



Boise's Urban Peregrines Go Global

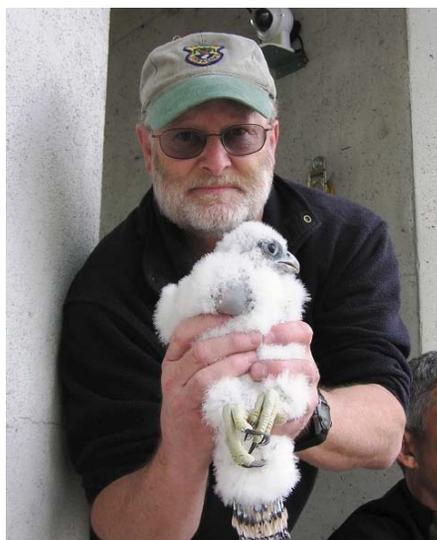
By Bruce Haak, Nongame Biologist in the Southwest Region,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

This spring, a trio of partners combined forces to bring Boise's urban peregrines a step closer to the wildlife-watching public. For the first time, anyone with a computer, or anyone who cared to walk into the foyer of One Capital Center (10th and Main, Boise), got an up-close and personal view of the home life of Idaho's state falcon.

Late last winter, a curious alliance composed of the Department of Fish and Game, The Peregrine Fund, and Fiberpipe (a high-tech company) began working on a way to broadcast interesting messages about wildlife conservation and falcon behavior to people throughout Idaho. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a webcam must surely be worth a fortune. Very quickly, however, this group discovered that technologies have no borders and that the very things that interest Idahoans also interest folks around the globe.

Species recovery is a long, slow process. During the 1980s and 1990s, IDFG worked in concert with The Peregrine Fund to reintroduce peregrines throughout Idaho. Finally in 1999, after three decades of intense reintroduction efforts across North America, the peregrine falcon was removed from the federal list of Endangered Species in the U.S.

Peregrines have been seen and occasionally heard around Boise after the reintroduction efforts of 1988 and 1989. Only once, in 1998, did a pair of falcons raise young in the nest box located on Key Bank. However, peregrines did not begin routine breeding here until 2003.



Bruce Haak with peregrine chick;
photo by Ed Levine.

The idea of using a webcam inside the peregrines' nest box had been discussed by various individuals for several years. From the outset, there were logistical problems to solve, financial limitations, and



The parents were never far from the nest; photo by Think Do.

the uncertainty that peregrines might not use the nest box on One Capital Center in any given year. It was not until Fiberpipe volunteered their impressive technical skills that a solution to these problems appeared. Fiberpipe's enthusiastic staff set up the cameras, worked out all of the computer glitches, and maintained the live "feed" allowing people to view the home life of our peregrines from dawn to dusk daily. The site is accessed via peregrinefund.org and the Fiberpipe website.

Initially, we guessed that the site might receive a few hundred hits a day. But it quickly became obvious that the webcam was getting thousands of hits per day from as far away as Europe. Suddenly, our home-town project had a global audience. Nothing proved the point more than the morning of June 6th when a downy peregrine stumbled out of the nest box and landed on the ledge of the building. In less than 20-minutes, we received phone calls, e-mails, and text messages from as far away as New York, telling us about the problem.

Working with staff from The Peregrine Fund, IDFG helped to set up the site and make sure that nothing inhibited the peregrines' ability to raise young successfully. Peregrines are still rare breeders in Idaho, and every young falcon produced is needed to complete a full recovery of the peregrine throughout our state.

To this end, the One Capital Center pair is doing their part. The national average for peregrine production is less than 1.5 young per pair. Yet, this pair produces an average of 3.5 young per year and, in 2005, fledged 5 young in one clutch.

Check out the webcam at:
<http://www2.fiberpipe.net/falconcam/live.asp>

Unclean Birdfeeders May Kill Birds

By Phil Cooper, Wildlife Conservation Educator in the Panhandle Region, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

A 1992 study by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology concluded that disease caused 11 percent of backyard bird mortalities.

When spring snow recedes from backyards, it is a good time to clean birdfeeders and the spilled seed below them before it gets moldy.

Five diseases commonly associated with birdfeeders and bird deaths include: salmonellosis, trichomoniasis, aspergillosis, avian pox, and mycoplasmosis. The most common of these is avian salmonella, which infects birds primarily through contaminated food. Avian salmonellosis is a bacterial strain that also could affect humans and pets.

Keeping feeders clean as the weather warms up is the best way to avoid the development of conditions that could make birds sick. Fish and Game recommends bird feeders be cleaned once a month.

Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned more often – at least once a week – and they should be taken down in winter to encourage hummers to migrate.

If diseased birds are observed at any feeder, take it down immediately to stop contaminating other birds.



Most feeders can handle mild dishwashing detergent followed by a dip in 10-percent bleach water. Throughout the year, clean up under the feeder and store feed in secure containers to keep out rodents and prevent mold.

To clean bird feeders, first remove all feed. Make a solution of one part bleach and nine parts water – 10 percent bleach solution. Wearing rubber gloves soak the feeder in the bleach solution for 10 minutes or pour the solution over the feeder and let it sit for 10 minutes.

Scrub the feeder thoroughly with a stiff brush. Then rinse thoroughly with more 10-percent bleach solution. Finally rinse the feeder well with plain water, and let

Clean seed reduces the risk of disease.

it dry completely before reassembling and refilling it with birdseed.

Don't use vinegar instead of bleach. Wash your hands after cleaning your feeders.

It is also important to keep the area below and around the feeder clean, as mold, and bacteria can grow in the seed and feces that fall to the ground. Birds will continue to feed on the waste seed.

Fish and Game recommends moving feeders each time they are cleaned if possible. If feeders are on permanent structures, rake, shovel or sweep seed waste and bird

droppings from the ground under the feeder and discard in household trash.

Birdbaths also can provide habitat for bacteria and parasites harmful to birds and should be emptied and refilled every day. They should be cleaned about every two weeks with dish detergent, and then rinsed with 10-percent bleach solution. Rinse them with plain water and let them dry before refilling.

If maintaining a weekly cleaning cycle is not possible, Fish and Game recommends simply removing birdfeeders until the fall.



Homemade Hummingbird Nectar

1. Mix 1 cup of granulated white sugar for every 4 cups of water.
2. Boil the mixture.
3. Let the nectar cool, and then pour into feeder.
 - Do not use red food coloring.
 - Do not use molasses, honey, or brown sugar in your mixture because it causes fungus to grow on hummingbird's tongues!
 - Clean and refill feeders ONCE A WEEK!

Spotlight on Wildflowers: Christ's Indian Paintbrush

Scientific name: *Castilleja christii*

Description: yellow flowered perennial herb ranging 6 to 15 inches tall. Stems are erect to ascending and usually unbranched with several in a cluster. Leaves are 2 to 5 inches long and are narrow to broadly lance-shaped.

Habitat: gentle, north-facing slopes in subalpine meadow and sagebrush habitats in the upper elevations of Mount Harrison in the Albion Mountains of Cassia County, Idaho.

Distribution: single population on the top of Mount Harrison. The population occupies approximately 200 acres.

Status: currently a Candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act and is on the USFWS Notice of Review List. Critically imperiled globally and in Idaho.

Threats: invasive non-native plants, disease, fire, road construction and maintenance, illegal entry into protected areas by off-road vehicle and recreationalists, livestock grazing, trampling, and climate change.

Conservation and Management: this rare population is managed by the Sawtooth National Forest, Minidoka Ranger District. It is currently ranked as one of Idaho's rarest plant taxa.



Christ's Indian Paintbrush; photo by Lynn Kinter, IDFG.



The only location where Christ's Indian Paintbrush can be found; map: IDFG.

Thank You
to
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The following people made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of a tax check-off donation between December 2008 through May 2009. 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 who donated money to IDFG using the nongame wildlife tax check off on their tax forms.
Thank you!



Summer *Wildlife Events*

Boise Watershed-

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

WaterShed Weekend Series every third Saturday from 10am-2pm. Free for all ages. Join us for an outdoor walking tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 1 pm.

August 15 -Wetland Wonders

Have you ever wondered who lives in a wetland? Join Biologist Walt Poole of Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game on a hike of the nearby Hyatt Wetlands to learn about the importance and function of these vanishing habitats. Discover waterfowl and wildlife and how people use wetlands. Meet at the Boise WaterShed, then caravan over to the wetlands at Maple Grove and Chinden for the hike. Register by Aug. 8; call 489-1284 or email Boisewatershed@cityofboise.org

Foothills Learning Center

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

No cost or registration is required. All programs are from 7-8.30pm.

July 8- Music in the Foothills

Join Carolyn Failla and friends for an evening of music and rhythm in our beautiful natural setting. This amazing group of musicians will be playing their own songs - alive in the moment. And you'll play too. With a huge array of percussion instruments to share, these musicians love to turn their listeners into players - blurring the line between performer and audience. This will be an exceptional mid-week break for all ages.

July 11 - Art and Writing – You're a Natural

Join Log Cabin writers and local artist Brian Schreiner for a day of exploring your inner artist! We will have stations around the grounds where kids and adults will be guided through writing and art activities inspired by nature. No experience required. You have more talent than you know. We will have games and activities for the youngest set as well, led by preschool nature camp educator Claudia Fernsworth. Drop in for a while and see what you can create!

July 22- Simple Steps Toward Green

Compost, recycle, buy in bulk, change your light bulbs . . . Learn about simple things you can do around your home and yard that can make a big difference for your wallet and for the planet. We're all in this together.

Idaho Green Expo

Boise Centre on the Grove, 850 W. Front St. Boise; <http://www.idahogreenexpo.org/>

July 18 + 19

Join us at the Idaho Green Expo 2009 at the Boise Center on the Grove. Watchable Wildlife and many community partners are proud to present the Kids EcoZone Exhibit, which will introduce the principles of environmental sustainability through multi-sensory, hands-on activities and demonstrations. From this experience, children will learn how to affect changes necessary to promote a more sustainable future. Double the size and double the fun from last year's exhibit. 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Saturday / 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Sunday; Free.

MK Nature Center

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

July 8- Family Night

Spend an evening at the nature center and make a branch weaving, paint a fish, cast an animal track, or try fly tying(kids style) and more! The Formal Backyard will be open for picnicking so bring a blanket and a picnic dinner. 6:30-8:00pm; Free.

Sept 10- Salmon BBQ

Support Idaho Salmon + Steelhead Days by attending the salmon bbq. Enjoy a delicious salmon dinner donated by Fred Meyer and prepared by Murphy's Seafood Bar and Grill chefs. Dessert is donated by Goody's Soda Fountain & Candy Store. All barbeque activities are family friendly and include live music, 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.

MK Nature Center's third Saturday programs are held from 2-3.30pm each month. Free for all ages. No registration is required.

July 18- Backyard Butterflies

Learn how to attract these summertime beauties to your own backyard. Take a tour of our butterfly garden then kids can join our summer youth volunteers for "make and take" butterfly paint print.

August—no program

Sept. 19- Mule Deer

Learn all about Mule Deer. Have you seen Mule Deer along the Boise River or on a walk at the Nature Center? Learn about what type of habitat Mule Deer need, how they migrate, what they eat, and kids can do an activity.

The World Center for Birds of Prey

5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise; (208) 362-8687; <http://www.peregrinefund.org>

You may think you've seen it all at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey, but you'll find even more to like this summer! Check our website for schedules.

All summer: Afternoon bird flight demonstrations: Swainson's Hawk, Turkey Vulture, American kestrels, more.

Tour the Archives of Falconry: Unique collection of artwork, furnishings and memorabilia from the 1500's to present, focusing on the sport of falconry.

See one of the world's most powerful Eagles...the Harpy Eagle, perched in our courtyard occasionally.

Learn about recycling from an American crow - discover why Corvids are not birds of prey. He may change your impressions about the Corvid family!



BE OUTSIDE

IDAHO CHILDREN IN NATURE

Looking for an activity near you?
Check out:

<http://www.beoutsideidaho.org>

Spring Cleaning at Blacks Creek Reservoir

By Sean Finn, Vice President, Golden Eagle Audubon Society

It's looking like 2009 is going to be the year of Blacks Creek Reservoir (BCR)! Coming off our hugely successful clean-up held in conjunction with Earth Day, interest in this Important Bird Area (IBA) is really accelerating. The rest of 2009 looks bright for the long-neglected haven to 150 bird species as landowners, conservationists, and recreation groups are joining the cause with gusto.

Blacks Creek Reservoir is a small impoundment surrounded by acres of mud flat about 10 miles south of Boise. It has long been recognized as a conservation asset for our community. Audubon and Idaho Department of Fish and Game designated the site as an Important Bird Area and the Ada County Open Space Task Force called the site one of the "Jewels of the Desert" indicating the value of open water in an area known for its dryness. Unfortunately, the site is not being used in a way that is considerate to the needs of wildlife and wildlife watchers. Illegal dumping, inconsiderate target shooting, and mud-bogging have made the site an eyesore for years. But Golden Eagle Audubon Society and a growing list of partners – including Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, IDFG, BLM, Ada County Sheriff Office, Boise River Volunteers, and Idaho Wildlife Federation – are in the process of changing that.

The long-term goal of seeing the site become functioning bird habitat and a regional wildlife viewing area is being achieved through a multi-pronged strategy of on-the-ground conservation, fund-raising, and cooperative planning. Clean-up efforts were reinitiated on April 24th and 25th when an Ada County Sheriff's SILD crew was followed by a volunteer clean-up effort in association with Earth Day. Over 60 volunteers



Jewel of the Desert? Dumping of trash hurts this important bird area; photo by Jane Rohling.

removed more than 80 cubic yards of trash including couches, a refrigerator, and a junkyard's worth of tires. Volunteers came from the full breadth of interest groups: high schoolers performing community service projects; sportsmen who appreciate the sites' beauty and value, bird-watchers hoping to improve the aesthetics and safety of a local wetland, and regular old folks just tired of seeing public lands abused. The clean-up was such a huge success!

Contact Sean Finn at: a_gentilis@hotmail.com if you would like to participate in the next clean-up!



One of many piles of trash dumped at the reservoir; photo by Jane Rohling.



A dumpster that was quickly filled up; photo by Jane Rohling.

Be Outside! It's not just for kids!

By Vicky Runnoe, Educator Supervisor, Idaho Department of Fish and Game



Vicky enjoying a hike in Hells Canyon with her dog, Zoe.

Adults who participate in outdoor activities with their children will be happy to know that they benefit from outside time just as much as their kids. Family time outside helps everyone become more physically fit, and less likely to suffer from long-term health problems such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes. Even simple activities such as gardening, bicycling, or taking a walk provides physical benefits to both adults and the children they love.

Another benefit for adults is stress reduction along with an increased ability to cope with stress. Physicians have found powerful links between stress and physical health. Taking time to enjoy the simple pleasures of a walk in the snow or sitting watching the birds at a feeder or tending a garden can go a long way toward reducing stress. It's no wonder that so many people take their lunch break outdoors!

Natural settings can help reduce stress even when only as a view from a window. Several studies have demonstrated that having a window with a natural view increases employee productivity and happiness on the job. Another study documented the importance of natural views to patient recovery in hospitals. Patients staying in rooms with a window overlooking a natural view had shorter hospital stays than patients with windows looking out at an adjacent building.

Spending time outside can help adults re-discover the wonders of the world around them. It can also re-awaken interest in outdoor pastimes once enjoyed but since put aside. Taking time to share these re-discovered interests with the children in your life can be a precious gift for both of you. So, what are you waiting for? Be outside!



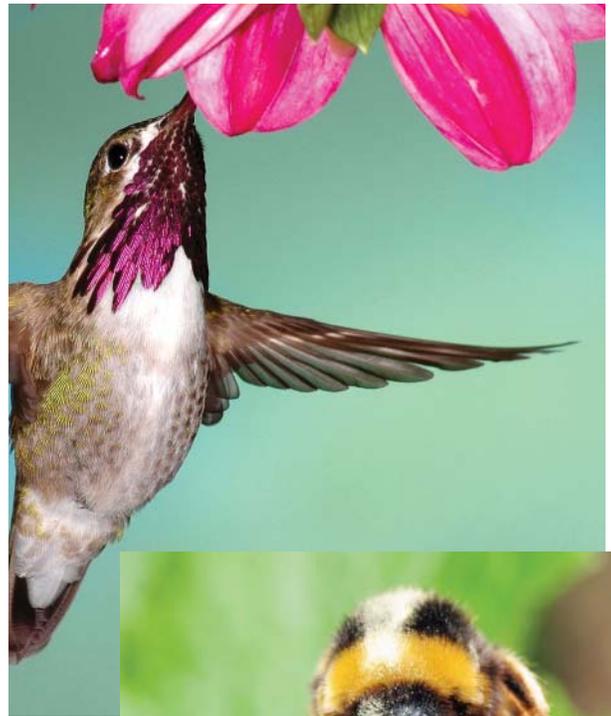
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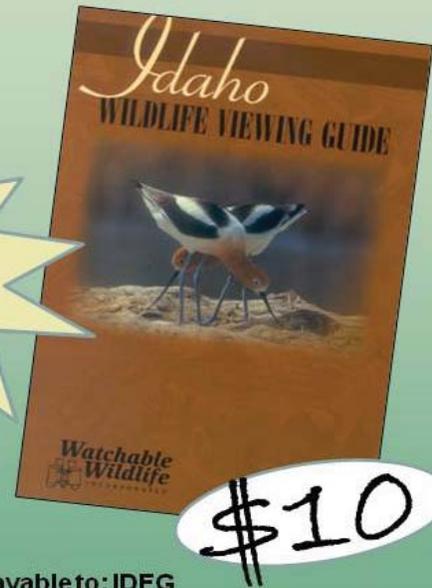
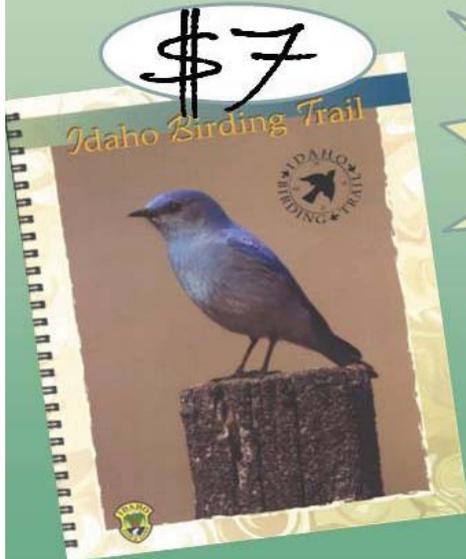
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