



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
[www.cdaudubon.org](http://www.cdaudubon.org)

November 2013

Volume 23 Number 3

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

**DATE:** November 12, Tuesday

**PLACE:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**SPEAKER:** Susan Drumheller, Executive Director for the Idaho Conservation League for North Idaho

**PROGRAM:** Susan will talk about the mission and history of the organization and some of their current efforts in North Idaho, particularly of their involvement with the Clark Fork delta restoration project.

### BOARD MEETING

**DATE:** November 5, Tuesday

**PLACE:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA

**TIME:** 4:00 p.m.

## November President's Message

George Sayler

Plans are sometimes like a bird's flight path – they don't always go the way you think they will! I had been looking forward to our September meeting and field trip to Kootenai Wildlife Refuge, but "life happened" and I wasn't able to make either event. The unexpected visit to Vermont was nice, but alas, I carried my binoculars pretty much in vain. I hope you enjoyed the meeting or the field trip, or maybe both.

I hope our October meeting was of interest. We enjoyed sharing some of our experiences from the national Audubon convention and I very much appreciate the feedback about the power-point presentation on the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society.



In the September newsletter, Shirley included a brief item from the American Bird Conservancy website about their bird friendly coffee. There was a good article on the same subject in the June 2013 issue of [Birdwatching](#) magazine, which had more good information on this subject, as well as pertinent websites. One that I found to be very informative and seemingly objective was

[www.coffeehabitat.com](http://www.coffeehabitat.com). The article mentioned that the Earth Friendly logo of the ABC was the most stringent certification but it generally has to be ordered online. It stated that Rainforest Alliance was another very worthwhile certification and that coffee is available at retail outlets. It then reviewed the other bird friendly certifications and made the point that we need to make growing shade grown coffee worthwhile to producers, otherwise it won't happen.

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## Mill Canyon Field Trip

Judy Waring

A light rain fell, the sky was grey, the destination far away but none of this mattered to the crack birding team of five women, out to see what could be found north and west of Spokane. Mill Canyon is a 3-4 mile forested descent to the Spokane River, a stark change from the approach through agricultural land on the plateau above. Migration was in full swing and the potential for good sightings was high.

As we worked our way down to the river we quickly tallied the standard mix of passerine species – Townsend’s Solitaire, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mt. Chickadee, Pine Siskin, and American Robin followed by Varied Thrush, Clark’s Nutcracker, Bewicks Wren and more. The river yielded 13 species of waterfowl including the Surf Scoters that had been spotted by other birders on area lakes.

We then returned to Reardon and headed north, crossing the Spokane River to Chamokane Creek on the Spokane Indian Reservation. This was new territory to all of us and though it appeared to have all the right things to attract birds, we added nothing new to the list. Spring would be the time to try this spot.

From here we moved along the north shore of Lake Spokane which is very scenic and tacked Canvasback, Northern Shoveler, Double-crested Cormorants, Eared Grebe, Common Loon, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, and Wood Duck onto the list. In total we had 49 species and a great day of birding. The team: Kris Buchler, Janet Callen, Lisa Hardy, Jan Severtson and Judy Waring.

## President's Message (Continued)



Toucans from Costa Rica  
Photo by Kathleen Cameron

If you are a Costco member, there is a pretty good alternative. I have found their San Francisco Bay certified organic rainforest blend 100% shade grown coffee to be quite good and pretty economical. It comes in whole beans only, so grinding is necessary, but a small thing to help protect bird habitat.

The article from [Birdwatching](#) also listed, by brand, the coffee growers that practice high commodity monoculture that destroys bird habitat. It said: “In general, if you are buying one of these brands, you are contributing directly to the destruction of bird habitat.” The brands are: Nestle (Nestcafe, Taster’s Choice, Nespresso), Smucker’s (Folgers, Milstone, Dunkin Donuts), Kraft Foods (Yuban, Maxwell House, Gevalia, Maxim, Sanka) and Massimo Sanetti (Chock full o’Nuts, Chase and Sanborn, Hills Bros, MJB).

Very few enjoy a good cup of coffee more than I do. However, I also enjoy, as you do, observing birds and their behaviors. Perhaps with a little effort and a bit more cost, we can adopt coffee drinking habits that will enable us to continue to do both. In that case, both we and birds win!

## Chatcolet-Indian Cliffs Trip

Dick Cripe



October 19. It was a beautiful, sunny, cool day and our trip included 13 beautiful, sunny, cool birders. We assembled at the Indian Cliffs parking spot and proceeded to walk the

three mile loop, first passing through mixed coniferous forest where we were instructed by Roland Craft and forester Mike Wolcott from Sandpoint on the trees we were seeing – ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, Pacific yew, tamarack, western red cedar, and western hemlock. As we climbed up the bluff, we emerged into open ponderosa pine forest with outstanding views of the lake and St. Joe River where we stopped for a snack. Birds seen in the Indian Cliffs loop were Red-Tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Pygmy Owl, Northern Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, Common Raven, Black-Capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, Chestnut-Backed Chickadee, White-Breasted Nuthatch, Red-Breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Song Sparrow.

Upon returning to the parking lot, we drove over to the Chatcolet boat launch area and walked along the bike trail to the bridge. After checking out those birds we drove to the nature boardwalk where we parked and surveyed the lake from there. Birds seen on this lake portion were Common Loon, Pied-Billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, and Belted Kingfisher.

Participants were Allan and Judith Sather from La Grande, OR, Mike Wolcott from Sandpoint, Roland Craft and his daughter, Jennifer, from Brooklyn, NY, Jan Severtson, Janet Callen, John and Susan Lee, Phil and Judy Waring, Lisa Hardy, and Dick Cripe. We all thoroughly enjoyed being out in beautiful North Idaho on such a fine October day.

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## Bluebird Trails and NestWatch

Shirley Sturts



*Photo by Peggy Albertson*

One of our Audubon Chapter projects is to monitor three bluebird trails. The largest one is in the Hoo Doo Valley north of Athol and west of Kelso Lake. It consists of 51 boxes. Our two smaller trails are at Mica Bay with 9 boxes and Mica Flats with 12 boxes. The results of our monitoring are reported to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program.

### What is NestWatch all about?

Their Website, <http://nestwatch.org>, describes this program as follows:

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## Bluebird Trails and NestWatch

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“NestWatch is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Our database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.”

### Hoo Doo results:

#### Western Bluebird

Boxes used: 9  
Boxes with 2 nest attempts: 4  
Boxes used by swallows and bluebirds: 3  
Nest attempts successful: 11  
Nest attemptsefailed: 2  
Number of fledged young: 52 (approx.)

#### Tree Swallow

Boxes used: 40  
Boxes with 2 attempts: 11  
Nest attempts successful: 23  
Nest attempts failed: 22  
Number of fledged young: 92 (approx.)

Bluebirds often have two broods during the nesting season. Swallows have only one. Boxes with two attempts were due to failure the first time. I think the cold wet June weather may have had something to do with the high number of swallow failures.

A big thank you to all those who participated in the Hoo Doo Trail nest monitoring: Peggy Albertson, Laura Bayless, Ed and Kris Buchler, Darlene Carlton, Linda Chalcraft, , Vera Roland Craft, Carrie Hugo, Rob and Nancy Kroese, George Saylor, Shirley Sturts , Vera Taggart, and Linda Wolovich. A special thanks to Kris

Buchler who organized the teams and to Roland Craft for repair, replacing and cleaning the boxes on all three trails

### Mica Flats results

#### Western Bluebirds

Boxes used: 1  
Nest attempts successful: 1  
Nest attempts failed: 1  
Number of fledged young: 5

#### Tree Swallow

Boxes used: 8  
Nest attempts successful: 7  
Nest attempts failed: 1  
Number of fledged young: 29

### Mica Bay results

#### Western Bluebirds

Boxes used: 1  
Nest attempts failed: 1

#### Tree Swallow

Boxes used: 8  
Boxes with 2 attempts: 1  
Nest attempts successful: 9  
Nest attempts failed: 0  
Number of fledged young: 45

Doing double duty by monitoring the Mica Flats and Mica Bay Bluebird Trail as well as being part of the Hoo Doo monitoring team were: Peggy Albertson, Roland Craft, and Rob and Nancy Kroese. A double thank you goes to these dedicated nest monitors. On the last visit to Mica Flats, Roland discovered a new fence had been put up and all of the boxes were gone. Fortunately there was only one box that was still occupied on his previous visit. The young in this nest box had been close to fledging at that time. We are being optimistic in thinking they fledged before their nest box was taken down. Roland is looking into getting permission from the property owners to reestablish our trail.

## Bird Monitors

Kris Buchler



Lisa Hardy – monitoring at Farragut State Park

Many of you may not know that Audubon members are involved in many bird monitoring projects as well as our well-known bluebird trail efforts. These other surveys include IBA (Important Bird Area) surveys at Wolf Lodge and Blue Creek Bays, Point Transect Counts at Farragut State Park and Breeding Bird Surveys, at various locations in the panhandle of Idaho.

Lisa Hardy and Kris Buchler are in their 10<sup>th</sup> year of doing IBA surveys at Wolf Lodge. These are done once a month and take about 3 hours of monitoring at 6 areas, covering mixed coniferous forest, ponderosa pine forest, meadow, wetland and two bays. We have only missed a few months due to heavy snow cover over the years. Other Audubon members who have assisted us at least once are Carrie Hugo, Roland Craft, Ed Buchler, Jenny Taylor and several participants in a field trip. All data is reported on eBird and is available to IDFG and BLM, who have an interest in the data.

Due to the urging of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance, Carrie Hugo, Lisa Hardy and Kris Buchler took on some time-consuming counts at Farragut State Park this year in the area where

IDFG intends to log and do some ponderosa pine restoration/habitat improvements. IDFG was not required to do pre-treatment assessments of the avian wildlife. With the help of Dave Leptich of IDFG, Carrie and Kris set up the 13 transect points. The counts consisted of listening for 5 minutes at each point and recording all birds heard or seen for each minute. We did 7 official counts once a week, covered about 2 ¼ miles one way and usually hiked back to the car the same distance. We began about 6:00 a.m. and finished the 13<sup>th</sup> point soon after 8:00 a.m. Driving to FSP, doing the count, hiking back and driving home took a over 5 hours, more for Lisa who drives from the Silver Valley. Janet Torline of KEA joined us one day and would like to do so again next year when we monitor between mid-May to early July.

Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) are done nationally and there are 5 done by our Audubon members. Lisa Hardy does 3 – Marble Creek, Latour and Shoshone, done with Ellen Scriven. Kris did Avery and Mivoden for almost 15 years (Shirley Sturts did them for several years) but turned them over to Carrie Hugo 2 years ago. Carrie and Kris go along with Lisa as a recorder or helper. These surveys cover 50 stops half a mile apart. The monitor listens for 3 minutes as well as combs the sky for visual records. These surveys are only done once a year, repeat the exact stops each time and are done mid-June to early July, the breeding season for most of our birds. Roland Craft has assisted on several of these counts and Ed Buchler helped get the GPS points for the Mivoden route.

Several other Audubon members have assisted as recorders on these trips. Monitors have to be experienced birders who can recognize 100+ species by ear, knowing both songs and calls.

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## Bird Monitors

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It is a continual learning process and often filled with surprises. We are always looking for people interested in learning these skills, are middle-age or younger (60 and 70 year old ears are not as acute as 30 year old ears) can get up before 2:00 a.m. and spend the better part of the day driving a couple of hours to the start point, doing a 5 ½ hour count and driving home.

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### Clean feeding habitat for waterfowl in the lower Coeur d'Alene Basin

#### From the EPA website



A moose, locally dubbed “Monte”, enjoys a healthy evening meal in a clean wetland created as part of a Superfund habitat cleanup project, as a bird swoops above. Click on photo for larger view.

This project is the first of its kind in the Coeur d'Alene Basin, and an important step in addressing the Basin's serious ecological contamination issues.

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

In 2011, EPA finished converting nearly 400 acres of agricultural property near Medimont to healthy wetland habitat. The area was made into clean feeding habitat for swans, ducks, and other wetland birds.

“Water birds feeding here are now safe from metals exposure. We hope to see even more birds as time goes on,” says EPA project manager Anne Dailey.

Waterfowl deaths have been recorded in the Basin for decades due to exposure to lead-contaminated sediment from upstream historic mining. This project, funded by settlement monies from the Asarco Trust, is a part of the interim Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund cleanup plan and will reduce waterfowl exposure to toxic levels of heavy metals.

USFWS monitoring data shows that the remediated and restored clean habitat is attracting some of the highest levels of waterfowl usage, waterfowl feeding, and waterfowl diversity in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. Moreover, blood lead data suggest that waterfowl using the conservation easement are experiencing reduced exposures to lead. This project is the first of its kind in the Basin, and is an important step in addressing Basin serious ecological contamination issues.

The project was a collaborative effort between the property owner, USFWS, Ducks Unlimited, the Army Corps of Engineers, CH2M Hill, and EPA. USFWS and Ducks Unlimited will maintain the wetland over the long-term under the Coeur d'Alene Basin Natural Trustee restoration plan. Together, we created a clean feeding habitat for migratory and resident wetland birds. The property is owned by a private party and will not be open to the public.

## Field Trips 2013-2014

PLEASE REGISTER: *Watch the website or newsletter for updates to our field trip schedule. Participants should contact the trip leader at least 24 hours in advance of the field trip to find out if the meeting place, time or destination has been changed. Participants will share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver.*

### **Mineral Ridge Hike and Fernan Lake, Wolf Lodge, Beauty and Blue Creek Bay**

**Date:** November 2, Saturday

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Meet:** Fernan Ranger Station

**Leader:** Janet Callen 664-1085

This will be a three-quarter day trip. Bring a lunch, or snacks and water, dress for the weather. Besides a hike on Mineral Ridge, we will search for waterfowl on Fernan Lake, and Wolf Lodge, Beauty and Blue Creek Bays. Our target birds will be loons.

### **Mica Bay Survey**

**Date:** November 12, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

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

**Meet:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95

**Leader:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318

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 area:**

**Date:** November 16, Saturday

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Meet:** K-mart parking lot

**Leader:** Lisa Hardy 783-1262

This will be a full day trip, so bring lunch and water. We will bird by car, and get out and walk short distances, so dress for the weather, we will bird either Sunnyside or the Pend Oreille River

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

depending where the action is. A stop at Starbuck's for coffee, and scoping the lake from City Beach is a given. Please let the leader know ahead of time in case of bad weather for which we might postpone or cancel the trip.

### **Coeur D'Alene CBC**

**Date:** December 14, Saturday

**Compiler:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318

[shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.sturts@gmail.com)

Meet at Michael D's Eartery for breakfast at 6:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

### **Annual Christmas Potluck**

**When:** December 14th, following the Bird Count All are welcome, not just the bird counters!

**Where:** Armstrong Park Club House –RSVP Kirs – 664-4739, [eagleroost@roadrunner.com](mailto:eagleroost@roadrunner.com)

### **Spirit Lake CBC**

**Date:** January 2, Thursday

**Compiler:** Shirley Sturts 664-5318

[shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.sturts@gmail.com)

Meet for breakfast at 6:15 a.m., Rustler's Roost, Hayden Lake, Highway 95 and Hayden Avenue, or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

### **Compiling and Pizza Party**

Following the Spirit Lake CBC, about 4:30 p.m.

**Where:** Janet Callen's home **RSVPS:** Janet, 664-1085 or email, [jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com](mailto:jgoldfinch@roadrunner.com).

Please bring money to share the cost of the pizza and something to add to a green salad (greens will be provided). Hot tea will be provided. Bring whatever else you want to drink.

### **Indian Mountain CBC**

**Date:** January 5, Sunday

**Compiler:** Don Heikkila 659-3389 -

[idfinn@sm-email.com](mailto:idfinn@sm-email.com)

Team organizers: Shirley Sturts 664-5318 - [shirley.sturts@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.sturts@gmail.com) and Lisa Hardy 783-1262 [basalt@earthlink.net](mailto:basalt@earthlink.net)

Meet and time - made by each participating team

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