

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaudubon.org

November 2012

Volume 22 Number 3

eBird and Mica Bay



Acorn Woodpecker – Fuertes Collection

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: November 13, Tuesday
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master,
4800 N. Ramsey, CDA
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
SPEAKER: Joey Haydock, a professor
of Avian Biology at Gonzaga University
PROGRAM: "My Friend the Acorn
Woodpecker"

Board Meeting

Date: November 6, Tuesday
Place: Lutheran Church of the Master
Time: 4:30 p.m.

Shirley Sturts

I know a few of you are familiar with eBird and already report your sightings on their database but I have a feeling that many of you have never heard of it. I find the eBird Website somewhat complicated but very worthwhile. I'm still exploring the various ways to explore the bird data they have collected. In the following paragraphs, I am going to lead you step by step on using eBird to find our Mica Bay reports and a map that brings up observations of individual species in Idaho or anywhere else in the United States or the world

Once a month our Audubon Chapter goes out birding in Mica Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene. We've called it the "Mica Bay Survey" but it is not an official survey. It is just birding the area and recording the species we see and the numbers of each. I have been reporting our sightings on eBird. To see our observations go to <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>. First, you must either "Sign In" with your user name and password or "Register as a New User" (top left on home page). When you get all that done, go back to the home page and do the following: Click on Explore Data, Summary Tables (bottom right of page), All Observations > Year Report, Jan1, 2012, United States > Idaho > Hot Spots > Lake Coeur d'Alene—Mica Bay > Continue. Enjoy the results page!. You will notice there are checklists from other birders. If you do a month report, you can narrow it down to our list by date.

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eBird and Mica Bay

Continued from page 1

Buried in the website is another important aspect of eBird but it's hard to get to if you are a beginner. For example, we saw five Bonaparte's Gulls on our October Mica Bay Survey. Have they been seen elsewhere? To find out, follow these steps: Go back to the Home page, click again on Explore Data. Click on "Line Graphs" (not looking for 'graphs' but a map of Idaho, but this is what you do). Type "Bonaparte's Gull" in the Select Species Box. When the dropdown menu comes up, click on "Bonaparte's Gull" to select it and then click continue. A line graph shows up. Click on the small map box next to the name Bonaparte's Gull. A map of the world should show up. In the box at top right, "Enter place name or address", type "Idaho". When the dropdown comes up, you will see "Idaho" in bold letters, click on that. A map comes up with Idaho and surrounding states. Zoom in on the map a little by either double-clicking or using the mouse wheel until you see little blue & red balloons. Click on any balloon, you will get the date, number, reporter and location.

I hope this works for you. If not, call me and while we are both sitting with our computers on the same website page, I'll "walk you through it"!

As I wrote these instructions, I clicked on a red balloon near Coeur d'Alene and our latest Mica Bay sighting showed up. I noticed the word (in blue) "checklist". When I clicked it, the entire list of birds we saw that day showed up. This was a new feature for me.

I hope this introduction to eBird will get you started using eBird for your own observations. One idea would be for our field trip leaders to report their trip checklists to eBird. The eBird Website has a tutorial to get you started. The following article from the eBird Website explains a bit more about what eBird is all about.



Why should I eBird?

From the eBird Website

Every time that you see and identify a bird, you are holding a piece of a puzzle. Whether you are casually watching birds in your backyard, or chasing rare species across the country, you are helping to put this puzzle together.

It might be a personal puzzle. For example, you might wonder when Red-winged Blackbirds appear in your backyard each spring or what time of day the Mourning Doves take a bath in your neighborhood fountain. Each time that you see and identify one of these birds—so long as you note the time and date—one piece of the puzzle falls into place.

Or it might be a regional puzzle. For instance, scientists might be wondering how quickly House Finches are spreading throughout your state or how rapidly Henslow's Sparrows are declining. Each time that you identify and count the numbers of one of these species, you are piecing together a part of that puzzle.

Or it might be an international puzzle. Each year during migration, hundreds of species fly from southern wintering grounds to northern breeding grounds, following the flush of summer insects. When do they leave? Where do they breed? And when do they return home? Whether recording common birds in your backyard or searching for rarities along the Mexican border, your sightings of these birds – with time, date, and location included – are pieces that can help ornithologists put together the parts of that huge puzzle, day by day, week by week, and year by year.

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Why should I eBird?

Continued from page 2

Unfortunately, just like puzzle pieces, these observations lose their value if they remain separate from one another. The sightings tucked away in your memory, or in your desk drawer, or in an old shoebox in your closet leave gaps in a partially completed picture. In truth, the only way that all these bird sightings make a contribution to our understanding of nature is when they are collected and organized into a central database where they can help complete a picture of the life of birds.

eBird is this database. With thousands of birdwatchers across the continent helping to construct it by contributing their sightings, eBird will soon become a vast source of bird and environmental information useful not only to bird watchers but to scientists and conservationists the world over. Want to find out what birds you'll see on your vacation? Want to know the closest spot to find a Least Bittern, or a reliable spot for Townsend's Warbler? Want to learn whether the crow population is growing in your state? Want to see if endangered Least Terns are continuing their decline?

By keeping track of your bird observations and entering them into the eBird database, you'll benefit, too. You can access your own bird records anytime you want, allowing you an easy way to look at your observations in new ways and to answer your personal questions about what birds you saw and when and where you saw them.

If you use the eBird website to enter all your birding information—and get your friends, family members, students, and colleagues to use it as well—before long the answers to the never ending questions about birds will be found in the eBird database, for use now and for generations that will follow.

Chapter Volunteers -

Making Tracks

Volunteers of the Month



Roland Craft deserves a big thank you for cleaning and then putting a protective coat on our viewing platform in Mica Bay.

Eula Hickam, Valerie Zagar and Kris Buchler are working on the Audubon Adventures program that Scott Reed sponsors each year. Eula recently participated in a Webinar on that subject with teachers around the country.

Mike and Valerie Zagar organized the Adopt-a-Highway project this fall. Mike writes the following summary of the latest litter pickup: The fall 2012 litter pickup along Highway 95 took place on Saturday, October 6. Ten individuals participated in the effort. Our thanks to Roland Craft, Jan Severtson, Judy Waring, Darlene Carlton, Laura Bayless, Russ Hersrud, Nancy Kroese and Eula Hickam for helping.

We gathered 15 bags of trash in a little over three hours, which was a bit less than in previous cleanups.

Idaho litter pickup is a big effort. Statewide last year, more than 1,600 volunteers devoted nearly 3,800 hours cleaning roadsides and gathered over 100,000 pounds of litter. This allowed the State to devote manpower to other vital roadway tasks while simultaneously keeping Idaho beautiful.

Our next cleanup will be scheduled in the spring of 2013. The date will be announced in this newsletter. Please consider joining us. A little effort on your part matched with a similar effort of other members goes a long way.

Bluebird Trail Report

Shirley Sturts



Western Bluebird along the Hoo Doo Bluebird Trail – Photographed by Peggy Albertson

Thanks to Roland Craft, the bluebird boxes are cleaned and ready for next year. A big thanks also goes out to all who participated in checking and keeping data on our three Blue Bird Trails. Between the three of them, Rob and Nancy Kroese and Roland Craft made 12+ visits to record nesting activity to 21 boxes in Mica Bay and on Mica Flats. Teams of 2-3 did the same for the 50+ boxes located in the Hoo Doo Valley. Team members included: Peggy Albertson, Kris Buchler (organizer), Ed Buchler, Pat Bearman, Darlene Carlton, Linda Chalcraft, Roland Craft, Carrie Hugo, Sally Jones, Theresa Potts, Judith Sather, Shirley Sturts, and Linda Taylor.

I have compiled the following data:
Mica Flats – 12 nest boxes, 2 not used, Tree Swallows made 9 nesting attempts, 2 failed, approx.. 36 young fledged --- Western Bluebirds nested in Box 2, laying 7 eggs and thought to have fledged 5 young –and in Box 8A a pair laid 6 eggs and are thought to have fledged at least

4 young. A pair of Tree Swallows then took over the nest and is thought to have fledged 4 young. **Mica Bay** – 8 nest boxes, 7 used by Tree Swallows - approx.. 21 young were fledged – Box 3 was used by a pair of Western Bluebirds, 1st attempt failed with 6 dead young removed from the nest box on June 7 (always sad-possibly weather related), 2nd attempt was successful with at least 4 (possibly 5) fledged young.

Hoo Doo - Not compiled yet

I am currently reporting the nest data that we collected to Nest Watch, part of the Citizen Scientist Network of Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The Latest Field Trip Summaries

The Bunco Road

Matt Thurley

The Bunco Road field trip on 22nd September went as planned. There were three attendees. The weather was warm, and generally a fun time was had by all. The walk up the mountain is relatively easy, with switchbacks and smooth terrain, plenty of beautiful views of the valley and diverse birding habitat.



There is a stream, open meadows and forested areas. We saw lots of robins, juncos, chickadees, woodpeckers, swallows and sundry birdlife that needed a more expert eye than we were able to muster at the time. We thought we saw a Cooper's Hawk.

This venue will be very interesting at early dawn or dusk. If all else fails, the views alone are worth the trip.

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Field Trip Summaries

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Gold Hill

Valerie Zagar



Photograph by Mike Zagar

It was a spectacular fall day for a hike. Gold Hill was true to its name with gold colored leaves strewn about the trail. Mike made the first sighting of a Northern Flicker. Farther along, the group was greeted by the twittering of Black-capped Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches. Other species heard were a Red-breasted Nuthatch and a Golden-crowned Kinglet. At the top of the hill was a panoramic view of Lake Pend Oreille masked by wildfire smoke. A Red-tailed Hawk flew by as well as a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks. It was a treat to identify their markings at eye level. As we descended, a Pileated Woodpecker bade us a fond farewell. On the way to lunch in Sandpoint, Wild Turkeys, an Osprey and a Rock Pigeon rounded out the day's birding event.

Participants were Mike Zagar, leader, the dog, Suzy Q, Dora Griffith, Mary Morrow, Jan Severtson, Karen Williams and Valerie Zagar.

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Karen Williams

The recent presentation by Dan Matiatos, Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge manager, prepared field trip participants with park goals and interesting historical facts as well as current park projects. One such project is the construction of replacement water control structures necessitated by past farming and grazing uses. Future goals include reducing invasive species such as stickleback fish and canary reed grass. Stimulus funding allowed energy efficiency, geothermal renewable energy, and cattle fencing projects.

As we met at the park fee station on October 13, a huge flock of Red-winged Blackbirds surprised our group of fourteen. The weather was cooperating as we set off on the Pine Creek Auto Tour Route.

We were in hopes of spotting the nesting Trumpeter Swans and their young which the park manager had told us to look for. We were not disappointed!

Near Pine Lakes, we hurriedly set up scopes and readied our binoculars as several large swan and the somewhat smaller, grayish juveniles came into view. Several of the large trumpeters took to the air and made a spectacular pass overhead. We could clearly hear their characteristic toy horn sounding "toot, toot, toot". Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Northern Pintail, and Pied billed Grebe were also identified at this location.

As we moved in for a closer look, a Northern Shrike perched in a nearby snag and was identified thanks to the spotting scopes as well

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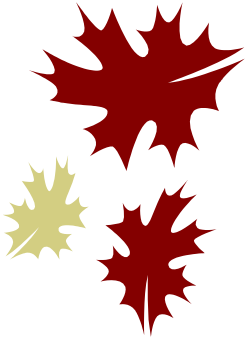


Photograph by Wayne Tree

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

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as a soaring Red-tailed Hawk and several Northern Flicker. We heard Marsh Wrens and saw larger White-crowned Sparrows in the shrubby growth near the water.



At our next destination, Kepple Lake, we were greeted by colors of orange, yellow and red of the fall day as we hiked to the overlook. Chatty Red-breasted Nuthatch, a busy Black-capped Chickadee, and Pygmy Nuthatch were seen. A Hairy Woodpecker flitted through the conifers. We decided to research the characteristics of a possible juvenile Bufflehead we saw bobbing in the lake.

We then set off to the Kepple Lake Peninsula Trail. At this site, we saw Great Blue Heron, Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, a Redhead and at least one somber, gray Gadwall, with its telling posterior white mark. Along the trails we explored bird blinds, bat houses and encountered a giant water bug!

Canada Goose, Common Raven, Black-billed Magpie, Wild Turkeys and a possible American Kestrel were also noted inside the park.

Lastly, we made a stop at the park headquarters where we supported the park by purchasing unique memorabilia (hummingbird earrings!) and enjoyed the hands-on park exhibits.

Field Trip attendees: Kris and Ed Buchler, Valerie Zagar, Linda Chalcraft, Roland Craft, Darlene Carlton, Herb and Jan Severtson, Mary Deasy, Matt Thurley, Sally Jones, Judy Calvert, Bruce Shadduck and Karen Williams.



Fall is Here, Go Birding!

George Saylor

Grandparents and bird watchers have at least one thing in common - they are both willing to travel long distances to see the objects of their affection. I confess to having done so on both counts with great reward. And so it was that Katie and I set out across the U.S. pulling our fifth wheel to New York to visit our daughter's family, and in the back of my mind, to see birds in a new environment. This is going to be great, I thought! And so it was with visiting her family and our grandkids. Not so much with the birds. After more than two weeks the best sighting I had was probably the flock of American Robins bathing in mud puddles.

I was feeling somewhat disheartened about my birding chances when I read Kenn Kauffman's ode to fall bird watching in the fall issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. He wrote that many of us are enthusiastic birders in the winter and spring when there is much to see and birding is relatively easy, but that generally we tend to slack off in the fall. He went on to point out the many reasons we should be out in the field during fall migration, noting that fall migration is two months longer than spring migration and with the birth of so many birds there are actually more birds migrating in the fall than in the spring. "Get out there and find them" he said in so many words. Another article in the same magazine listed five tips for making fall migration count. One was to bird frequently; another was watch closely. Good reminders I thought, and spurred on and newly resolved, I decided to visit a local nature sanctuary the next morning.

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Fall is Here, Go Birding!

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It was a beautiful clear morning with fall color showing in full glory as we drove to The Outdoor Discovery Center of the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum, a 177 acre property that is dedicated to wildlife habitat and outdoor education. It is a very scenic parcel of land that includes open meadow, several ponds, some marsh area, and deciduous woods.

Even before we started our walk birds began to appear. The first one flew too quickly to identify, then there was a Mourning Dove, then starlings in fall array, then a Tufted Titmouse, then robins, then more warblers and sparrows than I could keep up with, then a mystery bird I never did find in my bird guides (I hate those kind), followed by Pine Siskins, a Downy Woodpecker, and others. The bird highlight of the day was a close and lengthy view of a buteo perched in a colorful tree not more than fifty or sixty feet away. We had seen it fly earlier. Katie called it a Red-tailed Hawk, but I called it a Rough-legged because of its general appearance and because I had seen a brown tail as it flew away from me. After the close up view I was pretty sure it was a Rough-legged, but after checking two field guides I had to admit she was right. Who would think an immature Red-tailed Hawk would have a brownish tail and look so much like a Rough-legged Hawk.!

You may have surmised it was a good birding outing, and it truly was. It seemed the air was alive with birds. Had I not read those magazine articles I probably would have missed it. Kauffman was right. Fall birding can be great and is not to be missed. We just need to get out there and do it. Another reason he gave was that young birds on their first migration sometimes make big mistakes, so fall is the best

time to find birds outside their normal range. I encourage you to heed his advice, and when you scan that mixed flock of chickadees, look for those fall vagrants. By definition, a vagrant is a bird out of its normal range. It just might come into yours if you are out there to see it. As for me, I'll be out there again trying to find and identify that mystery bird – right after I get done playing with the grandkids!

Bird of the Month

White-throated Sparrow

Shirley Sturts



Photograph from Wikipedia

My first sighting of White-throated Sparrow was in Central Park, New York City on April 8, 1995, where they are common spring, winter and fall. It wasn't until October 28, 2001 before I saw one in Idaho on a Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter field trip to Brown's Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene. This species was first recorded in Idaho by L.E. Wyman who collected a female in Nampa, Canyon County on November 1, 1911. Thomas Burleigh collected 2 specimens in Moscow, October of 1948 and November of 1955 and 1 in Lewiston 1956. The first one recorded north of Moscow was found by Tom Rogers on the Indian Mountain CBC on December 27, 1975.

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White-throated Sparrow

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Thomas Burleigh, in *Birds of Idaho 1972*, lists its status in Idaho as of casual occurrence in fall and winter. According to Burleigh they breed commonly in northern British Columbia and Alberta but appear to migrate to and from their more southern home east of the Rockies. Looking through the database I keep, I see a handful of fall and winter records for almost every year since 1972.

It appears, similar to humans, there are a few individual White-throated that don't follow the crowd and find their own way south ☺. Thus, here in Idaho, we occasionally get to see one if we are in the right place at the right time. This was true for Doug Ward the other day when he not only saw one on Tubbs Hill on September 24, for our Kootenai County Big Year, but the next day he had 2 adults and an immature show up in his yard. These three were still being seen there on September 28. Being there at the right time is a matter of luck. Judy and Phil Waring visited Doug's yard three times and these 3 did a "no show" on each occasion. I can sympathize with them. I've been there done that on several occasions for other rare birds.

Alan Contreras, in *Northwest Birds in Winter 1997*, lists this species as uncommon west of the Cascades and occasional to rare east of the Cascades. According to Alan, numbers vary considerably from year to year, especially in British Columbia, Washington and east of the Cascades. They are more common as one goes south into Oregon. This year seems to be a big year for seeing the White-throated in Idaho. If you follow the steps I listed in my article on eBird, you will see many recent records in Idaho and Washington for this year plus several older records. For example, there

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is a record from Lisa Hardy for one she saw in Kingston on October 8, 2005. Also, this is not the first year Doug Ward has reported the White-throated.

One wonders where the White-throated go after putting an appearance in our state. Do they head over the Cascades or over the Rockies for the winter or seek our friendly yards with feeders in lowland areas? Alan Contreras says that small numbers winter annually in southwest Idaho.

KEA Opposes Proposed Constitutional Amendment HJR2

Adrienne Cronebaugh, Director

You should have received your [Idaho Voter's Pamphlet](#) in the mail by now. The 43 pages of 12-pt font are a lot to wade through but please make sure that you thoroughly read through [Page 4- H.J.R. 2aa](#), which is a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment also known as the **Idaho Hunting and Fishing (and Trapping) Amendment**

The proposed measure would add "*the right to hunt, fish and trap, including by the use of traditional methods, are a valued part of the heritage of the State of Idaho and shall forever be preserved for the people...*" to the Idaho State Constitution under a New Section #23, to Article 1. Article 1 is a list of 22 very specific rights and privileges that are guaranteed by our [state constitution](#) (i.e. INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF MAN). The freedoms listed under Article 1 are hard fought civil rights that apply to each of Idaho's 1.5 million citizens and should be reserved as such, not bent to allow for a quick push through by small special interest groups. In 2011, [352,510 Resident Hunting & Fishing Licenses/Permits were issued by Idaho Fish & Game](#). Trapping permits constituted only 900 of the 1.3 million total tags/licenses sold in 2011. Even if those 900 were ALL resident permits they make up less than 0.1% of Idahoans

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Amendment HJR2 Continued from page 8

So is it really appropriate to enshrine a civil 'right' into our constitution for the <0.1% of Idahoans to trap wildlife forever?

Trapping is a highly controversial issue that has NOT been largely discussed or surveyed yet in this state. In fact, HJR2 made it onto the ballot with hasty house and senate votes and without the constitutionally required reading aloud and floor discussions in the House and Senate.

HJR2 is not about "[preserving Idaho's great sporting heritage](#)" but rather a small special interest group trying to slip a highly controversial issue (trapping) in under the cover of the more popular sportsman activities like fishing and hunting. The right to hunt, fish and trap are already highlighted in the Idaho Fish & Game [Mission Statement](#). If HJR2 is defeated, nothing will change- on November 7th sportsmen will still be able to recreate as they currently do and historically have. **Vote NO on H.J.R. 2** * *The inclusion of this article does not imply the Audubon Society's position. The local Audubon Society has no stand on this amendment.**

Events and Field Trips

Thanksgiving Day Count

For information and report form go to:

<http://www.utahbirds.org/cbc/ThanksgBirdCount.htm>

Project Feeder Watch

Starts: Nov.10. 2012.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>

Kootenai Environmental Alliance

November 1&15 – Lunch&Learn @ Iron Horse

November 3 - KEA Book Club Meeting

December 1- Wes Hanson Art Show

For information: check their Website, call the office at 667-9093, or email KEA at kealliance.org. <http://www.kealliance.org>

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Sprague Lake

Date: Saturday, October 27

Leader: Phil and Judy Waring

Meet: South side K-Mart parking lot

Time: 8 a.m.

Activity: This area is a dependable destination for Snow, Cackling, Ross's and White-fronted Geese. Trumpeter Swans have been seen here in late October as well as scoters. This will be a full day trip so bring your lunch.

Mineral Ridge Hike and Bird

Date: November 10, 2012 (Saturday)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Meet: Fernan Ranger Station

Leader: Janet Callen, 664-1085

Hike the trail, and look for waterfowl in Wolf Lodge, Beauty and Blue Creek Bays. This will be a partial day trip, but bring snacks or a lunch. Target Birds; loons and other waterfowl.

Mica Bay Survey

Date: November 13, Tuesday

Time: 9:00 a.m. **Note time change**

Meet: Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

Activity: We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Beginner birders are welcome. We will help you with identification skills.

Sandpoint

Date: November 17th, 2012 (Saturday)

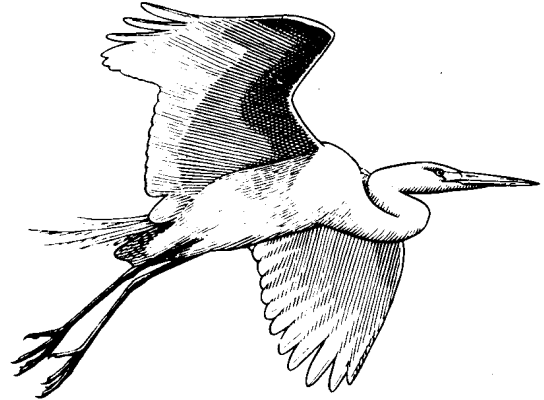
Meet: South side K-Mart parking lot

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Lisa Hardy 783-1262

This is a full day trip. We will check Lake Pend Oreille for loons and other interesting waterfowl. If the weather forecast is for bad roads, we will pull in our horns and stick closer to home around the Coeur d'Alene area.

National Audubon Coeur d'Alene Chapter
P.O. Box 361
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