



Bird-a-Thon Team Holds Fundraiser for Feathered Friends

By Beth Waterbury, Nongame Wildlife Biologist, Salmon
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

BELLEVUE – Starting before sunrise and bracing against sub-freezing temperatures, a binocular-clad group of four piled into a truck with an Idaho license plate reading “BIRD ON.”

In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) on May 8th, the team of Poo Wright-Pulliam, Jean Seymour, Dave Spaulding, and Kathleen Cameron, going by the handle Bird Fanatics, set out on a 15-hour bird-a-thon that logged 111 species, trekked 500 miles, and generated over \$800 in proceeds to support bird conservation programs, including Idaho Department of Fish and Game’s Conservation Sciences Program.

The Bird Fanatics have birded together since 2004, when they enrolled in a Master Birding Class. The intense, science-based curriculum pushed them to a new level of birding and engagement in bird conservation work. They were instrumental in successfully nominating Magic Valley Reservoir and Silver Creek Preserve as Audubon Important Bird Area sites. For the last 6 years, they have conducted monthly monitoring of bird populations at the Silver Creek Preserve. The bird-a-thon was another expression of their spirit of volunteerism and passion for birds.

“We thought the bird-a-thon would be a creative and enjoyable way to raise funds for bird conservation,” explained Cameron. “It’s also a great way to raise awareness of migratory birds and the need to conserve their habitats across the Western Hemisphere.”

Friends, family, and birding colleagues were asked for a small donation for each species observed on bird-a-thon day. The team imposed a stringent rule that all four members had to see or hear a bird before it was counted toward the final tally. The Bird Fanatics cut a swath from the Wood River Valley to the Silver Creek Preserve, from Magic Valley Reservoir to Minidoka National



The Bird Fanatics: (from left to right) Dave Spaulding, Jean Seymour, Kathleen Cameron (picture), and Poo Wright-Pulliam; photo by Poo Wright-Pulliam.

Wildlife Refuge, where by 2:00 p.m. they counted their 100th species—an Orange-crowned Warbler. Cameron posted the team’s progress on her Facebook page, keeping friends informed and cheering from afar. “The Facebook aspect was really fun, knowing we had ‘virtual participants’ out there supporting us,” said Cameron.

From Minidoka, the team headed to American Falls Reservoir via Register Rock, where they got caught in a big downpour. A few more species were picked up before they turned south to search the juniper habitat at Mink Creek and Cherry Springs, south of Pocatello. The area was oddly lacking target birds, perhaps due to recent inclement weather which may have delayed the migration. As darkness approached, the team counted their 111th and last species of the day—a Black-crowned Night Heron.

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Salmon, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

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Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The second bighorn sheep viewing station opens...

Bird By Bird: Kids, Birding and a Great Program in the Schools

By Meggan Laxalt-Mackey Information & Education Specialist,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

How do we interest kids in the outdoors, teach them creatively, and impart a love of nature? And how do we encourage observational skills, improve attention spans, and encourage social interaction in youth? We teach them birding!

"Bird by Bird" did all that, and more. This exciting program, sponsored by partners in the Idaho Children and Nature Network (ICNN), used bird feeding and watching to connect youth with nature. Birding can provide a foundation for life-long observation skills, as well as heightened awareness of and appreciation for nature. Birding also can have a very positive impact on physical, emotional and mental health.

Knowing these things about birding, a group of committed teachers and ICNN partners operated a successful pilot educational program in Boise and Meridian schools this past year. ICNN partners (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Watchable Wildlife Program, Audubon Society's Golden Eagle Chapter, and Wild Birds Unlimited) developed the program, and leveraged collective funds and staff to operate in eight schools.

Participating schools were given bird feeding equipment (tube and ground feeders), optics (spotting scope, tripod and binoculars), a bird bath, perches, bird seed, and a great collection of bird books. Wild Birds Unlimited, the program's birding business partner, provided the seed, feeders and optics at a significant discount as their way of encouraging youth to engage in birding. The schools were also given native plants and trees to enhance bird habitat on school grounds. "Bird by Bird" facilitators provided assistance and visited classrooms.

There were some requirements for participating in the "Bird by Bird" program. Principals had to approve participation, and an area for bird observation and feeding had to be secured. The primary care-takers of the birds were to be the students, who had to feed and water the birds and care for the equipment. The schools used "Flying Wild" program curriculum for classroom projects. Schools were asked to participate in data collection, so they were enrolled in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Project Feeder Watch" and other bird counts to help them understand migratory bird pat-

"I learned so much about birds! I even did research online and from books about birds. I never knew they were so interesting until you taught us. Now, I look for birds almost every day. When I'm not doing my chores or I have nothing to do, I'm looking for birds."

Haylee L'Huillier

participate in data collection, so they were enrolled in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Project Feeder Watch" and other bird counts to help them understand migratory bird patterns. Students observed, collected and recorded data. As the students recorded bird data, teachers recorded observations about student behavior throughout the year, including attention span, social interaction, observation skills, physical activity, independent thought, creativity and teamwork. All teachers and students were required to submit reports at the end of year. From there, it was left to the teachers to design and implement their own program with their students.

Elementary schools included White Pine (John Keiser and Todd Belamy, 6th grade), Garfield (Joni Brooks, 3rd grade), Roosevelt (Lety Grisham, 6th grade) and Grace Jordan (Lane DeGiulio, 4th grade). Four high schools, Rocky Mountain (Todd Elson), Mountain View (Daisey Horner), Borah (Kris Stone) and Timberline (Dick Jordan) also participated.

"Bird by Bird" facilitators and teachers ended the year with rave reviews. The end-of-year projects were fantastic, ranging from art projects to writing to birdhouse construction to a video. Plans are being made to improve the program next year, and if funding allows, three more schools will be added. High schools students will also be asked to add a mentoring component to their requirement.

What did the kids think? For most, seeing birds was exciting during high migratory bird periods. The rush to the window to see a new bird was thrilling! Learning to use binoculars and spotting scopes was "cool." The books helped, and classroom visits were fun. Cleaning the stations and not seeing birds in lower migratory periods - not so much.

From fourth grade to high school, students could easily identify Boise's common birds by the end of the school year, and their interest was high. Joni Brooks' third grade students created a book of bird art that is a visual masterpiece, and they took bird walks. Maggie Shumar, fourth grade student at Grace Jordan, was recognized for her ability to show her teacher and fellow classmates neat things about birds. Todd Elson's high school students were inspired to create a native habitat at their high school for birds and wildlife. Daisey Horner's high school students made bird posters and a video. High schoolers learned how to collect and analyze scientific data. These stories and much more, tell us that birding in the schools had value.

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Looking out the classroom window; picture by Bailey Rogers, 4th grade.



Did you see that Idaho Bluebird?

A portion of a Wildlife License Plate purchase and/or renewal contributes to Idaho's Wildlife:

- Conservation
- Education Programs
- Habitat Improvements
- Wildlife Publications

Your support helps protect Idaho's wildlife heritage for present and future generations!

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PURCHASE ONE AT YOUR LOCAL DMV OR ONLINE AT:

www.accessidaho.org/secure/itd/personalized/plates.html



CATCH A LOOK AT IDAHO'S BLUEBIRD!

Idaho's bluebird specialty license plate has a new look. The design will please birdwatchers with its realistic depiction of Idaho's state bird and the state flower (Syringa). The new bluebird design joins the other wildlife license plates- elk and cutthroat.

More than 90% of Idaho's wildlife are nongame- which means that they are not hunted, fished, or trapped. Proceeds from the purchase of wildlife plates helps support the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Conservation Sciences Program (formally known as the Nongame Program). Funding supports conservation and management programs, surveys, and watchable wildlife and research activities. Idaho Fish and Game receives no revenues from state taxes.

The wildlife license plates, sponsored by the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, are available from every county assessor's and DMV office throughout Idaho.



The "newly designed" Idaho Bluebird Plate will be available in early August.





Summer *Wildlife Events*

Boise Watershed-

11818 West Joplin Rd., Boise; <http://www.cityofboise.org/Bee/EnvironmentalEducation>

July 7, 14, and 21- WaterShed Wednesday Series every Wednesday from 10am-12pm. Free for all ages. Join us for free activities, movies and more! We'll find out what plants and animals depend on clean water to live.

July 17- Watershed Weekend; Hot Summer, Cool Watershed

Beat the heat and stay cool at the Boise WaterShed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm! FREE admission! No pre-registration is required.

The center's summer teen program staff will lead "cool" activities they have designed for all ages. Join local visual and performance artists as they create memorable art experiences that connect with the center's mission of conserving precious natural resources.

Participate in an interpretive walk using the Boise WaterShed's new podcasts to learn more about the center's captivating works of art such as the "EnviroGuard Pipe Tree," made of old pipes from the wastewater treatment plant junkyard, and "Meander," the Gallery floor made of recycled rubber tire product.

You can also tour the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The tour begins at 1:00 pm in the Library. Note: For safety reasons, closed-toe shoes are required for the tour.

Deer Flat NWR

13751 Upper Embankment Rd.; Nampa; 208-467-9278; <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/>

July 15- Volunteer Orientation Session; 7pm

If you want to be a part of the fun and help wildlife, come join the growing volunteer program at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge will be holding a volunteer orientation session at the refuge Visitor Center at Lake Lowell. The volunteer coordinator, Lauren Roden, is inviting people interested in volunteering to learn about the refuge, refuge wildlife, and volunteer opportunities. Refreshments will be served.

Foothills Learning Center

3188 Sunset Peak Rd., Boise; (208) 514-3755 <http://www.cityofboise.org/Bee/Foothills/index.aspx>

SUNSET SERIES: No cost or registration is required. All programs are from 7-8.30pm. Please leave pets at home.

July 14- Natural Pest Control

Weeds and bugs are just part of our gardening world this time of year. Take this opportunity to learn from one of Boise's fine organic farmers how to control those pests the natural way – and when to just let them be. A great evening for garden guru and novice alike.

July 28 - Stories from the Natural World

Join the Treasure Valley Storytellers for an evening of fun and imagination. Hear stories of the world of nature. For millennia, storytelling has been one of the most important forms of entertainment and education for people all over the world. Come get a taste of the traditional art.

2nd SATURDAY SERIES: No cost or registration is required. Activities for adults and children! All programs are from 10am-2pm. Please leave pets at home.

July 10- Leapin' Lizards & Slithering Snakes

Yes, there will be LIVE animals!! We're all fascinated with snakes and lizards and they are more than a little mysterious. David Pilliod will lead us as we explore the mystery of these cool creatures, and help us understand the part they play in the foothills ecosystem. David is a wildlife ecologist and herpetologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, so he knows his reptiles! Join David for presentations at 10:00 am and 12:00 noon. In between, experience live lizards and snakes, do a fun craft or two, and explore the nearby trails to look for our reptile friends.

August- no program

Sept. 11-- Composting

Wait – don't throw out those food scraps and yard waste. Turn them into the perfect food for our Treasure Valley soils. Jennie Rylee will take you through the EASY way to compost in your backyard. You'll learn how "Compost Happens"; a simple recipe for foolproof composting; options for containing your pile; and how to use the finished product. Presentations at 10:00 am and 12:00 noon. Jennie is our education coordinator at the Foothills Learning Center and co-teaches the Master Composter course through Ada County Extension.

MK Nature Center

600 S. Walnut St., Boise; (208) 334-2225; <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/education/mknc/>

July 9 and 10- Face to Fish Days

Face to Fish Days - 20 Year Anniversary Event

What is your favorite face-to-fish encounter? Come to the nature center and try gyotaku, get in the Boise River, put your nose on the glass, and take a stream walk. Learn more and have some fun at this brand new

signature anniversary event as we showcase all of your favorite programs.

We are celebrating 20 years of "face to fish" experiences at this anniversary special event! Concessions will be available by Mustards Grill both Friday and Saturday, during the event times.

All activities and events are free.



Sept 9- Salmon BBQ; 5.30-8pm

Support Idaho Salmon + Steelhead Days by attending the salmon bbq. Enjoy a delicious salmon dinner. All barbeque activities are family friendly and include live music by Joshua Tree, gyotaku fish painting and splashing in the Boise River with the activity "Kids in the Creek." The Nature Center stream walk will be open for viewing live Chinook salmon and kokanee salmon. Tickets are limited and sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please call 334-2225 for more information.



BE OUTSIDE

IDAHO CHILDREN IN NATURE

Looking for an activity near you?
Check out:

<http://www.beoutsideidaho.org>

The bird-a-thon event exemplified the theme of this year's IMBD: the Power of Partnerships in Bird Conservation. The success of bird conservation efforts relies on collaborative partnerships as global as international treaties and as grass-roots as local Migratory Bird Day events. The Bird Fanatics' fundraising proceeds, augmented by donations collected at the Twin Falls-based Prairie Falcon Audubon IMBD event at Auger Falls, will be shared among Environment for the Americas, a non-profit organization that coordinates IMBD, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and a Kimberly-based licensed raptor rehabilitator.

"The bird-a-thon conducted by this passionate group of citizen scientists is a great example of how volunteers can raise awareness about Idaho's many watchable wildlife opportunities. Moreover, the proceeds raised can be used to leverage other sources of matching funds to make an important contribution toward the conservation of at-risk species or their habitats. Creative fund-raising efforts like this one are both inspirational and significant – thank you Bird Fanatics!"

Kathleen Cameron hopes the upbeat success of their bird-a-thon will inspire others to form their own fundraising birding teams across Idaho. She even invites some friendly competition to try and beat their bird-a-thon species total, knowing it's all for a good cause and a splendid time.

4 ways to support Idaho's wildlife in 2010



1. **BUY A HUNTING LICENSE.** People who hunt in Idaho are the only ones contributing to the conservation of game animals such as elk, deer, and mountain lion.
2. **BUY A FISHING LICENSE.** Anglers in Idaho pay for all fish stocking, habitat restoration, fisheries research, and some educational programs.
3. **BUY AN IDAHO WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATE.** Make your car look good AND support Idaho's nongame wildlife!
4. **DO YOUR TAXES RIGHT!** None of your tax money goes to fish and wildlife conservation. Make a donation to the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund on Line 37 of your Idaho State Tax Form.

Bird by Bird story continued from page 2...

Most importantly, though, "Bird by Bird" opened many students' eyes to the wonder of birds, which hopefully is a life-long lesson. Mountain View High School Teacher Daisey Horner said it best: "The one hope I have for my students is that now they will be more observant when they are at the park, ball game, or in a parking lot. It is just like the saying about planting seeds and waiting for them to grow. Maybe some day down the line, a student will say, "Look there's a American Goldfinch!"

"Bird by Bird" was facilitated by Meggan Laxalt Mackey (USFWS), Deniz Aygen (IDFG), Larry Ridenhour (BLM), Julie Steele (Wild Bird Unlimited), Dennis Mackey (USFWS), and Terry Rich (USFWS).

For more information, contact Meggan Laxalt Mackey at 208-378-5796, Deniz Aygen at 208-287-2750, or Larry Ridenhour at 208-334-3334.



Maggie Shumar, 4th grader at Grace Jordan Elementary School, was recognized for her ability to show her teacher and fellow classmates neat things about birds; photo by Carol Wanstrom, USFWS.

"I never did like birds, but till I saw how cool it is to watch them, I started to love learning about birds all the time. I read books about birds at school now. It was fun to learn about birds. Thanks for giving us the things to learn about them."

Ayely Guzman, 4th grade

Nampa's Ospreys: a new way of watching

By Katie McVey, Environmental Education Specialist
Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge along with Fiberpipe Internet and Network Solutions of Boise and Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge have installed a webcam at an osprey nest site near the refuge visitor center. Interested parties can view the Osprey-cam at <http://www2.fiberpipe.net/deerflat/ospreycam.asp> a live-streaming website or visit the nest in person by stopping at the Visitor Center at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge at Lake Lowell, Nampa. Visitors can walk near the nest on the ½ mile nature trail, view the nest through a spotting scope and watch live-streaming video on the flat screen television installed in the visitor center. A companion Osprey-cam blog can be found at: <http://ospreycamdeerflatnwr.blogspot.com/>

With an up close view into an osprey nest, refuge visitors and people from all over the world are learning how ospreys raise their young. Local schools, through field trips and website viewing, benefit from a new opportunity to link technology with biology in their own backyard. Osprey educational materials on the website help foster an appreciation of the natural world and encourage students to go outside.

Nest Happenings 2010:

This spring the osprey returned on March 28th, laid the first egg on April 22nd and we speculate the first egg hatched around May 28th. Currently, there are three young ospreys in the nest. The young are growing very fast and will begin to take their first flights near the end of July.



Osprey nest; photo by Katie McVey.

Thank You to All Contributors

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Don & Pat Patterson
Michael & Laurie Pillers
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Maria Salazar
Kristin Search
Michael Weber

The following people made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of a tax check-off donation between April 2010 through June 2010. This list represents those who marked the contributor box when they donated to the Conservation Sciences Program. However, many subscribers not listed here have contributed generously and Idaho's nongame wildlife thanks you ALL!

Also, a special thanks to those that donated money to IDFG using the nongame wildlife tax check off on their tax forms.
Thank you!

Buffalo Jump Bighorn Sheep Viewing Station

By Deniz Aygen, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

One recent project of the Watchable Wildlife Program is the second bighorn sheep viewing station near Challis at the intersection of Highways 75 and 93. On April 28, 2010, a ribbon cutting ceremony took place to celebrate the new wildlife viewing opportunity and all who helped make it happen.

The Idaho Chapter for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) and the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA), along with the Watchable Wildlife Committee and IDFG Salmon Region staff worked for over a year to raise funds, gather support and partners, design signs, purchase materials, and finally, build this viewing station. The station is similar to the Red Rock site north of Salmon that was completed in October 2008 that includes an informational kiosk and viewing scope.

Providing opportunities for Idahoans and nonresident tourists to view wild animals helps create interest and awareness about wildlife and the issues they face today. In this particular example, signs were created to help people understand bighorn sheep. The viewing station was also built to raise awareness about the animals crossing the roads, asking drivers to pay attention and slow down while driving this particularly dangerous section of the highway.

Watching wildlife is big business, as is hunting and fishing. Though there is no license required to admire a herd of pronghorn, or take pictures of wildflowers, wildlife watchers contribute greatly to Idaho's economy in the form of gas, lodging, dining, and buying equipment (see below).

Watchable Wildlife is sometimes misunderstood as being an activity for people who don't hunt and fish. This could not be further from the truth. Many sportsmen and women enjoy watching birds and other wildlife in their own backyards or while out taking a hike. The bighorn sheep viewing station project was led by sportsman's groups. Watchable Wildlife is a program every Idahoan who loves wildlife can support!



Buffalo Jump Bighorn Sheep viewing station near Challis; photo by Dale Toweill, IDFG.



A viewing scope at the site will enable visitors to view bighorn sheep up close; photo by Dale Toweill, IDFG.

Wildlife Watching Contribution's to Idaho Economy

Number of Wildlife-Watching Participants in Idaho (population 16 years or older): 754,000

Wildlife-Watching in Idaho generates:

- Retail sales= \$265 million
- Jobs= 5,903
- State and local tax revenue= \$35 million



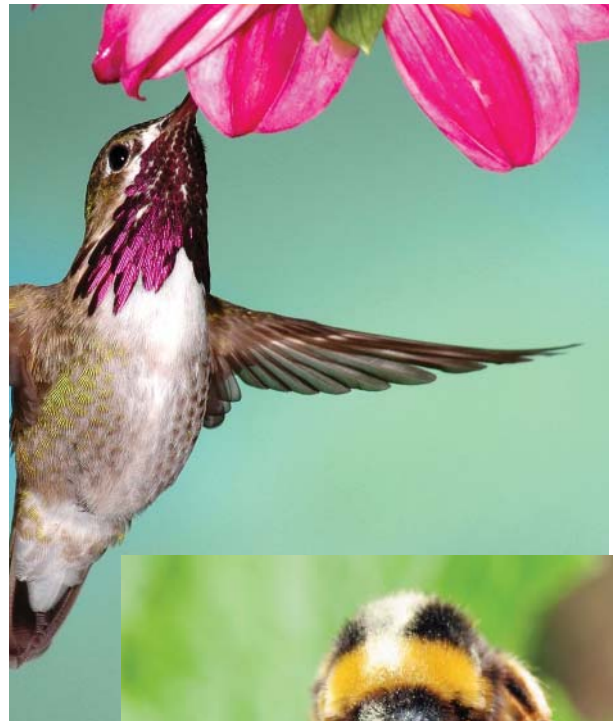
Source: 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

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- Idaho Department of Commerce & Labor
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation
- Idaho Power
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

