



The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

January/February, 2016

Sometimes Elusive, Chickadees Brighten up the Winter

By Crista Videriksen Worthy

We moved to Idaho from southern California four years ago, arriving at our new home on Halloween, moments before the first trick-or-treaters knocked on the door (I brought candy though)! Before I'd even finished unpacking, I hung a suet feeder from a branch on our maple tree, eager to see a chickadee for the first time.

Not a single bird of any type ever patronized the suet, although our three feeders filled with hulled sunflower chips soon became, and still are, the hit of the neighborhood. In winter, the most common patrons of our feeders are the house finches and lesser goldfinches. But not one chickadee.

Indeed, it wasn't until we undertook a series of hikes this past October that I finally saw them. We walked far up into the Eagle Cap Wilderness, in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. Our first interesting bird was a dipper, which my husband spotted.

We watched it walk along the bottom of an eddy in the East Fork of the Wallowa River. Later, near Aneroid Lake, I heard the chickadees before I spotted them: that call, *chick-a-dee-dee-dee* is unmistakable, even if you've never heard it before! And then we saw them in the conifers, busily exploring the buds at the ends of the branches. I also nearly stepped on a sooty grouse that froze as we approached (guess that's why some call them "fool hens.") We didn't see a single deer in the mountains, nor did anyone in the three hunting parties we passed, with pack horses strung out along the trail. But when we returned to the little town along Wallowa Lake, deer were everywhere, literally hundreds of them, grazing on grass in the yards, unafraid of people and safe in the knowledge they couldn't be shot in town.

Three weeks later we hiked in the hills above the Wood River Valley. Our first hike, through groves of yellow aspen, yielded hundreds of chickadees. On our second day, we hiked through hills burned by the 2013 Beaver Creek fire, which charred nearly 115,000 acres and coated Hailey, Ketchum and the Sun Valley Resort in ash. As we walked above Greenhorn Gulch, through groves of burnt aspen and pine, the silence was nearly complete—no birds—except for the woodpeckers. We heard them everywhere, not vocalizing but pounding the trees and

searching for beetles. In open areas, the hills were covered in fields of dried cheatgrass or tumbling mustard weeds, so uniform you'd think they'd been farmed. But whenever we walked beneath a few unburned conifers, we'd hear the chickadees again.

We stayed with our friend, who lives in Hailey. One morning a juvenile moose walked into his yard and proceeded to tear branches off his Honeycrisp apple sapling. Even his barking dog had no effect. You can't go out there and chase it off—even a "small" moose can kill you. This one, knowing we wished it to leave, instead kicked the little tree to bits and broke several branches off a larger one. The speed and power of its hooves was awe-inspiring. From behind the fence, my husband picked a few apples off the ground and threw them at the moose. They hit their target but the unafraid moose simply picked them off the ground and ate them. Eventually it ambled off.



Mountain chickadee

Photo by Crista Videriksen Worthy

Before returning home we stopped at both Redfish and Stanley lakes, normally packed with people in summer. This time, we had both lakes to ourselves—except for the chickadees. When we returned home I glanced into the back yard to see the Grim Reaper, in the form of a juvenile Cooper's hawk, dining on an unlucky quail. We have a flock of about 45 quail, and more keep arriving now that the sage is growing back from its "goat trimming" last summer. Two pheasants are back as well.

And then on Halloween, four years after we moved to Hidden Springs, I looked out my bedroom window to see a chickadee on a branch just two feet away. It flew over to the feeder and returned to the bush with one tiny sunflower chip, which it proceeded to pound against the branch, breaking it into nearly microscopic pieces, and eating them. Then it flew back to the feeder. Indeed, I had a whole flock of chickadees, busily taking seeds to branches and then going back for more. And they haven't left, now that they've finally found us.

It's interesting that they don't just stay on the feeder to eat multiple seeds, the way the finches and other birds do. Instead, they take just one seed at a time. Back and forth they go, endless little bundles of energy, all day long. Somehow I find them inspiring. They'll certainly brighten up the winter.

President’s Message

By Sean Finn

Dear Members of Golden Eagle Audubon Society,
 First: sincere wishes of comfort and joy this Holiday Season. It’s always hard to know when you’ll see the Golden Eagle Newsletter, so let me capture it all: Happy Chanukah, Joyous Solstice, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, and all the best for a Happy and Rewarding New Year.

Maybe it’s just me but it seems this past fall has been one for the ages. Mixed in with the hopeful victory for greater sage-grouse and the potential world-changing outcomes of the COP 21 Climate Change Conference (deliberations are on-going as I write this) it seems we’re witnessing an escalation of violence both at home and abroad, institutional and random. It saddens me as a father and a citizen of the planet that we can’t seem to describe a path toward peace and sustainability despite the universal recognition that we all desire to give our children a better world to live in. It’s not my intention to set a somber tone for this newsletter or for GEAS as we turn the calendar to 2016. But I do want to take a minute to affirm my belief and commitment that a functional social-ecological system is a necessary underpinning to a safe and hopeful future. That’s why I’m optimistic this new year. I believe that together we can defend and protect the rights of humans, wildlife and wild places by being proactive members of the global community and thinking and acting in ways that sustain diversity and stability in the human-natural world. My resolution is resolution—to seek solutions that in some way contribute to a healthy environment. Happy New Year to all!

With that, two quick notes: First, thank you to all who participated in the many Christmas Bird Counts in southwest Idaho (and elsewhere). Of course, I write this before counts have begun, but I trust all will be safe and sharp and ensure that one of the nation’s longest-standing monitoring (and citizen science!) programs delivers top notch data to help us all understand bird trends. Second, a reminder to reserve your tickets for the annual GEAS Banquet to be held at the Red Lion Downtowner on March 12. Our guest speaker, Ken Dial, is a world renowned bird researcher and educator. Ken is a fabulous communicator (remember All Bird TV?), and I guarantee you won’t be disappointed—either by Ken’s presentation or the opportunity to come together as a society and celebrate our commitment to bird conservation!

Sincerely,
 Sean Finn, President

Hummingbird Sightings Wanted

Please report any Idaho winter hummingbird sightings to the Intermountain Bird Observatory. They are looking to map Anna’s Hummingbirds wintering in the state, and may band your hummer if you are willing.
 More information at: <http://ibo.boisestate.edu/winter-hummers/>.
 Contact: IBO@Boisestate.edu or 208-426-2225.

GEAS CALENDAR January-February 2016

Family Birding Walk	January 10
Field Trip: Gull ID	January 16
Field Trip: Caldwell	January 23
Field Trip: Fort Boise WMA	January 31
Backyard Bird Count through Feb 15	February 12
Family Birding Walk	February 14
Field Trip: Marsing Island Park	February 27

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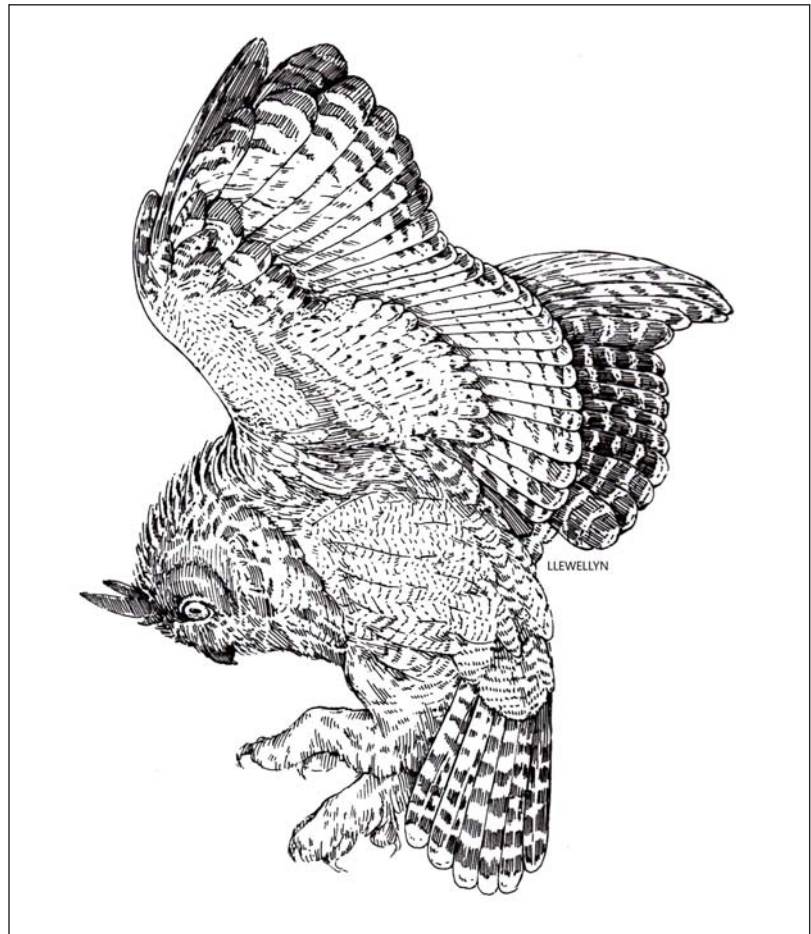
News From the Board:

The Golden Eagle Audubon Society Board completed and mailed the annual fundraising letter. Please consider donating to the Chapter. If you didn't receive a letter in the mail let us know, and visit goldeneagleaudubon.org to donate.

In addition the board:

- Has printed and sold almost 200 copies of "Out the Kitchen Window," a compendium of Hilda Larson's contributions to the GEAS Newsletter. Contact Sue Norton to get your copy.
- Confirmed Megan Llewellyn as our new Volunteer Coordinator. Welcome Megan!
- Completed the Chapter's Annual Report and submitted it to National Audubon Society
- Renewed our commitment to Adopt the Greenbelt and maintain the section off of Parkcenter
- Planning a Retreat for Spring 2016, to review the Chapter's Strategic Plan and find even more effective ways to achieve Chapter goals

The Board would like to thank all our 2015 volunteers and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year!



Eagle owl

by Megan Llewellyn m.rose.llewellyn@gmail.com

My Kitchen Window



Observations on Life and Nature
by Hilda Larson
Edited by Sue Norton and Cathy Eells

Hilda's Columns, Sketches Collected

Hilda Larson began writing a column for the Golden Eagle Audubon Society in the 1980s. She began writing a column for the Southwestern Idaho Birders Association in 2007. She also drew cartoons and sketches of birds and birders for the newsletters. She continued writing for both groups until her death in 2014.

Sue Norton and Cathy Eells have compiled a collection of Hilda Larson's columns and sketches from the newsletters called My Kitchen Window. Niels Nokkentved did the design and layout. It also contains a history of Al Larson and Hilda's project of setting up blue bird trails in Idaho.

The book will be of interest to people who like to watch birds and other wildlife and those who would like a glimpse into the world outside the windows in Hilda's life. She writes with great warmth, curiosity, and humor.

To order a copy contact Sue Norton at 378-4248 or at nortonsu@msn.com or Cathy Eells at 459-4435 or cathyeells53@gmail.com. Copies are \$13. Sue or Cathy will mail one to you for \$16. Proceeds will go to GEAS and SIBA.

GEAS EVENTS for January and February

Field trip information is subject to change. Please check the website <http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org> and go to the Calendar and Field Trips section for the latest information or contact Alex Takasugi at 484-9132 or alextakasugi@cableone.net and Kristin Gnojewski at kgnojewski@cableone.net.

Field Trip Etiquette: We set up car pools to take as few cars as possible, while making sure everyone has a window. Please give the driver of your ride gas money and arrive 10 minutes early.

Sunday, January 10

Family Birding Walk – Especially for children or the child in you
Time: 1 to 3 p.m.

Location: Marianne Williams parking lot, 3451 E. Barber Valley Drive, Boise

Contact: Alex Takasugi alextakasugi@cableone.net 484-9132
We will walk the paved loop around the park looking for geese, ducks and herons on the water, as well as songbirds in the brush. Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. We go over the basics of using binoculars. We have binoculars and field guides you can borrow. Sign up the kids in our Frequent Flyer Club where they earn rewards for birding. We will finish at 3 p.m.

Saturday, January 16

Event: How Gull-able are you (a.k.a. Gull ID 101)

Time: 9 a.m.

Meeting Place: Northgate Shopping Center, corner State Street and Gary Lane. (under the sign)

Leader/Contact: RL Rowland (208) 336-9808 (H) Best, no answer, try (C) (208) 297-9953 rlrowland@centurylink.net
Well... here we go again, mid-Jan, cold weather... hmmm... just gotta be RL's rousing clarion call for to get folks out to that winter-birding-sports Mecca, called the Ada Co. Landfill, to begin learning some basics of gull identification. RL is not the best "guller" (birders who go out deliberately looking for, finding and identifying gulls, known as "gulling") in the state, far from it, but he is so enthusiastic about teaching folks that these birds can not only be speciated (told apart), but, also aged by each species' various plumage differences, juvenile to adult and more. He can go on-and-on on the subject so if you don't want to subject yourself to his monotonous disjointed litany (and in the cold to boot!) then by all means stay home and spare yourself some misery or come on out and get a start on identification in the "Wonderful World of Gulls."

Saturday, January 23

SIBA Field Trip to Canyon Hill Cemetery, Rotary Pond Park and Caldwell Ponds

Location: Canyon Hill Cemetery, 2024 N. Illinois Avenue, Caldwell (I-84 west exit 28, turn right onto Illinois)

Time: 9 a.m.

Leader: Letty Percifield

Contact: Alex Takasugi alextakasugi@cableone.net 484-9132
Folks in Boise and points east: let's meet at the Eagle Road Park and Ride (Eagle and Overland) at 8:00 to form carpools. Canyon Hill Cemetery is a good winter birding location, and the ponds and Boise River provide lots of waterfowl action. This is a long half-day trip.

Sunday, January 31

Field Trip: Fort Boise WMA

Time: 9:30 a.m. at Martin Landing parking area

Leader: Kevin Glueckert

Contact: Alex Takasugi alextakasugi@cableone.net 484-9132
Folks in Boise and points east: let's meet at the Eagle Road Park and Ride (Eagle and Overland) at 8:30 a.m. to carpool (I'll hand out a direction sheet to the WMA).

Let's spend the morning exploring the Martin Segment of Fort Boise WMA. This area includes walking trail access through riparian woodland to the confluence of the Boise and Snake Rivers, with a variety of bird species possible. We will also peruse the surrounding fields and fencerows for wintering raptors, sparrows, etc. A point of emphasis during this trip will be the identification of call notes of passerines. By noon, we will move on to the main boat launch parking area at the north end of the WMA, where we can explore the riverside cottonwoods and willows. From there, a trail leading to Teal Ponds (and beyond) offers the opportunity to see additional species. Pack lunch, snacks, and water. Wear sturdy footwear and prepare for adverse weather conditions. If the weather cooperates, we'll keep birding until 3:30 pm. Bathrooms are available at both parking locations.

Friday, February 12 through Monday, February 15

Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon Society **Great**

Backyard Bird Count

Web site: gbbc.birdcount.org

If you have as little as 15 minutes to count birds—at your feeder, in your yard, in a neighborhood park, or anywhere—you can join people all over the world in helping scientists assess the health of bird populations. Just make a separate list for each location and day you count, then enter them online. Go to the website and look at the instructions under the "GBBC Toolkit" links on the right side of the page.

Sunday, February 14

Family Birding Walk – Especially for children or the child in you
Time: 1 to 3 p.m.

Location: Barber Park parking lot, 4049 S. Eckert Road, Boise

Contact: Alex Takasugi alextakasugi@cableone.net 484-9132

We will walk the trails along the river looking for geese, ducks and herons on the water, as well as songbirds in the brush, and check the trees in the parking lot for owls. Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. We go over the basics of using binoculars. We have binoculars and field guides you can borrow. Sign up the kids in our Frequent Flyer Club where they earn rewards for birding. We will finish at 3 p.m.

Saturday, February 27

SIBA Field Trip to Marsing Island Park at the Marsing Bridge

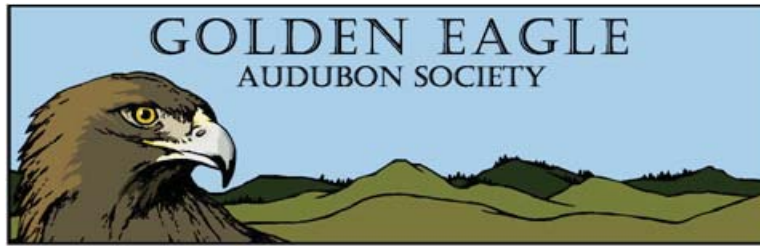
Location: Idaho 55 bridge over the Snake River at Marsing

Time: 8 a.m.

Leader: Letty Percifield

Contact: Alex Takasugi alextakasugi@cableone.net 484-9132

Let's meet at the Eagle Road Park and Ride (Eagle Rd and Overland) at 7 a.m. to form carpools. After looking for birds in the ponds near the bridge we will continue on to Malheur County and the Owyhee River. We hope to see the Barrow's goldeneye and many raptors. It could be cold and birders need to bring water and lunch. We will do some walking so good boots are necessary. We should conclude and be back about 4 p.m.



P.O. Box 8261 Boise, ID 83707 ♦ www.goldeneagleaudubon.org

Annual Banquet and Auction

Saturday, 6 p.m., March 12, 2016
 Red Lion Downtowner, 1800 Fairview Ave.
 \$45 Per Person or \$400 for a table of 10

Kenneth Dial, 2016 GEAS Banquet Speaker, to Discuss ‘Waxing and Waning of Wings: Ecology and Evolution of Avian Locomotion’

Kenneth Dial is a professor in the Division of Biological Sciences at the University of Montana. His research program has focused on the biomechanics, ecology and evolution of avian flight. Dial took a keen interest in aeronautics and biology as a teenager. For more than 20 years, he was acting director of the UM Flight Laboratory as well as director of UM Field Research Station at Fort Missoula. He teaches graduate classes in evolutionary ecology in East Africa. With more than 30 years of experience as a pilot, Dial is certified to fly several types of jet aircraft but prefers backcountry flying into hidden dirt and grass airstrips. He hosted 26 episodes of “All Bird TV” on the Discovery Channel’s Animal Planet. He currently is transitioning from his professorial duties to wildlife conservation efforts in Tanzania, Kenya, southern California and western Montana.



Please consider joining us for this annual fundraising event. In addition to our wonderful presenter, we will have a delightful silent auction during the social hour before dinner. Come spend the evening in good company and select a delicious homemade dessert as part of the fundraiser for \$5. Dinner is served at 7 p.m.

Banquet Registration – Due by March 7, 2016

Please complete your registration, with payment, and mail to: GEAS, 1963 Teal LN, BOISE, ID 83706
 or pay by credit card online at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/banquet

Tickets are \$45 per person or a reserved table for 10 is available for \$400. To purchase a table please call or email Liz Urban at 208-629-2146 or urbanhawk127@gmail.com

Name: _____	Phone: _____	Email: _____
Address: _____	City: _____	State: _____ Zip: _____
Number of tickets (@ \$45 per guest): _____	Check Enclosed: \$ _____	

Entrée Choices are Beef Tenderloin (B), Char-Grilled Northwest Salmon (S), or Vegetarian Lasagna (V).
 Please indicate each guest’s selection by circling one selection below:

Guest Name: _____ Entrée Choice: B, S, V
 Guest Name: _____ Entrée Choice: B, S, V
 Guest Name: _____ Entrée Choice: B, S, V
 Guest Name: _____ Entrée Choice: B, S, V

*If you would like to support GEAS by donating an auction item or a homemade dessert, please email Danette at danette444@gmail.com.
 Thank you!*



Steller's jay.

Photo by N.S. Nokkentved

The Golden Eagle Audubon Society publishes *The Golden Eagle* six times a year.

- Please help us save paper and mailing costs; if you would like to receive your newsletter online, send your name and zip code in an e-mail to membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org. GEAS does not share your email address.
- For membership/subscription information, renewals, or change of address, e-mail membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org.
- For newsletter submissions, send an e-mail to Niels S. Nokkentved at sparre47@gmail.com. The deadline for newsletter submissions is the second Sunday of the month.

We invite you to join the Golden Eagle Audubon Chapter

Membership in the local chapter includes a one-year subscription to *The Golden Eagle*, and all my dues remain with the local chapter and support local activities.

Name: _____
 E-Mail: _____ (allows for website login)
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

- Student membership \$15
- Individual membership \$20
- Family membership \$35
- Golden Eagle Lifetime membership \$500

I would like to donate an additional \$ _____

Make check payable to Golden Eagle Audubon Society. Mail to: Golden Eagle Audubon Society, PO Box 8261, Boise, ID 83707, **or pay by credit card on our website www.goldeneagleaudubon.org (click support GEAS).**

Please contact us for information on membership scholarships.

To join the National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/> and use chapter code G00 for Golden Eagle Audubon Society, or write to: National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250.

The Golden Eagle Audubon Society is southwest Idaho's chapter of the National Audubon Society. GEAS promotes environmental awareness through field trips, local programs and volunteer work.

Post Office Box 8261, Boise, Idaho 83707
www.goldeneagleaudubon.org

Chapter Code: C5ZG000Z