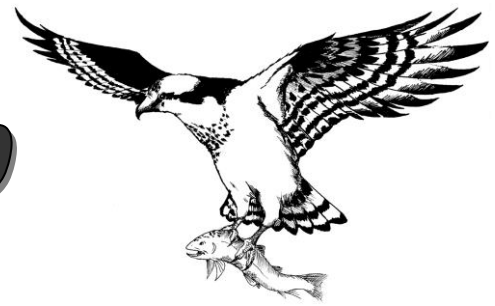


THE FISH HAWK HERALD



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

October 2010

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 2

FISH HAWK HERALD SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Our September issue is complimentary to all local Audubon members. To receive the October - May issues you need to subscribe: \$15 for one year or \$25 for two years. (See the subscription form on the back of this newsletter.) Some of you have paid for two years, and some have a different expiration date. Please call Jan at 667-6209 if you are unsure of your subscription status. The newsletter is free of charge on our website: www.cdaudubon.org
ALSO: Articles for the newsletters are welcome. Please submit to the editor Shirley Sturts at: shirley.sturts@gmail.com by the 20th of each month, All submissions are subject to editing.

Thank you and happy reading!

OCTOBER PROGRAM

DATE: October 12, Tuesday
PLACE: Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 North Ramsey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PROGRAM: "Water Quality Issues in Hayden Lake"
SPEAKER: Karen Hayes.
Karen developed an educational/community outreach effort to address water quality issues in Hayden Lake.

BOARD MEETING

DATE: October 12, Tuesday
PLACE: Mountain West Bank, 125 Ironwood
TIME: 4:30 p.m.

Visit our website:
www.cdaudubon.org

BOREAL TOAD TIDBITS

Carrie Hugo



I mentioned to some of you that I saw a boreal toad (aka western toad) this spring. I thought you might like a little more information about this species:

The one I saw was probably a male because it is smaller than others I have seen and the females are larger than the males. They tend to "walk" rather than hop.

This male was probably just emerging from its winter hibernation. They hibernate in burrows below the frost line, up to 1.3 meters underground. They use small mammal burrows or they can dig holes themselves, if need be.

They tend to be nocturnal, but it is not rare to see one during the day. Often, like me, you will see a "toad shaped" rock in the middle of the road. In Spring they emerge from their burrows and congregate in breeding ponds. Preferred breeding sites are permanent or temporary water bodies that have shallow sandy bottoms. Females can lay an average of 12,000 eggs in each clutch. They look like strings of black pearls.

The tadpoles are black and they metamorphose into tiny little toads that look just like miniature adults. They can be about 1.5 inches small! The tadpoles are herbivorous and they eat mostly algae, whereas adults are insectivorous and will eat flying insects, as well as earthworms, beetles, ants, centipedes and slugs. The tadpoles turn into toadlets by the end of the summer and do not mature into full-fledged adults for 2 to 3 years. Adults can reach 5.5 inches, not including the hind legs!

After breeding, adult western toads disperse into terrestrial habitats such as forests and grasslands. They may roam far from standing water, but they prefer damp conditions. Western toads spend much of their time underground; though they are capable of digging their own burrows in loose soils, they generally shelter in small mammal burrows, beneath logs and within rock crevices.

Continued on page 3

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



DATE: October 9, Saturday

PLACE: Mica Grange for the ritual fueling up with donuts and juice

TIME: 8:00 a.m.

Plan on about 1-2 hours. Wear long pants, long sleeves, and bring water. Come out and enjoy a fall morning and see if this is the time that one of us finds a treasure out there.

For more information call Mike Zagar 819-5115.



**House Finch
photograph by
Wayne Tree**

PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

Reprinted from:

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

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help 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 and Bird Studies Canada.

It is open to anyone with an interest in birds! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

Count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided (plantings, food, or water). For each species, you will report only the

highest number of individuals that you see *in view at one time*. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over our web site or on paper data

There is a \$15 annual participation fee (\$12 for Lab members, CAN\$35 for Canadian participants), which covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and a year-end report (*Winter Bird Highlights*). Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

For additional information go to:

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

REVISED 2009 YARD LIST RESULTS

Lisa Hardy



American Coot-- photograph by Wayne Tree

Well, I can only plead *mea culpa*. While I was busy rounding up late entries to the 2009 Yard List Challenge, I forgot about Bob Hanson's letter of his 2009 observations sitting in my in-box. That's your reward for sending your list in on-time, Bob!

But it is better that I'm late than that I miss noting these observations. The Hansons' list adds 13 new species, bringing the total to 105. Many of these are water birds, like Tundra Swan and American Coot, thanks to the lake vistas from the Hansons' property, but the highlight is a Red-breasted Sapsucker seen March 12-14 in their yard. The Red-breasteds are found west of the Cascades, with only rare individuals wandering this far east. Bob also reports many species nesting on or near their property, such as Ruffed Grouse, Calliope Hummingbird, Spotted Towhee and Bullock's Oriole.

The updated 2009 Yard List tabulation can be found on our website. My apologies, Bob, and thanks again to all participants.

BOREAL TOAD TIDBITS

Continued from page 1

The bumpy skin of adult toads has very distasteful secretions that make them a desperate last choice for most would-be predators. If they are really lucky toads, they may live ten years in the wild. Captive toads have lived as long as 36 years.

Western toads in BC are “apparently secure”, whereas populations in the western United States have seen significant declines. Major threats to the toad include introduction of fishes into lakes and ponds (they are predators of the tadpoles), being run over by vehicles as they migrate, development or destruction of their wetland habitat, and disease.

BIRDING IN COSTA RICA

Bird watching eco-tourism expeditions that could be life changing for you! You are invited to come along!

Kathleen Cameron

Editors Note: Kathleen Cameron was our program speaker at our May 2010 meeting. In 2009 she organized an eco-tourism birding tour to Costa Rica. Two of our local Audubon members, Ronn and Roberta Rich, participated in this tour along with some Spokane Audubon Chapter members. Ronn and Roberta said it was a great tour. Kathleen is organizing two tours for 2011: March 4-17 and March 18 to April 1. The following two articles are from brochures giving details of the trip. I can email you the brochures or you can contact: Kathleen Cameron cell 208-721-0687 majesticfeathers@cox.net or majesticfeathers@gmail.com

In 2008, I went on a birding tour to Costa Rica that changed my life. It changed my life because it brought home to me how vital this Central American country is to the birds that migrate to North America each spring to breed and rear their young. You might be thinking that I should have known how important the habitat of Costa Rica is, and intellectually I did, but I have to say that it wasn't until I actually saw for myself the hordes of shorebirds making their way north along the Pacific Coast, the Orchard and Baltimore Orioles munching on tropical fruit, and thrushes foraging in the rainforest that it hit home for me. It really impacted me to see, for instance, a Spotted Sandpiper right next to a Caiman and think, “my gosh I could see that very same sandpiper along the river near my home a couple of months hence.” On that day I will tick it off my year list but this time it will be different. I will have the vision of a Spotted

Sandpiper nearly beak to snout with a Caiman in my mind, a sight that I had never even thought of before.

An image that now communicates to me volumes about this bird's incredible journey.

The spring and fall migration will never be the same for me. Now I know where some of my yard birds and those striking Swainson's Hawks are going and what the habitat is like in their winter homes. It now makes total sense to me why the Bullock's Orioles and the Black-headed Grosbeak devour the orange halves and the grape jelly that I put out for them in May and June. They are used to eating fruit in their tropical winter homes.

I really can't say enough about how much I gained from my trip to Costa Rica and as you might imagine, it wasn't just the 336 birds that we saw and enjoyed. It was far more. I gained a greater sense of the interconnectness of everything; plants, insects, and people. I came away with an expanded awareness of the impact of habitat loss and forest fragmentation on the resident birds, wintering birds and seasonal migrants. Previously, I had little to no knowledge about altitudinal migration and now I do. Besides this, I experienced the breath-taking sight of one of the most sought-after altitudinal migrants in the world, the Resplendent Quetzal. I am not kidding, my breath caught in my throat and tears came to my eyes. It sounds a bit hokey but in that instance I knew why this bird was sacred to the Mayan and the Aztec. I thought that I might fall to my knees!

Yes, Costa Rica is a land populated with jewels with wings, 880 species of them to be exact, and then there are the butterflies, that account for 10 % of all known species in the world. I can't even image how many insect species there are but the bottom line is this, when it comes to diversity and density of flora and fauna this country is a winner and you will have hit a birder's dream jackpot when you go on this trip!

Meet Your Guide

Edwin Ramirez is a native of Costa Rica, born and raised on a coffee and tomato farm. From the time he was a youngster he experienced an ever-growing interest in the natural world around him. It was not uncommon for Edwin to put aside his coffee-picking basket to pursue a complex and intriguing song coming from the woods to discover the identity of the bird that brought this song to his ears.

Continued on Page 4

Meet Your Guide

Continued from Page 3

His love for birds eventually led to big trouble, especially in the instance of releasing his father's prized caged Blue-crowned & Golden-browed Chlorophonias! But this did not end his love of birds. Edwin's passion for the living planet around him increased and when he got the chance to attend the Universidad Nacional to study for a career as a Tropical Biologist he didn't hesitate. It was during this time period while on a field trip to San Isidro del General that Edwin met Alexander F. Skutch (yes - the co-author of the "Bible" of birds in Costa Rica: *A Guide to The Birds of Costa Rica*, Stiles and Skutch) who introduced him to the art of birdwatching. Edwin refers to Skutch as a "one of a kind maestro", and his inspiration. Skutch became his birding instructor and friend. Edwin has facilitated birding expeditions for the ABA, Audubon Soc., Elderhostel, Holbrook Travel Inc., and for his own tours. Edwin Ramirez does a great job of sharing the history and culture of Costa Rica, knowledge about this eco-system, and he is a wonderful naturalist and just a great bird guide! You will really enjoy him. He has been guiding throughout Central and South America for 20 years and he is able to take you places that other tours can't because of his personal connections. To quote Edwin, "I love the art of Birding and try to make it contagious and fun to anyone around me."

You can take my word for it, Edwin is a wonderful guide and teacher and you will have the time of your life birding with him!

LA PAZ RIVER CLOUD FOREST RESTORATION FOUNDATION

A portion of the proceeds from your tour will be donated to this foundation

Edwin Ramirez

The La Paz Cloud Forest is located in the county of San Ramón (province of Alajuela) approximately one hour and 30 minutes Northwest from Costa Rica's main international airport. Here beautiful remnants of the original forest that once covered the whole of the uppermost portions of the Tilarán Mountain Range thrive and resist the ever-increasing pressures that humans continue to put on this delicate and fragile mosaic of ecosystems.

My very first visit to this magical place was some 30 years ago when a friend of mine invited me to come along and help him round up and herd some cattle. As we started to pierce and cut through this

evergreen realm of trees covered with bowl-shaped bromeliads and the yellow, white and purple-colored flowers of different orchids, many creeks and a river as avenues of crystal clear waters played before us, and the voices and songs of birds followed me as I walked up and down. I could not help it and a big part of me got trapped and actually continues to dwell amongst the breezes and mosses of this heavenly spot, Si La Paz de San Ramón, where the Sunbittern nests and displays, and the wild aguacatillos (avocados) get dispersed by the Quetzales. This is my idea of paradise, where our moisture charged alisios (trade winds) bathe the ridges atop the continental divide, and the rain shadow swings back and forth towards the depths of el Río La Paz.

I had many trips, hikes, days of camping, and months of birding in this precious corner of Costa Rica over these 30 years. It was some 10 years ago that I woke up at night and realized that, as I tried to go back to sleep, something within was bugging me. It only took me a few minutes to discover that the time had come for a closer connection to this sacred (to my thoughts and understanding) site. The next morning, I took the public bus to the end of the paved road and started my walk on the mud and gravel sections (the filter) and began to carefully look for a piece of land I liked. And again, to my eyes, they all looked beautiful in their own way-little parcels that the Costarican Agrarian Institute had been given to the people of La Paz de San Ramón, little pieces of land that were meant to be the farming territory for sugar cane, strawberries, and a few other crops. The farming results had been extremely poor since the true vocation of this soil is to sustain areas of forest.

And yes, I did it! I bought my first small chunk of land that urged repair. And then second and third ones came. I have restored forest on my own land quite well, but then I came to the point where I realized that I cannot, should not buy all the land that needs protection. Instead it would be much more meaningful if many other people joined me in this Forest and River conservation/restoration project. This is when the Foundation for the Protection and Conservation of the La Paz River and surrounding Forests was born.

The members of this group include friends, neighbors, and family members. We all cooperate in order to talk to farmers and convince them to let us plant some trees native to the area in a section or two on their plot of land. We have our own tree nurseries.

Continued on page 5



BEGINNING BIRDING TRIP WITH LYNN SHERIDAN

Thursday, August 19, 2010

On a cooler than usual day, three friends, Pat Bearman, Adela Sussman and Vera Taggart, met me at the beginning of Rosenberry Drive at North Idaho College and the Spokane River at 9:00 a.m. A new birder, Linda Taylor from Spirit Lake, joined us. The Canada Geese, Mallards, and Ring-billed Gulls were everywhere. The Osprey nest was deserted, but we saw and heard two nearby. We scanned the gulls hoping for an unusual one but found only Ring-Billed. In a group of blackberry and Oregon grape bushes, were noisy flocks of House Sparrows and European Starling. On the lake, two Double-crested Cormorant were sitting on pilings. Back up along the road, Vera spotted a silent Northern Flicker on the college grounds, and we all got a good look. Pygmy Nuthatch were heard but not seen.

Thank you, everyone, especially Linda from Spirit Lake!. As we were leaving, she took her bicycle out of her vehicle and went for a spin around town.

HIDDEN LAKE CRANBERRY BOG SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

Bill Gundlach

Seven people from various locations met at the Killarney Lake boat launch to begin what has turned into an annual event: picking cranberries from a real bog.

After unloading two canoes and three kayaks, we proceeded westward across Killarney Lake to the narrow channel leading into Hidden Lake. This channel is well-grown-in with wild rice which had not been harvested yet. While paddling, we observed many ducks, mostly Mallards and many Wood Ducks, rising straight up out of their hidden resting and feeding areas in the wild rice. The number of Wood Ducks is not surprising considering the many duck boxes that have been mounted on trees and pilings in the area by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. When we finally reached the bog, we pulled our boats up and everyone started picking cranberries. This was wet fun with the light rain and bog water, but everyone was pretty well prepared and I heard no complaints as everyone moved from patch to patch filling their buckets. After a couple of hours and stopping to eat our lunches, it was time to head back. Although this was not a true birding trip,

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

we did see some other birds: Northern Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, and Red-necked Grebe.

Participants included Janet Callen and her daughter Leslie Covey from Turner Bay, Dennis Andrew from Spokane and his friend Joyce Kelley from Coeur d'Alene, Shannon Malloy, my step-daughter-in-law from Bovill, Linda Wright and myself.

CLOUD FOREST Continued from page 4

Perhaps the greatest reward of all has been to see a pair of Resplendent Quetzales (the most beautiful bird in the Americas) come and pluck wild avocados from a tree I planted some seven years ago.

On some Majestic Feathers Costa Rica trips we will visit the restoration project and may even have the opportunity to plant some trees!

FIELD TRIPS 2010-2011



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.

MICA BAY SURVEY

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

Time: 9:00 a.m.

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. Everybody is welcome, especially beginner birders. We will help you with identification skills.

MILL CANYON-SPOKANE COUNTY

Date October 17, 2010; Sunday

Leaders: Phil & Judy Waring 765-5378

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet: K-Mart

This will be a full-day trip. Bring lunch and water. Target Birds: Woodpeckers, including Lewis's and White-headed.

EXPLORING FARRAGUT STATE PARK

Date: November 7, 2010, Sunday

Leader: Roland Craft 457-8894

Meet: K-Mart

Time: 8:00 a.m.

This will be a hiking trip. There are many trails we can explore. Check later for details.

