

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Audubon Society
Editor: Shirley Sturts - E4615 Fernan Lake Rd - Coeur d'Alene, Id. 83814 -664-5318

OCTOBER 1998

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CALENDAR CHECK

(Registering for a field trip is not required but if you register the leader will call you if the time or meeting place is changed)

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

OCTOBER 19 MONDAY REGULAR MEETING

Time: 6:30 p.m. Social Time
7:00 p.m. Meeting

Place: First Presbyterian Church, 521 Lakeside Ave. (Annex building)

Program: Lupito Flores, Panhandle Organizer of the Idaho Conservation League will talk about his organization and their goals and objectives, both in north Idaho and state-wide. He will also discuss current environmental concerns and activities.

OCTOBER 24 - 25 SATURDAY/SUNDAY IDAHO AUDUBON COUNCIL FALL MEETING

Time: 10 a.m (Starting time)

Place: Idaho Museum of Natural History, Idaho State University

Program: Meetings on Saturday and a field trip on Sunday led by Chuck Trost.

Information: Susan Weller 682-3413

APRIL 16-18 FRIDAY-SUNDAY IDAHO AND WASHINGTON AUDUBON COUNCIL (JOINT) SPRING MEETING

Place: Pinelowe, Washington

Information: Susan Weller 682-3413

FIELD TRIPS

OCTOBER 16 FRIDAY AND 28 WEDNESDAY MICA BAY SURVEY AND BIRD HOUSE CLEANING

Time: 8:00-11:30 a.m.

Meet: Fairmont Loop Road turn off

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

Activity: Come prepared to clean houses and to birdwatch - we plan on doing a little of both.

OCTOBER 20 TUESDAY BIRDING WITH A BROWN BAG

Time: 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.

Meet: 1st parking lot/Centennial trail.

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

Activity: We will look for Loons and other migrants between Silver Beach and Higgins Point

OCTOBER 24 SATURDAY HEYBURN STATE PARK

Time: 9:00 a.m. - all day trip

Meet: East side of Rosauers Parking Lot

Leader: Lisa Woolford 762-5506

Activity: We will look for migrating waterfowl such as Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Redhead, Northern Pintail, and whatever other surprises mother nature has in store. Bring a lunch

OCTOBER 26 MONDAY GERTIE HANSON BLUE BIRD TRAIL

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet: East side of Rosauer's Parking Lot

Activity: Clean and repair bird houses. Please sign up with Shirley if you are planning on helping - the date could be changed depending on the weather.

Leader: Shirley Sturts 664-5318

MICA BAY SURVEY

Participants: Janet Allen, Kris Buchler, Pam Comrie, Bill Gundlach, Jerry Hanson, Theresa Potts, Shirley Sturts, Lynn and Jim Vogel (visitors from Phoenix, Arizona), Lisa Woolford

Species	Sept. 9	Sept. 29
Pied-billed Grebe	-	4
Red-necked Grebe	2	1
Great Blue Heron	1	3
Canada Goose	3	24
Mallard	16	8
Northern Harrier	-	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	-	1
American Kestrel	1	1
Wild Turkey	-	18
American Coot	-	6+
Killdeer	4	-
Ring-billed Gull	-	2
Belted Kingfisher	2	1
Hairy Woodpecker	2	2
Northern Flicker	1	2
Pileated Woodpecker	1	-
Western W-Pewee	2	-
Swallow sp.	12	-
Tree Swallow	1	-
Common Raven	3	-
Black-billed Magpie	11	2
Black-C Chickadee	7+	3
Red-b Nuthatch	2	2
Brown Creeper	1	1
American Robin	-	16+
Gray Catbird	1	-
Ruby-Crowned Kinglet	-	1
Wilson's Warbler	-	1
Warbler sp.	1	-
Song Sparrow	3	6
Dark-eyed Junco	-	1
Red-w Blackbird	100+	50+
House Finch	20+	-
American Goldfinch	15	3
Coyote	-	1

COUGAR BAY — BROWN

BAG BIRDING September 7

Roger Youngs Leader

A very hot noon hour was not conducive to much bird movement at Cougar Bay. Many gulls were happy to rest on the log booms while a few Mallard and American Wigeon fed in the swamp. We saw many American Coot, a few Great Blue Heron, Red-winged blackbird, Osprey, Canada Goose and Pied-billed Grebe. Joining me on the trip were Kris Buchler and Shirley Sturts

SMITH CREEK/KOOTENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FIELD TRIP

September 20, 1998

Cynthia Langlitz

It was a cool sunny day for 7 Audubon members who trekked to the far reaches of North Idaho to find Boreal Chickadees. We didn't find any....but at Smith Creek we did see Chestnut-backed Chickadee 3, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet 6+, Spruce Grouse 4, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-Crowned Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Dark-eyed Junco 6, and heard a Clark's Nutcracker and Gray Jay.

We left Smith Creek and headed for the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge along Westside Road where we encountered in an Elderberry Bush: several young White-crowned Sparrow, An American Robin, a Swainson's Thrush and 6 Dark-eyed Junco. From there through the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge we saw Northern Harrier 3 (female), a hawk (sp.), L. Yellowlegs 1, Mallard 12+, Green-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Canada Goose 50+, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfisher, Pied-billed Grebe 3, Red-winged Blackbird (several), Savannah Sparrow 4, Wood Duck 4, Cinnamon Teal, American Coot (several), and Blue-winged Teal.

"BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS, BEES AND BATS"

Lynn Sheridan

This was the theme of the popular Farmers Market (Hwy 95 & Prairie) on September 12. The Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter was invited by Manager Barbara Arnold to man a booth---Gratis!! Member Janet Callen, Jan Severtson, Lisa Woolford and Lynn Sheridan spent a happy morning giving away packets of birdseed, lots of useful information and tried to answer questions. We gathered about 20 names of folks interested in getting a complementary newsletter. Two Bat houses and 2 bird house kits were sold (competitive with fierce with many artistic small habitations for sale at other booths!). We sold raffle tickets for a 50 lb. bag of black oil sunflower seed. The winner was Isabella Christofferson.

BIRD SEED FOR SALE

A FUND RAISER FOR AUDUBON

50# Black Oil Sunflower \$16.00
Tax included

Niger (Thistle) \$1.40 a pound
(available at meetings)
Tax included

All proceeds go to the Coeur d'Alene
Audubon Chapter

Call Janet Callen at 664-1085

*NOTICE*NOTICE*NOTICE*NOTICE*NOTICE*

WHAT: "The Secret Life of Cats" A
National Geographic Documentary on
Cats and Wildlife

WHEN: October 11 7:00 p.m. &
11:00 p.m. EST

WHERE: TBS-Cable

We encourage you to see this new film documenting cat predation on wildlife around the world. The film includes footage from the United States, England, New Zealand, and Australia. We hope this documentary will help spread the word that all cats should be indoor cats.

Cats Indoors!

Cats Indoors! The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats is an initiative to end the widespread predation of birds and other wildlife by domestic cats.

This campaign was initiated by the American Bird Conservancy ABC but it belongs to all individuals and groups who want to address this issue. For information or to order an educational kit (\$5.50). Write: American Bird Conservancy Cats Indoors! 1250 24th Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20037 Phone: 202-778-9666. E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org

Our newsletter will be featuring reprints of articles from the educational kit they have developed as part of their campaign (see article next column)



CATS AND WILDLIFE

A Conservation Dilemma

by John S. Coleman, Stanley A. Temple and Scott R. Craven
(Reprinted from ABC educational kit)

INTRODUCTION

Domestic cats first arrived in North America with European colonists several hundred years ago. Since that time, cats have multiplied and thrived as cherished pets, unwanted strays, and semi-wild predators. Although often overlooked as a problem, free-ranging cats affect other animals, often far from the homes and farms they share with people. Because we brought the domestic cat to North America, we have a responsibility to both the cats and the wild animals they may affect. Here are some interesting and perhaps surprising facts concerning the contemporary dilemma posed by free-ranging domestic cats in the United States.

HOW CATS BECAME DOMESTICATED

Domestic cats originated from an ancestral wild species, *Felis silvestris*, the European and African Wild Cat. The domestic cat is now considered a separate species, name *Felis catus*. In appearance, domestic cats are similar to their wild relatives, and many of their behaviors, such as hunting and other

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activity patterns, remain essentially unchanged from their ancestral form. Cats were first domesticated in Egypt around 2000 BC [1]. Domestic cats spread slowly to other parts of the globe, possibly because Egyptians prevented export of the animal they worshiped as a goddess. However, by 500 BC the Greeks had acquired domestic cats, and they spread cats throughout their sphere of influence. The Romans introduced the domestic cat to Britain by 300 AD. Domestic cats have now been introduced around the world, mostly by colonists from Europe.

How many cats are there in the United States?

The estimated numbers of pet cats in urban and rural regions of the United States have grown from 30 million in 1970 [2] to 60 million in 1990 [3]. These estimates are based on U.S. Census data and include only those cats that people claim to "own" as pets, not cats that are semi-wild or free-ranging. Nationwide, approximately 30% of households have cats. In rural areas where free-ranging cats are usually not regarded as pets, approximately 60% of households have cats. In the state of Wisconsin alone, with approximately 550,000 rural households, the number of rural free-ranging cats (not house pets) may be as high as 2 million [4]. The combined total of pets and free-ranging cats in the U.S. is probably more than 100 million. Because of their close association with humans, most of these cats are concentrated in areas where people live rather than in remote undeveloped areas.

The legal status of domestic cats

The laws that relate to domestic cats vary by local government. In most areas, the person who provides care for a cat is legally responsible for its welfare and control. As with other domestic animals, if ownership can be established by collars or other means of identification, a cat is considered personal property [5]. It is usually the responsibility of the owner to control the cat's movements. In most areas, cats can be live trapped and either returned to the owner or turned over to authorities if they wander onto other peoples' property. Many municipalities have leash laws and require vaccination and neutering of pet cats. Because laws

vary, one should check local ordinances for the appropriate way to deal with stray cats.

What effects do domestic cats have on wildlife?

Although rural free-ranging cats have greater access to wild animals and undoubtedly take the greatest toll, even urban house pets take live prey when allowed outside. Extensive studies of the feeding habits of free-ranging domestic cats over 50 years and four continents [6] indicate that small mammals make up approximately 70% of these cats' prey while birds make up about 20%. The remaining 10% is a variety of other animals. The diets of free-ranging cat populations, however, reflect the food locally available.

Observation of free-ranging domestic cats shows that some individuals can kill over 1000 wild animals per year [7], although smaller numbers are more typical. Some of the data on kills suggest that free-ranging cats living in small towns kill an average of 14 wild animals each per year. Rural cats kill many more wild animals than do urban, or suburban cats [8]. Several studies found that up to 90% of free-ranging rural cats' diet was wild animals, and less than 10% of rural cats killed no wild animals [9]. Recent research [10] suggests that rural free-ranging domestic cats in Wisconsin may be killing between 8 and 217 million birds each year. The most reasonable estimates indicate that 39 million birds are killed in the state each year. Nationwide, rural cats probably kill over a billion small mammals and hundreds of millions of birds each year. Urban and suburban cats add to this toll. Some of these kills are house mice, rats and other species considered pests, but many are native songbirds and mammals whose populations are already stressed by other factors, such as habitat destruction and pesticide pollution.

Despite the difficulties in showing the effect most predators have on their prey, cats are known to have serious impacts on small mammals and birds. Worldwide, cats may have been involved in the extinction of more bird species than any other cause, except habitat destruction. Cats are contributing to the endangerment of populations of birds such as Least Terns, Piping Plovers and Loggerhead



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Shrikes. In Florida, marsh rabbits in Key West have been threatened by predation from domestic cats [11]. Cats introduced by people living on the barrier islands of Florida's coast have depleted several unique species of mice and woodrats to near extinction [12, 13].

Not only do cats prey on many small mammals and birds, but they can outnumber and compete with native predators. Domestic cats eat many of the same animals that native predators do. When present in large numbers, cats can reduce the availability of prey for native predators, such as hawks [14] and weasels [15].

Free-ranging domestic cats may also transmit new diseases to wild animals. Domestic cats have spread feline leukemia virus to mountain lions [16] and may have recently infected the endangered Florida Panther with feline panleukopenia (feline distemper) and an immune deficiency disease [17]. These diseases may pose a serious threat to this rare species. Some free-ranging domestic cats also carry several diseases that are easily transmitted to humans, including rabies and toxoplasmosis [18].

Domestic cats vs. native predators

Although cats make affectionate pets, many domestic cats hunt as effectively as wild predators. However, they differ from wild predators in three important ways: First, people protect cats from disease, predation and competition, factors that can control numbers of wild predators, such as bobcats, foxes, or coyotes. Second, they often have a

dependable supply of supplemental food provided by humans and are, therefore, not influenced by changes in populations of prey. Whereas populations of native predators will decline when prey becomes scarce, cats receiving food subsidies from people remain abundant and continue to hunt even rare species. Third, unlike many native predators, cat densities are either poorly limited or not limited by territoriality [19]. These three factors allow domestic cats to exist at much higher densities than native predators. In some parts of rural Wisconsin, densities of free-ranging cats reach 114 cats per square mile. In these areas, cats are several times more abundant than all mid-sized native predators (such as foxes, raccoons, skunks) combined. With abundant food, densities can reach over 9 per acre, and cats often form large feeding and breeding "colonies" (81 cats were recorded in one colony, and colonies of over 20 are not uncommon) [20, 21]. Unlike some predators, a cat's desire to hunt is not suppressed by adequate supplemental food. Even when fed regularly by people, a cat's motivation to hunt remains strong, so it continues hunting [22].

In summary

Free-ranging cats are abundant and widespread predators. They often exist at much higher densities than native predators. They prey on large numbers of wild animals, some of which are rare or endangered. They compete with native predators, and they harbor a variety of diseases. Yet, cats are popular pets. In order to have and care for our pets--and still protect our native wildlife--we must make an effort to limit in a humane manner the adverse effects free-ranging cats can have on wildlife.

What you can do

- ▶ Keep only as many pet cats as you can feed and care for. Controlling reproduction and humanely euthanizing unwanted cats will keep cat populations from growing beyond the size that can be adequately cared for. On farms, keep only the minimum number of free-ranging cats needed to control rodents. Well-fed, neutered females will stay closest to farm buildings and



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do most of their killing where rodent control is needed most. Traps and rodenticides, as well as rodent-proof storage and construction, will usually contribute more to effective rodent control than cats.

- ▶ If at all possible, for the sake of your cat and local wildlife, keep your cat indoors. Confinement will eliminate unwanted reproduction, predation on wild animals, and the spread of disease. Bells are mostly ineffective in preventing predation [23] because, even if the bell rings, it's usually too late for the prey being stalked. Declawing may reduce hunting success, but many declawed cats are still effective predators. Keeping your cats indoors helps protect the wildlife around your yard and prevents your cat from picking up diseases from strays or getting injured. The two most common causes of death for rural cats in south central Wisconsin are disease and being struck by automobiles. If cats must be allowed outdoors, consider using a fenced enclosure or runway.
- ▶ Neuter your cats or prevent them from breeding, and encourage others to do so. Support or initiate efforts to require licensing and neutering of pets. In areas where such laws already exist, insist that they be enforced. For information on local licensing and neutering laws, contact your local health department or humane society.
- ▶ Locate bird feeders in sites that do not provide cover for cats to wait in ambush for birds. Cats are a significant source of mortality among birds that come to feeders [24]. To prevent cats from climbing to bird nests, put animal guards around any trees in your yard that may have nesting birds.
- ▶ Don't dispose of unwanted cats by releasing them in rural areas. This practice enlarges rural cat populations and is an inhumane way of dealing with unwanted cats. Cats suffer in an unfamiliar setting, even if they are good predators. Contact your local animal welfare organization for help.
- ▶ Eliminate sources of food, such as garbage or outdoor pet food dishes, that attract stray cats.



- ▶ Don't feed stray cats. Feeding strays maintains high densities of cats that kill and compete with native wildlife populations. Cat colonies will form around sources of food and grow to the limits of the food supply. Colonies can grow to include dozens of animals [21]. Maintenance of colonies of free-ranging or feral cats through supplemental feeding benefits no one. The cats suffer because of disease and physical injury; native wildlife suffers from predation and competition, and colonies can be a source of disease for animals and humans. Those concerned with the welfare of animals can improve the lives of the many native species that suffer from lack of food and shelter by protecting and improving the habitats they require [25].

Literature cited

Because of space the citations are not included. If you wish copy of the 25 citations used in this article contact Shirley Sturts 664-5318.

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OBSERVATION POST



Observers: Nancy Aley (NALE), Kris Buchler (KBUC), Janet Callon (JCAL), Corrine Cameron (CCAM), Gordon and Pam Comrie (GCOM,PCOM), Bill Gundlach (BGUN), Kristin Philbrook (KPHI), Cynthia Langlitz (CLAN), Theresa Potts (TPOT), George Saylor (GSAY), Jan Severson (JSEV), Lynn Sheridan (LSHE), Shirley Sturts (SSTU), John Weber (JWEB), Susan Weller (SWEL), Roger Young (RYOU)

RBA Rare Bird Alert for Northern Idaho - Eastern Washington - Northeastern Oregon Phone (208) 882-6195 or Internet-Web Site: <http://pimacc.pima.edu/~cwilliamson/index.html>

1. Common Loon 2 Carlin Bay, CDA Lake Sept. 10 (BGUN); 1 Farragut State Park Sept. 23 and 1 Mica Bay, Coeur d'Alene Lake Sept. 25 (KBUC w/Elderhostel); 37 Sam Owen Campground on Pend Oreille Lake Sept. 24 (TPOT)
2. Horned Grebe 1 Farragut State Park Sept. 23 and 1 Mica Bay, CDA Lake (KBU w/Elderhostel)
3. Double-crested Cormorant 1 Driftwood Yard Pend Oreille Lake Sept. 25 (TPOT)
4. White-fronted Goose Several (with Canada Goose) Creston Wildlife Refuge Sept. 28 (LSHE)
5. Eurasian Wigeon 1 Denton Slough, Pend Oreille Lake Sept. 25 (TPOT)
6. Osprey 1 Roman Nose Lake Aug. 12 (BGUN); 1 CDA area Sept. 21 (KPHI)
7. Spruce Grouse 2 + 6 young Roman Nose area Aug. 13 (BGUN)
8. Greater Yellowlegs 1 CDA River at Enaville Sept. 21 (BGUN)
9. Common Tern 1 imm Carlin Bay, CDA Lake Sept. 10 (BGUN)
10. Great-Horned Owl 1 sitting in an Osprey nest at the Harrison boat docks Sept. 23
3 Upper Priest Lake Sept. 23 (BGUN), 1 CDA city (Arrowhead) Sept. 11 (TPOT)
11. Northern Pygmy Owl 1 Sept. 24 and 28 Armstrong Hill (KBUC)
12. Pileated Woodpecker 1 CDA Lakeview Hill Aug. 11+other days (BGUN); 1 using is birdbath
daily in Sept. (RYOU), 1 Armstrong Hill Sept. 27-29 (KBUC)
13. Three-toed Woodpecker 1 Roman Nose area Aug. 12 (GGUN); 1 Upper Priest Lake Sept. 23 (BGUN)
14. Red-naped Sapsucker 1 Upper Priest Lake Sept. 23 (BGUN)
15. Black-chinned Hummingbird (last seen at feeder) Armstrong Hill Sept. 3 and 6th (KBUC)
16. Olive-sided Flycatcher 3 Roman Nose Aug. 12-13 (BGUN); 1 Armstrong Hill Aug. 26 (KBUC)
17. Blue Jay 1 CDA city (south east) Sept. 26 (BGUN)
18. Gray Jay 1 North Fork CDA River Sept. 16 (SWEL)
19. White-breasted Nuthatch 1 CDA city (Arrowhead) Sept. 19 (TPOT)
20. Pygmy Nuthatch 1-7 at feeders in Sept. (SSTU, GSAY, KPHI, JCAL, KBUC-1st time Oct. 28+)
21. Brown Creeper 1 Roman Nose Aug. 12 (BGUN); 1 in his wood shop on Fernan Hill - he
caught it and put it outside Sept. 27 (RYOU)
22. Dipper 2 N.F. CDA Riv. Sept. 16 (SWEL); sev. ST. Joe Riv. Rd east of Avery Sept. 17-19 (BGUN)
23. Cassin's Vireo (Solitary) 1 Armstrong Hill Sept. 6 (KBUC)
24. Western Bluebird 8 Mica Bay, CDA Lake Sept. 25 (KBUC w/Elderhostel); 3 Hayden edge of
Prairie Sept. 25 (CLAN)
25. Mountain Bluebird 6 Hayden edge of prairie Sept. 25 (CLAN)
26. Varied Thrush 2 Rimrock area Sept. 14 (CLAN); 5 Upper Priest Lake Sept. 23 (BGUN)
27. Townsend's Solitaire 1 Cataldo Slough Sept. 5 (SWEL)
28. Gray Catbird 1 CDA (Arrowhead) Sept. 10 (TPOT)
29. American Pipit 3 Hayden (Edge of Prairie Sept. 25 (CLAN)
30. Northern Shrike 1 Little N. Fork CDA River July 20 (KPHI)
31. Yellow Warbler 1 female CDA city (11th/Ash) Sept. 20 (GSAY)
32. Yellow-Rumped Warbler 1 Armstrong Hill Sept. 7 (KBUC); 1 CDA city (Arrowhead) Sept. 20
(TPOT); 3 Hayden (edge of prairie) Sept. 25 (CLAN)
33. Chipping Sparrow 1+ at feeder CDA city (16th St.) Sept. 15 (LSHE)
34. White-crowned Sparrow 1 Altas Road Aug. 28 (CCAM); 6+ adults 1 imm Cataldo Slough
Sept. 5 (SWEL); 3 Dalton and Ramsey Sept. 11 (JCAL); 1 CDA city (11th/Ash) Sept. 20
35. White-throated Sparrow 1 CDA city Sept. 22 - 26 (JWEB)
36. Savannah Sparrow 1 (in yard) CDA city Sept. 5 (GCOM, PCOM)
37. Vesper Sparrow 12+ home in Hayden (edge of prairie) Sept. 25 (CLAN)
38. Spotted Towhee 1 CDA city (Arrowhead) Sept. 20 (TPOT)
39. Western Meadowlark 3 home in Hayden (edge of prairie) Sept. 25 (CLAN)
40. Black-headed Grosbeak 1 CDA City (11th/Ash) Sept. 20 (GSAY)

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member in the National Audubon Society and my local chapter, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter (Chapter Code GO67XCH8).

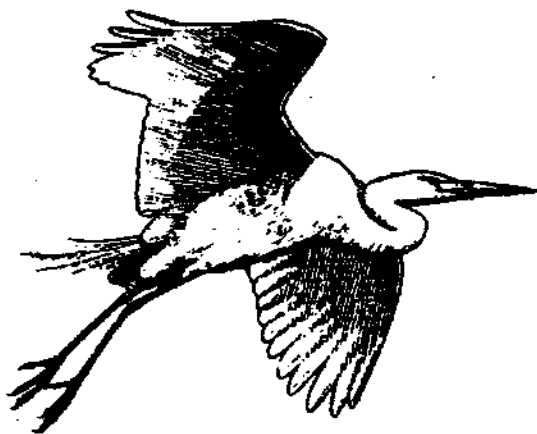
Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Introductory membership is \$20.00 for individual or family. Members receive 6 issues of Audubon magazine and the chapter's local newsletter. Please make check payable to the National Audubon Society and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

Subscription to the The Fish Hawk Herald newsletter only is \$10.00. Please make checks payable to the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter and mail to Jan Severtson, Membership Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society Chapter, P.O. Box 361, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

**National Audubon Society
Coeur d'Alene Chapter
P.O. Box 361
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GREAT EGRET
Ardea alba

