

# THE FISH HAWK HERALD



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

October 2012

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## Serendipity

George Saylor

Serendipity is defined as the faculty of making fortunate discoveries by

accident, or the occurrence and developments of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way. In general it refers to finding or discovering something valuable or beneficial when you are not looking for it. I have always preferred "the art of making happy unsought for discoveries". One of the reasons I love bird-watching is that all those elements of serendipity are present in it. Often times it happens by chance but as the saying goes "chance favors a prepared mind."

Thus it was over Labor Day weekend for me when Katie and I were staying at our daughter's in Dover, just west of Sandpoint, watching their dogs while they were out of town. On a clear, crisp Sunday morning I decided to take a bicycle ride around the Dover Bay development, a beautiful area along the shore of Lake Pend O'reille and the river of the same name. It is an area of mixed habitat, with lake, river, open fields, mixed trees, shrubs and marshland. You're right – it is an excellent area to look for birds because of the many types of habitat.

So, on a Sunday morning I decided to go on a "bike ride." However, I also decided to take along my binoculars, (chance and the prepared mind) knowing there were birds in the area. My first serendipitous event was after parking the bike and slowly climbing a hill overlooking the lake. I was able to identify a pair of Merlins that I had seen from below, my first sighting of them in years. At that moment, a Bald Eagle flew over the lake.



**Pileated Woodpecker**  
Photograph by Bill Linn

Before my ride was over an hour and a half later, I had other moments of serendipity. There was the great view of a Pileated Woodpecker hammering away at a dead birch tree, with Cedar Waxwings flying by.

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### OCTOBER PROGRAM

**DATE:** October 9, Tuesday

**PLACE:** Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey, CDA      **TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**PROGRAM:** . Dan Matiatos, manager at Turnbull, or Mike Rule, a biologist there, will be talking about the refuge management, a bit of its history, and recreational opportunities. A field trip to Turnbull is scheduled for October 13.

### Board Meeting

**Date:** October 2, Tuesday

**Place:** Lutheran Church of the Master

**Time:** 4:30 p.m.



## Serendipity

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There was the hard-won view of a Red-naped Sapsucker, and the up close view of a Common Yellowthroat, the friendly visit up close and personal of Black-capped Chickadees, and even a sighting of a Red-eyed Vireo. Our bird of the month for September, the Osprey, was also present in abundance.

And so it went. By the time I returned I had seen twenty species. Not bad for a bike ride!

I hope your birding experiences are full of serendipity too. On a totally different note, I do hope those of you who were there enjoyed the September program and found it to be worthwhile. October's program features the Turnbull Wildlife Refuge, with a field trip to follow on Saturday. Two more chances to experience serendipity.

### Bird of the Month

## Rough-legged Hawk

Shirley Sturts

By late September and the first week in October, our Osprey have pretty much moved south for the winter. There is an occasional one that hangs around a bit later. Bill Gundlach reported one as late as October 21, 2002 at Enaville. Lisa Hardy reported one on October 22, 2006 in the Kingston area and found one as late as October 30, 2005 while birding along the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River.

As the Osprey leave, the Rough-legged Hawk moves in. However, unlike their water-loving relatives, they prefer the open space of fields and meadows where they can find their favorite food item, rodents. They also like to munch on grasshoppers, eating large numbers of them. They don't seem to bother other birds, leaving those for falcons and accipiters.

Around October 1<sup>st</sup> you should take a good look at hawks sitting on telephone poles where there are open fields. When you see a buteo hawk during the summer in the five northern counties, you can be pretty sure it will be a Red-tailed Hawk. Come October 1<sup>st</sup> you need to take a closer look. Although an occasional one could show up in September, October 1<sup>st</sup> seems to be the earliest of the arrival dates. I have October 1<sup>st</sup> as an arrival date for the years 1989, 1993,



**Photograph by  
Wayne Tree**

1994, and 1995. Many years, including 2011, it was not reported to me until November. It could have been here in October but no one reported it.

The Rough-legged Hawk spends the summers in the far north above the Arctic Circle where it builds

nests of sticks and grass on the open tundra or on cliffs. Young are fed a diet of voles and lemmings. They winter in southern Canada and the United States, except for the southeast. There are six different plumages, making identification somewhat of a challenge. There is the light juvenile, adult female and adult male. Then there is the dark juvenile and adult female and adult male. The light phase is the easiest to identify with its dark wrist patch, dark belly band, and white tail with a wide dark band at the tip.

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# Rough-legged Hawk

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**Photograph by  
Wayne Tree**

Records show that the Rough-legged Hawk is a fairly common winter resident throughout Idaho where suitable open habitat is available. It was first recorded in Idaho by J.C. Merrill in 1897, a major and surgeon in the U.S.. Army stationed at Fort Sherman.

(“Notes on the Birds of Fort Sherman”, Auk, Vol.14, No. 4, Oct, 1897). William B. Davis was the first to publish sightings of this species in southern Idaho, 1919-1921. (“Analysis of the Bird Population in the Vicinity of Rupert, Idaho”, Condor, Vol. 37, No.5, Sept.-Oct., 1935).

I keep arrival dates in a database. Please let me know of any observations in the five northern counties



## The Christmas Bird Count is now Free!

(*National Audubon email*) After nearly two years of internal discussions, budget-modeling, head-scratching, and intense decision-making, two major changes will come to the Christmas Bird Count program effective with the upcoming 113th Count in December, 2012. First, the CBC is now a free program. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5.00 fee of field participants.

Second, to minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, *American Birds* will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants, and

Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the CBC.

From December 14 through January 5 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action. From feeder-watchers and field observers to count-compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

## Fishing Line - Hazard

Taken from

“<http://birding.about.com/od/Threats/a/How-Fishing-Line-Hurts-Birds.htm>”

By [Melissa Mayntz](#)

### Where Fishing Line Threatens Birds

Anywhere fishing line is carelessly discarded, it can be a threat to birds. The most common areas where fishing line is a hazard include popular fishing shorelines of rivers, lakes and beaches, public fishing docks in urban and suburban areas, and tangled in trees and bushes near fishing spots. In any of these areas, birds can be ensnared in the line, leading to injuries, drowning and other threats.

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# Fishing Line

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**Birds Affected by Fishing Line** At first thought, many fishers and birders assume that fishing line only threatens birds in the water where fishing takes place, such as ducks, geese and other waterfowl. While these types of birds do have a higher rate of fishing line injuries, the line can also affect other types of birds, including: gulls, terns and shorebirds on beaches, wading birds that forage alongside rivers, songbirds that get snared in tree tangles, and raptors that hunt in fishing areas



## Fishing Line tragedy at Fernan Lake

Larry Krumpelman emailed me this photo he took this summer.

"I would like to report the death of one of our Osprey at Fernan Lake due to entanglement with old fishing line . A very sad day" -- Larry

THE FISH HAWK HERALD

Not only can fishing line threaten a wide variety of birds, but other animals such as turtles, muskrats, otters and even curious pets can be at risk in areas where fishing line is inappropriately discarded. In rare cases, large tangles of fishing line have even been known to injure kayakers or swimmers.

**How Fishing Line Hurts Birds** Monofilament fishing line is a strong, durable material that does not degrade or decompose, so one tangle can stay in an area for months or years, threatening birds and other wildlife every day. Depending on the size or length of the line and how birds encounter it, fishing line can hurt birds in many ways, such as:

- **Tangle Injuries:** Birds that get tangled in fishing line will struggle, but the line only tightens and can cut into legs, feet, necks, wings and any other body part that gets ensnared. When the line tightens enough without relief, limbs can be critically disabled, even amputated.
- **Movement Restriction:** If the fishing line does not tighten enough to cause a serious injury to a bird, it can still restrict their movement by decreasing the range of motion of their legs or wings. This can make it harder to forage or escape from predators.
- **Starvation:** When fishing line gets tangled around a bird's bill, it can cause starvation as the bird is unable to forage effectively. Birds that accidentally ingest fishing line may eventually starve as well, as the plastic in their stomach restricts how much food they can digest.
- **Drowning:** When birds are netted by discarded fishing line, they may drown as a tide comes in, waters rise or their struggles force them under the water with no way to escape.

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## Fishing Line

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- **Nest Risks:**

Birds may be tempted to use fishing line in their nests, but doing so can threaten both

brooding parents and young hatchlings. Parents may get tangled as they shift around while brooding, and as young birds grow, they can be tangled in loose bits of line. In extreme cases, hatchlings may even be bound together by a tangle as they grow, resulting in poor growth, as in a case of conjoined robins in Utah in 2011.

- **Hook Injuries:** When discarded fishing line contains hooks, birds might see the glittery trinket as a tempting morsel, but their mouths and throats can be cut by the hook. Hooks can also cut into birds that are snared in fishing line, causing additional injuries that can become infected.
- **Lead Poisoning:** If fishing line is attached to lead sinkers, birds that ingest those sinkers are subject to the toxic effects of lead poisoning. This type of poisoning can be a lengthy, debilitating illness that causes much suffering for affected birds.
- **Overfishing:** While discarded fishing line is not responsible for overfishing, if an area is very popular with sport fishermen the food supply for piscivorous birds is severely depleted. This can force them to adjust their range or rely on less suitable food sources that do not provide the best nutrition.

**How You Can Help:** Because fishing line is such a potent hazard to birds, it is imperative that it be properly cleaned up and safely disposed of. Whether or not you fish, you can always help.

- Remove any discarded line you come across, or any line that breaks when you are fishing.
- Look for tangles whenever you are birding in a riparian area that is open to fishing.
- Organize a fishing line collection from your local birding club, school group or service group.
- Carry small scissors at all times in order to cut line free if you do find it.
- Contact bird rescue organizations if you find a tangled bird so it can get help quickly.
- Only fish in authorized areas where the risk of line tangling in trees or brush is minimal.
- Use the proper fishing line weight and tackle when fishing to minimize the risk of breakage.
- Share information about how fishing line hurts birds with other fishers so they can take appropriate steps to safeguard wildlife.

Fishing line may itself be lightweight, but it is a heavy risk to many types of birds. Understanding those risks is the first step in being able to help keep birds and other wildlife safe in fishing areas.

## Phillio Lake Feld Trip

Darlene Carlton



**Photograph by Darlene Carlton**

Our first field trip of the season was to lovely Philleo Lake near Turnbull NWR in Washington. We met members of the Spokane Audubon Society in Spangle, WA. Biologist Ivan Lines guided us to the lake. He has owned the west end of the lake for a number of years with 5 other men. They are in the process of turning the property over to Turnbull NWR for preservation.

We saw over 20 species of birds, including American White Pelicans, yellowlegs, Black-necked Stilts, phalaropes, Double-crested Cormorants, peeps, assorted ducks and geese, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Cedar Waxwings, Western Wood Peewee, Killdeer, Northern Harrier, and many got to see the Peregrine Falcon. Other animals included a river otter, praying mantis, and many flying insects.

CDA Audubon members included Midge and Jim Brenon, Roland Craft, Dick Cripe, Joan and Bill Gundlach, George Sayler, Matt Thurley, Karen Williams, Mary Deasy, and Darlene Carlton.

## Black Lake Field Trip

Roland Craft

Our September 15 field trip to the Black Lake area along the chain lakes occurred on a sunny warm day, although there was quite a bit of smoke from the numerous forest fires. We met Bob Martinson on his 170 acre property adjacent to Black Lake. He guided us on numerous trails through ponderosa pine and grand fir habitat. We spotted Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatches, American Robin, Common Raven, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwing, Pine Siskin, Red-tailed Hawks and Turkey Vulture.

Bob has enrolled his property in the Tree Farm Program and has done an excellent job in managing his timberland for multiple purposes. We also found time to examine a variety of scat. We identified deer, elk, coyote, and bear scat. Bob said he has seen 3 cougar and moose on his land. On the Black Lake Road, we spotted California Quail and what we think were White-throated Swifts (*very rare for our area-editor*). All the evidence pointed to that, but we are not sure.



**Northern Harrier  
Photographed by Bill Linn**

On the way back to Coeur d'Alene, we observed many birds on and near the lakes along Highway 3, including Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, juvenile Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Belted

Kingfisher, and Pied - billed Grebe, Wood Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, American Wigeon and Canada Geese. We could have identified many more waterfowl but we ran out of time.

Participants were Darlene Carlton, Pat Bearman, Karen Williams, Valerie Zagar and Roland Craft.



## Events



### Adopt-a-Highway Fall Cleanup

**Date:** October 6 , Saturday

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

**Place:** Meet at Mica Grange Hall for donuts, coffee and road assignments. It may take 1-2 hours depending on number of volunteers. Long pants, sleeves and gloves are advisable. If you are planning to help with the clean-up and have not signed up yet please call, Mike Zagar, 208 - 819- 5115.

### Project Feeder Watch

The Cornell Lab is now taking sign-ups for the 2012-2013 Feeder Watch season, which begins on Nov.10. 2012.

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

### Kootenai Environmental Alliance

Noon meetings at the Iron horse Restaurant the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, running September through June. Check their home page for information on upcoming meetings, or call the office at 667-9093, or email KEA at kealliance.org. <http://www.kealliance.org>

### KEA - Junk2Funk Eco-Fashion Show

4th Annual Junk2Funk Eco-Fashion show will be held again in the Coeur d'Alene Eagles Club on Sherman Ave in downtown. Just \$24.99 for a trash-n-good time! Saturday, Oct 13 at 7-10 PM. Silent auction items will be available

## Field Trips

**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 9, Tuesday (held 2nd Tuesday of each month - times vary depending on month)

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. **Note time change from summer**

**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.

### Turnbull Wildlife Refuge

**Date:** October 13, 2012 (Saturday)

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

**Meet:** South side K-Mart parking lot

**Leader:** George Saylor 664-2787

**Activity:** A visit to Turnbull for fall migrants. This will be a half-day trip, but bring lunch or snacks.

### Sprague Lake

**Date:** Saturday, October 27

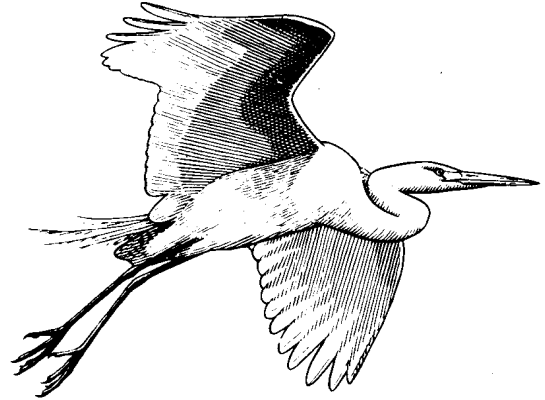
**Leader:** Phil and Judy Waring

**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.

National Audubon Coeur d'Alene Chapter  
P.O. Box 361  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816



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