



# Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society

**February, 2020**

## **Moran Taing**

Many Thanks to James Jay, Michael Donelson, Richard McKenzie, Chaz Roth, Jessica Clark , Kris Satterwhite and the Scottish American Military Society for making our Burns Celebration a fantastic event!

## **Upcoming Events**

**Knockabouts at Uptown Pub, February 14<sup>th</sup> 6 – 9 PM**

**Celtic Dancing at the Library... March 6, 1:30**

**Master Chorale of Flagstaff “Tales of the British Isles” Concert March 9<sup>th</sup> Sinagua Auditorium**

**Sedona St. Patrick’s Day Parade... March 14. Call Jude if you want to participate. 928.606.6327.**

**St. Patrick’s Day at the Weatherford Hotel, from 5 to ???**

**St.Patrick’s Day with the Knockabouts, Uptown Pub 6 PM**

**How the Celts Influenced Flagstaff... Flagstaff Public Library, March 18 from 6pm to 7pm**

**Birds of Scotland**

**By Meredith Young**

Scotland is home to numerous plant and animal species, including many kinds of birds. The Scottish crossbill (*Loxia scotica*) is a small member of the finch family that is native only to Scotland. This crossbill’s song contains a series of short chirps that slightly raise and lower in pitch. Thanks to their unique calls, Scottish crossbills only mate with other members of their direct sub-species, so their beaks and body sizes are almost exactly the same across

the species. Red, Parrot, and Scottish crossbills all inhabit the Caledonian Forest, an area in the northern part of Scotland that previously consisted of temperate rainforest. Since these types of crossbill are very similar in appearance and call, the Scottish crossbill was only classified in 1980, then labeled a distinct species and extensively studied in 2006. There are approximately twenty thousand Scottish crossbills in existence today, so they are not currently at risk of extinction. They nest in conifer or pine trees where their bills help them extract conifer seeds from cones for food. Scottish crossbills lay an average of two to five eggs a year, and they do not migrate outside of Scotland. However, they will join flocks of other crossbills to travel across the country. The males tend to be orange or red in color, while the females are green or yellow, but the colors can vary widely.

The Western capercaillie, or wood grouse, is the largest member of the grouse family. The word capercaillie comes from the Scottish-Gaelic “capall-coille,” which means “wood horse.” Males can weigh up to sixteen pounds, and they are often twice as large as females because of a trait called sexual dimorphism. There was a distinct subspecies native to Scotland, but it went extinct in the 1780s. Currently, all Western capercaillie living in Scotland today come from the Swedish population. Male capercaillie somewhat resemble peacocks, as they have large (but black) fantails and shimmering green chest feathers. Female capercaillie have brown and auburn speckles, and chicks resemble their mothers for the first year of their lives. All capercaillie have feathered legs and a white spot on their shoulders. They eat a varied diet consisting of berries, bugs, grasses, insects, and conifer needles in the winter. Females lay an average of eight eggs per clutch, and the chicks eat mostly insects right after they are born. The chicks’ high-protein diet helps them develop flight muscles very rapidly so that they can fly about three to four weeks after birth. These Scottish birds are not at risk of extinction, but their numbers have decreased by half owing to habitat destruction, chick mortality from overly wet environments, and accidental deaths from flying into fences.

The merlin (*Falco columbarius*) is the UK’s smallest falcon, weighing in at around seven ounces. Even though it is only the size of a blackbird, merlins are aggressively fierce and even attack birds many times their size. Merlins have been used in falconry for many centuries; Mary, Queen of Scots preferred to use merlins on lark hunts. Male merlins are called Jacks because their fighting style is similar to that of Jack Russell terriers, and they have rust covered chest feathers with blue-gray feathers on their heads and wings. Female merlins are much duller in color, with brown wing feathers and light cream covered chests. Merlins migrate between the upper Scottish Highlands in the summer and the Lowlands in the winter. They are most active during their mating season from May to June, and they will violently chase away other raptors while screaming “kek-kek-kek.” Unlike the Western capercaillie, merlin females are often slightly larger than males, and they lay about four to five eggs per season. Since there are so many subspecies of merlins that live around the world, they are not at risk for extinction. After many countries banned particular pesticides, merlin populations rebounded. During a national study of merlins in 2008, scientists found that there are around eight hundred stable pairs living in Scotland.

**MON  
MAR  
9**

**7:30 pm**

The Master Chorale of Flagstaff  
PRESENTS

**TALES OF THE  
BRITISH ISLES**



Benjamin Saunders  
*music director*

**Sinagua  
Middle  
School  
Auditorium**

Featuring the award-winning Celtic band *The Knockabouts*, come to celebrate the beautiful music of the British Isles. Selections will include Celtic fantasies, Irish folk tunes, and Welsh lullabies, as well as the early music of Thomas Morley and all-time favorites of the Beatles.

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.masterchorale.net](http://www.masterchorale.net) or at the door with cash, check, or credit card. Transaction fees may apply.



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