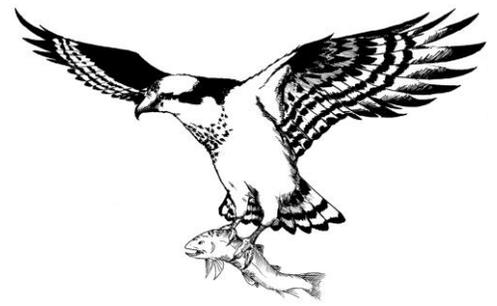


THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of Audubon

NOVEMBER 2006

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 3

BOARD MEETING

DATE: November 20, Monday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mt. West Bank
125 Ironwood Dr.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: November 20, Monday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: First Presbyterian
Church, 521 E. Lakeside, Coeur
d'Alene
SPEAKER: Scott Robinson, BLM
Wildlife Biologist.
PROGRAM: "The Bald Eagle,
Summer Nesters in North Idaho"

THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DAY COUNT

See page 6 for details



Photograph by
Wayne Tree

THE BALD EAGLE

OUR NATIONAL SYMBOL

(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Shirley Sturts

NAME ORIGIN

Haliaeetus: Greek for "sea eagle" as used by Aristotle, formed from *halos*, "salt," or "the (salt) sea," and *aetos*, "eagle."

leucocephalus: Greek for "white-headed" and formed from *leukos*, "white," *kephale*, "head," a reference to its field mark

"Bald": here used in its less common meaning of "streaked" or "spotted with white."

It has become a winter tradition for Bald Eagle fans to visit Wolf Lodge Bay over the Christmas season. They come to see the large numbers of eagles that arrive mid-November to eat the dead and dying spawning kokanee salmon.

The lesser known summer breeding population of the Bald Eagles will be the topic of our November program. This population has been increasing in North Idaho over the past 28 years. Our speaker, Scott Robinson, a biologist with the BLM, will give an in-depth view of the surveys, studies and conservation measures taken to protect this popular and symbolic bird.

When I started birding in the 1960s, Bald Eagles were rare in North Idaho. In May of 1978, Dean Carrier, birder and United States Forest Service biologist, called me with a report of a nest that was found on Pend Oreille Lake that contained 3 young. In the years following 1978, more and more nests were being reported in both Bonner and Boundary Counties. Then in the spring of 1993 Susan Weller called me, full of excitement, about a nest near Lane, the first Kootenai County nest that I had heard of. However, I learned from Scott that Fish and Game reported a nest on Upper Twin Lakes at least 2 years before the Lane nest was found. Today there are several nests being monitored each summer by volunteers.

The Bald Eagle was officially declared the National Emblem of the United States by the Second Continental Congress in 1782. Ben Franklin wanted the Wild Turkey to be the national bird because he thought the eagle was of bad moral character. The Bald Eagle, because of its fierce demeanor, won the hearts of the Congress. In reality, it is a somewhat timid fish and carrion-feeder. Today, this noble bird is a living symbol of our country's spirit, strength and freedom. Its numbers declined due to pollution and loss of habitat as our country advanced technologically and increased in population. Also, many were shot. Between 1917 and 1952 an estimated 100,000 Bald Eagles were killed when a bounty was placed on their heads in Alaska. Fishermen believed that eagles competed with them for salmon, but this was found to be largely false.

In 1940, Congress passed the National Bald Eagle Act to ensure the species survival. The act prohibits any killing of the birds and protects their habitat. The Bald Eagle is still with us, thanks to the effort of people with insight, courage and a willingness to work toward conservation efforts necessary for its continued survival.

This Newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

BIRD TRACKS



AUDUBON MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



BLUEBIRD TRAIL RESULTS 2000-2006

The Bluebird Committee - Shirley Sturts, Theresa Potts, and Roland Craft - want to thank all those who helped with our trail monitoring this field season.

Our Audubon Chapter monitors 3 bluebird trails and reports the results to "The Bird House Network" (TBN), a project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. The 2006 field season marked the 10th season of data collection for the TBN. We have been reporting our data to TBN for 7 years.

Our largest trail has 51 nest boxes spaced out along the Kelso Lake Road in the Hoo Doo Valley north of Athol. This past season we made 13 visits to the trail between April 22 and August 17. On each visit, we check every box, recording the number of eggs and nestlings present. By visiting the nests about 10 days apart, we can usually determine the approximate date of the first egg, first hatch date, and the date fledged. We record this information on our field sheets and then report the nesting success of each box on the TBN website: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/>.

The only time we need to be careful when opening a nest box is about 6 days before the expected fledge date. The nestlings become very active at this time and may jump out of the box before they are ready to fly. Once they have tasted the freedom of the outside world, they usually will not stay in the box, no matter how many times we put them back in.

If we are lucky, we may get to watch some young birds in the process of fledging. On one visit, Pat Bearman was helping me check boxes. We had just driven up opposite one of the boxes and Pat had opened the passenger door when we saw a Western Bluebird fledgling fly out of the box toward the back of the car. In the next instant, it flew again, this time landing on top of the passenger door an arm's length from Pat. The little bird looked at Pat and Pat looked at it. They communicated this way for 3-4 minutes. Slowly moving her hand under the bird, it clutched her finger with one foot before flying off to a nearby pine tree.

South of Coeur d'Alene, we have 12 boxes along Highway 95 on Mica Flats and another 7 boxes located along Putnam Road, just as you turn off of Highway 95 toward Mica Bay. Eleven visits were made to these two trails between April 20th and August 3rd.

Most of our boxes are used by Tree Swallows with Western Bluebirds in second place. The Hoo Doo trail has 1-3 boxes used by Mountain Bluebirds each year. Early in the season we have had chickadees use a couple of the boxes on the Hoo Doo Trail. Where bushes are nearby, House Wrens fill the box to the top with sticks. Their nest is almost impossible to see into and therefore eggs and nestlings are often not recorded. Box number 1 on the Hoo Doo Trail has had a resident Flying Squirrel for the last 3 summers. We have not made any attempt to evict her. However, we do evict the yellow jackets that like to build their combs (or nests) in the back of the boxes near the roof. Roland is especially good at evicting these guys without getting stung.

Besides reporting to TBN, we belong to "Mountain Bluebird Trails" based out of Great Falls, Montana. Mountain Bluebird Trails was organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes, specifically to foster the preservation of bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds through education, nest box programs and research. We report the total number of boxes we have, boxes used and the number of Western and Mountain Bluebirds that fledged on our trails.

Their 2005 Fledging report, rather amazing, is as follows: Montana has 336 bluebird trails, containing 1 to 220 boxes; Idaho has 16 trails reporting, containing 3 to 350 boxes (Al Larson's trail, near Boise, has been

Continued on page 3

monitoring his 350 boxes for many years and he is known as "Mr. Bluebird" by his friends); Other states (Washington, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, plus 2 provinces; British Columbia and Alberta) have 15 trails containing 2-164 boxes. Altogether they total 7324 boxes of which 3,944 were used by bluebirds. The total of fledged birds reported from all trails was: 14,230 Mountain Bluebirds, 1,418 Western Bluebirds and 63 Eastern Bluebirds.

Getting back to our own trails, the chart below shows our success for the past 7 years. It includes all three trails.

WESTERN BLUEBIRD

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Eggs	76	97	85	123	120	126	132
Nestlings	61	81	61	79	83	104	92
Fledglings	37	54	43	57	61	92	66

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Eggs	10	17	5	5	8	17	10
Nestlings	0	14	4	5	8	14	4
Fledglings	0	7	4	5	4?	8	4

TREE SWALLOW

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Eggs	245	236	153	173	230	271	311
Nestlings	186	165	116	119	172	232	234
Fledglings	140	128	71	93	115	191	199

ADOPT-a-HIGHWAY PROJECT - October 7, 2006 - Judy Waring

Sunny, fall morning, perfect temperature and twelve friends gathering to spruce up two miles of Highway 95. How cool is this? A little over one hour and seventeen bags of trash later - the job was done! The hoped for cash find still has not happened but the groups that clean on each end of our area came up with a few stray dollar bills. Our Sherry and Larry Mundt have generously lent us their "grabbers" for every spring and fall clean-up and it was a pleasure to bring them a handsome cedar bird feeder in gratitude, compliments of the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter. Check May 5, 2007 on your calendar for the next round.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY - October 16 - Lynn Sheridan

- We voted to renew the contract to clean up our stretch of Hwy 95, for 2 more years.
- We agreed to continue to fund the Susan Weller scholarship at NIC for \$500.00.
- A committee is working on the proposal to use all or part of the \$952.00 collaborative funding from National Audubon for directional signs on the Idaho Panhandle Birding Trail sites.
- At the next general meeting, cranberry pickers will bring their baked goods and recipes to share.

REARDAN DEDICATION - October 14, 2006 - Lynn Sheridan

Eula Hickam generously offered to drive Jan Severtson and me to Reardan, WA for the dedication of Audubon Lake in Reardan. There was a good turnout for the roster of speakers, praising the efforts of all who helped bring the project to fruition.

The area was a cattle farm for many years belonging to Susan Eastman's family. The 277 acre site includes a shallow lake, a small island, a stream, and several ponds. Birding records going back to the 1950s include many rare sightings. That day it was mostly dominated by Canada Goose, American Coot, and a lone Tundra Swan on the water.

Reardan is a small town but is large in spirit and generosity. It is wonderful to know that a valuable part of the Palouse will be preserved for all to enjoy. Another grant will be requested for further improvements: trails, blinds, and parking.

Thank you Reardan, and to all the Audubon groups who helped.

CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES - Roland Craft

The Coeur d'Alene Audubon Conservation Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Projects we are working on include participating in the proposed revision of the U.S.F.S. Idaho Panhandle National Forest plan and the travel plan for the U.S.F.S. Coeur d'Alene River District, attending and commenting on Post Falls managed growth plan, participating in the development of the Kootenai County Comprehensive Plan and continuing to help in the EPA process for cleanup of the Coeur d'Alene River Basin.

New members with fresh ideas and solutions to the many problems concerning birds and other wildlife are welcome to join us. Contact Roland Craft 457-8894 or email rolcra@adelphia.net. Conservation Committee Members: Roland Craft, Mike Mihelich, Ed Buchler, Dick Cripe, and Jerry Hanson.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders in backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from November through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation. Go to <http://www.birdsource.org/> for more information and to find out how to participate.

GREEN TIP

Green tip is a monthly feature in our newsletter. It is designed to give you ideas for taking personal conservation action to improve the environmental health and habitat quality of our yards and neighborhoods. (Members are encouraged to send tips to the editor for inclusion in future.)

RECYCLING BATTERIES - Lisa Hardy

Since 1997, the standard disposable alkaline batteries that are used in flashlights and our chapter field trip radios, for example, have been manufactured with such a small amount of mercury that they can be disposed of in the trash. This is also the case for rechargeable alkaline batteries. Other types, including the majority of rechargeable batteries, or the button batteries used in cameras, should go into a hazardous waste because they contain toxic metals. If sent to a standard landfill, these metals will leach out over time, and potentially contaminate the groundwater.

In Coeur d'Alene, the Ramsey Waste Transfer Station operated by the county accepts all household batteries. They have a separate container designated for batteries. Some retailers accept rechargeable or button batteries for recycle, though apparently a significant amount of these end up in the hazardous waste stream anyway.

Here are two links for more information: <http://ehso.com/ehshome/batteries.php> or

<http://www.grinningplanet.com/2004/12-21/battery-recycling-article.htm>.

And you may want to consider using rechargeable batteries to reduce your consumption of disposables:

<http://www.grinningplanet.com/2004/11-23/rechargeable-batteries-battery-charger-article.htm>.

CRANBERRY TRIP - Roland Craft

The Coeur d'Alene Audubon field trip on October 3rd to harvest cranberries was a great success. Thanks to Dick Cripe for the leadership on this venture. The weather was fine with smooth water both going and coming back. We launched canoes and a kayak from the Killarney Lake boat launch and paddled across the lake, up a narrow channel and then hiked along the lake shore on dry land for about a mile to the cranberry bog. Getting from dry land to the bog required wading through nearly knee-high mud and then the picking commenced.

The cranberry bushes are quite small and most of the berries were near or on the bog. There was a plentiful supply and most everybody limited out on the amount they wanted. Those in attendance were Dick Cripe, Janet Callen and her daughter Leslie Covey, Jan and Herb Severtson, Roland Craft, Judy Waring, Bill Gundlach, George and Helen Neuner and Dawn Hauss and son Dan.



BROWN BAG BIRDING - October 17 - Lynn Sheridan

A lovely day, and nobody to share it with! But, I enjoyed the quiet woods and rustling falling leaves. A few birds were noted by sound and sight: California Quail, Northern Flicker, House Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Ring-billed Gull. A flock of Canada Geese flew overhead.

My compliments to the Tubbs Hill Assoc. for the well kept, clean trails. Only leaf litter was evident.

FIELD TRIP TO WALLACE - October 24 - Lisa Hardy

The Forest Service opened a new trail to the Pulaski Tunnel this summer. South of Wallace, this two-mile trail was the first order of business on our October 24 field trip that combined hiking and local history with an opportunity to observe rare, early bird prints.

Nine Auduboners trekked the superbly-signed trail up a narrow drainage to the unimpressive remains of the Pulaski Tunnel, so-named for the crew leader who led his men to this refuge. In the summer of 1910, drought conditions resulted in fires that burned millions of acres across Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, culminating in the "Big Blowup" of August 20-21. The smoke from these fires cast a pall as far as the New England states. Ed Pulaski brought his men through a roaring, burning landscape to an 80 foot long abandoned adit where 39 of the 45 men survived the conflagration. Meanwhile, half the town of Wallace burned.

The devastation of the 1910 fires resulted in the Forest Service implementing a policy of fire suppression for decades. Ed Pulaski lived to design the "pulaski", a fire-fighting tool that combined an axe for chopping with a hoe for digging that remains the equipment of choice for manual fighting of fires today. Standard-issue pulaskis are bolted to posts along the trail as a tribute to their designer.

We admired the fall color of scattered mountain ash and cottonwoods along the trail, arriving back to the parking lot just as the rain started. After supper in Wallace, we adjourned to the Wallace Carnegie Library, built in 1911. This handsome brick building with cut-glass windows in the front doors was restored in 1999. In his will, Wallace native Robert L. Anderson gave the library its choice of any volumes from his personal collection. Bob's grandfather settled in Wallace in 1887, and Ed Pulaski had asked the grandfather to draw a sketch of a new fire-fighting tool he envisioned; this, of course, was the tool that became known as the pulaski.

Bernie Ludwick, the Wallace librarian, greeted us with coffee and cookies. Bob's niece, Pat Anderson, joined us, bringing along a folio of Wilson prints and other bird volumes. She explained the history of the book collection.

In addition to the Audubon set, the Wallace Library chose sets of Theodore Roosevelt's collected works, Abraham Lincoln's writings (the Nicholay and Hay edited volumes), Rudyard Kipling's works and Edgar Allen Poe's works.

After looking at a number of 20th century field guides to birds, we washed our hands and took the leather-bound Audubon volumes off the shelf one-by-one and leafed through them. This was the purpose of our journey to Wallace. We compared Audubon's style to that of Alexander Wilson, a contemporary. Wilson has more birds named after him, but his style appeared flatter. Audubon's work has a distinct look that was praised at the time for being more life-like, but the poses in which he painted birds appear grotesquely contorted to the modern eye.

It was humbling to hold these rare old works and consider the effort that went into making them. Pat said her uncle had told her that he didn't want the books to be locked up out of sight somewhere after his death. She felt he would have been pleased to know that the books were being browsed by an appreciative group.

We want to thank Pat Anderson for coming up with the wonderful idea of this trip. And thank you to Bernie Ludwick for extending the hospitality of the Wallace Carnegie Library to our group.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

1. **PLEASE REGISTER:** Dates and trips could change - check future newsletters or our website - or call the trip leader ahead of time
2. **COST:** Participants will share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver at a rate of \$0.25/mile, with the trip leader responsible for collection and distribution of the compensation.
3. **RADIOS:** We will ask participants to contribute \$1.00 toward batteries as needed.
4. **UNSCHEDULED TRIPS :** Sign up to be on the group email list for unscheduled trips with Shirley Sturts: s.sturts@verizon.net. Those without email may get on a call list by calling Shirley at 664-5318.

RATHDRUM PRAIRIE SEARCH

DATES: 1st Tuesday each month - **TIME:** Call for time - it will vary.

MEET: 8732 North Meyer Road (One road east of Highway 41 and between Prairie and Hayden Ave.) Home of Stephen Johnson.

LEADER: Stephen Johnson - 765-6516

ACTIVITY: Come help Stephen with his Rathdrum Prairie bird study. He will be reporting from time to time what he finds out on the prairie. He is asking for our help! It should be fun. Please call Stephen ahead of time and let him know if you are coming. He can then let you know if he needs to change the day or time of the trip.

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: November 14

TIME: 8:00 a.m.

MEET: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

LEADERS: Shirley Sturts, 664-5318 - Kris Buchler, 664-4739

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

BROWN BAG BIRDING TRIP

DATE: November 21

TIME: 12:00 noon - 1:00 P.M.

MEET: Fernan Lake Boat Launch (west end)

LEADER: Lynn Sheridan, 765-2603

ACTIVITY: Take an hour out of your busy day to enjoy the out-of-doors. See how many different species of birds one can find in an hour and get to know people that share your interest in nature. Beginner bird watchers are welcome.

PRIEST LAKE

DATE: November 11, Saturday - **TIME:** 8:00 AM

MEET: K-mart parking lot, south end

LEADER: Lisa Hardy, 682-4808 or Roland Craft, 457-8894

ACTIVITY: Good area for waterfowl, gulls. Bring lunch and water or we can eat lunch in a restaurant if everyone wants to relax and warm up.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Three Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are conducted in the Coeur d'Alene area each winter, part of a larger Audubon program extending across the Western Hemisphere. No matter what your skill level, beginner or expert, you can be a part of this century-old tradition. Join an Audubon team for the day or half of the day, or count birds at your feeder if you live within one of the count circles.

For more information about the CBC, go to www.audubon.org and click on "Science". For specific information about our local CBCs, or to sign up, contact Shirley Sturts - 664-5318 or email:

s.sturts@verizon.net

Cost: \$5.00 per CBC plus gas money for the driver

Coeur d'Alene CBC: Thursday, December 14, 2006 (firm date)

Indian Mountain CBC: Sunday, December 30, 2006 (tentative date)

Spirit Lake CBC: Friday, January 5, 2006 (tentative date)