred and Earl chasing down a woodchuck while we headed back to Bonners Ferry in quest of a cinnamon roll and Coffee that the quick eyes of Nola, Bertie and Judy had spotted on the drive up. We added this bakery to our list of must stops on our next birding trip to Bonners Ferry.

SOME SUMMER BIRD SIGHTINGS

Common Loon: 6/25/93 1 calling Chabcolet Lake (Dan and Tia Svingen)

7/2/93 1 pr McArthur Lake WMA (Pat Cole)  
no sign of nesting

Western Grebes: July at least 15 + 5 pairs had built flatland nests st Denton Slew near Hope (Pat Cole)

Great Egret: 7/22/93 1 Thompson lake (John W. Nigh)

7/14/93 1 St. Joe River ( Canyon Birders )

Black-Crowned Night-Heron: 7/28/93 Thompson Lake (John W. Nigh)

American Bittern: 1+ seen off and on all summer in the St. Maries area (Dan Svingen)

White Pelicans: 7/29/93 returned to McArthur Lake and remained into August. Last year a similar group of 18 arrived on 7/22/92 and left on 8/14/92. (Pat Cole)

Harlequin Duck: 6/20/93 adult male Avery (Dan Svingen)

Northern Shoveler: female with brood St. Maries area (Dan Svingen)

Bufflehead: a female successfully fledged 9 young

Osprey: 5 adults and 90 nestlings were banded on CDIA Lake and the St. Joe River and 38 nestlings were banded on Sand Creek

River and Lake (Don Johnson)

Red-Tailed Hawk: a nest with 2 young was reported on Rathbun Prairie (Jane Berchtold)

Sora Rail: 1 spent the summer in the meadows on Blackwell Hill (Gertie Hanson)

Blue Grouse: 1 female

Bonaparte's Gull: 1 imm. 7/18/93 St. Maries Sewage Lagoon (Dan and Tia Svingen)

Svingen)

Caspian Terns: 6/17/93 6 Wolf Lodge Bay, CDA Lake (Shirley Sturts and Esther Stewart)  
7/19/93 1 Mica Bay, CDA Lake (Shirley Sturts and Esther Stewart)  
7/18/93 1 Lake Chatoclet (Dan Svingen)

Merlin: 6/19/93 1 adult male Bonners Ferry (side Dan Svingen)  
6/25/93 1 adult Bonners Ferry (Dan Svingen)

Common Nighthawk: 6/6/93 1st seen on Blackwell Hill (Gertie Hanson) other sightings on Thomas Lake, Ferner lake at at Potlatch (John Neigh, Shirley Sturts and Zoltan Porgs)

Hairy Woodpecker: 6/27/93 1 pr at a nest hole, young could be heard inside just south of Bullion Pass on the Old Pacific Road between Taft, Montana and Avery. (Shirley & Vail Sturts, Judy and Phil Waring)

Eastern Kingbird: 6/29/93 1 adult feeding 2 fledged young (Shirley Sturts and Carole Vanda Verde)

Clarke's Nutcracker: 2 7/9/93 near the top of Stevens Peak (Shirley, Keith and Carrie Sturts)

Hermit Thrush: 1 7/9/93 near the top of Stevens Peak (Shirley, Keith and Carrie Sturts)

Pine Grosbeak: 1 on the Avery Breeding bird survey  
7/9/93 1 near Stevens Peak (Shirley Sturts)

Nashville Warbler: one around all summer Blackwell Hill (Gertie Hanson) 1 also seen on 7/25/93 at Mica Bay, CDA Lake (Shirley Sturts and Esther Stewart)

American Redstart: 7/19/93 and 7/25 Mica Bay, CDA Lake (Shirley Sturts, Dan Svingen and Esther Stewart)

COMING FIELD TRIPS

It is important to register with the field trip leader so that if plans change you can be informed. I am looking for people who would like to lead a field trip. If you have an interesting place you want to bird and want company you can lead a trip. Don't feel you need to know every bird. The group can figure them out together.

SEPT. 12 - SUNDAY Rochat Peak Route

Leaving at 7 AM. Meet at the Cove Bowl parking lot. Bring a lunch, good walking shoes and dress of the weather. We will exit I-90 at the Cataldo and travel toward Dudley. We will drive up the Latour Creek Road and then up the Rochat Divide Road to

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the Sheep Springs Trailhead. This is about 17 miles of good road. From here we plan to do some hiking, possibly to Coon Creek Lake. I would encourage those that may not wish to hike to come along and enjoy mountain scenery and bird along the road as the scenery up there is well worth the drive. Please call and register with Shirley Starts 664-5318 if plans change I can then call you.

OCT. 3 - SUNDAY - SANDPOINT - CLARKFORK  
 Meet at Wards Parking lot at 7 AM. We will travel to Sandpoint and if possible meet with Carl Chapin, a well known birder from Sandpoint who knows where the interesting birds can be found. Bring a lunch but I hope to be back in Coeur d'Alene by 2 or 3 pm. We will be looking for late migrating shorebirds and wintering gulls along with an array of waterfowl. Please register in case plans change 664-5318.

OCT. 17 - SUNDAY - HEYBURN STATE PARK  
 Leaving time 8 AM from Wards Parking Lot. We will check out the birds along the lake and possibly hike some easy trails depending on the wishes of the group. Bring a lunch and plan to come back early afternoon. Please Call Shirley Starts and Register if plans could change. 664-5318