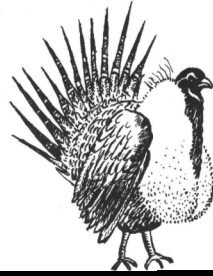


# PLAINS & PEAKS



Vol. 45—Iss. 1 — JANUARY—2011

**MURIE AUDUBON**

Casper Wyoming - Monthly Publication  
<http://www.murieaudubon.org>

## DARWIN AND THE GALAPAGOS

The Murie Audubon lecture series starts the new year on January 14 with "Darwin and the Galapagos" at 7 PM at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building, 2211 King Blvd.

Guy Sallade, a 2nd and 3rd Grade teacher at Woods School here in Casper, will be our guest speaker. Mr. Sallade took part in a University of Wyoming / Casper College course – a semester seminar that included a 10 day expedition to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands National Park in the spring of 2010. There were several things that the course intended to introduce the participants to: 1) Ecuador and the national parks and the natural history of the Quito region; 2) the natural history of the Galapagos Islands; 3) the role of the islands in the development of the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin; 4) current research on the biology and ecology of the islands; and 5) current conservation issues on the Islands and similarities to issues in Wyoming. Mr. Sallade will share photos and videos of his trip.



This lecture is free and open to the public. For more information about this program, please contact Bruce Walgren at 234-7455.

**BRUCE WALGREN—PROGRAM CHAIRMAN**

### CALENDAR

- Jan. 24 – Article Deadline for February PNP
- Feb. 12 – MAS 25th Annual Banquet & Fundraiser – 5:30 Parkway Plaza
- Feb. 18-21 – Great Backyard Bird Count
- March 17-20 Rivers and Wildlife Celebration – Kearney, NE

SAVE PAPER, MONEY & FOLDING TIME—READ YOUR NEWSLETTER AT MURIE'S WEBSITE—CONTACT ROSE-MARY KING—[rking7453@bresnan.net](mailto:rking7453@bresnan.net)

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## ALONG THE PATHWAY WITH HARRY

By the time you read this, the new year will have come and gone. I really don't have much to say as 2010 comes to an end. I haven't given it much thought as I am surrounded by family this holiday season. My two sons preoccupy my spare time and so, I concentrate most of my free time on them. I hope that MAS can forgive me that I have not drawn out any major conservation projects or plans.



This is the time for reflection on what I have accomplished (or failed to accomplish) in the past six months. I certainly never expected to become the president of MAS, but so far, it's been fun and a pleasure to work with the MAS Board of Directors. Thinking back from the present to the beginning of my term as president I have to say I really have enjoyed the Christmas Bird Count. Each one has been different and has allowed us to explore areas around Casper with good friends. Stacey Scott has been most helpful in having myself and Tony doing bird counts in areas not usually open to the general public.

I don't recall stating to the MAS membership what my goals have been, but I will tell you that I have every intention to grow our membership. I continue to brainstorm ways to get fresh young new faces to join MAS. It is not easy. I don't believe conservation is a high priority with the younger generation. Birding is not on the minds of most young folks who are preoccupied with texting back and forth on their cell phones. MAS is competing against the Internet, cell phones, television, iPods, computers, and any free time not already taken by other activities. Yet, these very activities and gadgets are the same tools we can use to recruit new birders into MAS. It will just take time to use those tools to communicate and reach out to these prospective new members. I am still working on this and it will take time.

Since the last newsletter, we have made progress with reducing the cost of printing and mailing newsletters and time spent in folding, taping and addressing. I am very grateful to those members who have elected to receive their newsletters via our website. Rose-Mary has been working very hard to utilize the latest web tools to deliver an improved product. Over time, I expect more visitors to our website and hopefully bring in new members.

We still have an opening for a Membership Chair and a Vice President, but MAS still exists and continues to function thanks to the dedicated members who give MAS their best efforts. All I can say is thanks to all the Board members, and those MAS members who work in the background that I have yet to meet.

One item that I have failed to mention, and am pleased to announce, is that the National Audubon Society has renewed our Chapter and that we have been re-certified for the 2011 fiscal year, and we should receive a baseline payment of \$1,214.25 by direct deposit. So, I got at least one thing right by getting our paperwork in for re-certification.

Looking to 2011, I'll have to give it more thought. One thing I'd like to do is get my ten year old, Scott, involved with birding. Perhaps working on him will give me some new ideas on how to get more younger kids involved as well. I would like to work on projects with Wanda at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek to generate more interest. I'd also like to see the local community get more involved with supporting the Audubon Center at Garden Creek. I believe there is not enough advertisement of the excellent trails to explore in and around the Garden Center.

I could go on and on, and I know it takes time to work these ideas out, so we will see what 2011 brings. Please contact me if you have any comments or ideas on how to improve MAS. I can be reached via email: [Harry@HarryMartinCartoons.com](mailto:Harry@HarryMartinCartoons.com), or call me at 251-0939.

Thanks, and best wishes to you and yours for the new Year. Good birding to all.

**HARRY MARTIN—MAS PRESIDENT**

## BIRD NOTES

As winter continues to make its way into Wyoming, some interesting species have been reported. Of particular note was the Black-legged Kittiwake seen in the JTL Pond in Evansville; this bird was seen for several days. Other sightings in the Casper area included Tundra Swans, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Goldeneye, Western Grebe, Common Loon, and White-winged Scoter. Also, a White-winged Scoter had been reported in Green River. The Evanston Christmas Bird Count found 10 Snow Buntings and tallied 253 Greater Sage-Grouse. A small flock of Snow Buntings was also reported in the Green River



area. Unfortunately, we didn't get any Snow Buntings on the Casper CBC.

**November yard birds** – For the month of November, Wayne and I received 195 yard bird selections from 16 states plus Yukon Territory and Columbia, with 82 different species tallied. November generally brings fall migration to a close, maybe with some “Johnny –come-lately” individuals here and there. Depending on weather and food supply, local residents continue to move around. November “yard bird” reports usually have Townsend's Solitaires, Steller's Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Northern Shrikes, chickadees, elusive Brown Creepers, and lots of Sharp-shinned Hawks, along with winter season sparrows like American Tree and Harris's. The #1 species for November was (surprise?) Sharp-shinned Hawk. Red-breasted Nuthatch came in second. Third place was a tie between Brown Creeper and Northern Shrike. Fourth place was taken by Townsend's Solitaire.

#### **Wyoming Yard Birds**

**Casper:** Frank Odasz – White-throated Sparrow, Joanne Odasz – Hermit Thrush, Linda Drury – Northern Flicker, Chris Michelson – Townsend's Solitaire, Cecil Foote – Black-capped Chickadee, Pat Classen – Blue Jay, Casper College Greenhouse – Canada Goose, Bruce Walgren – Bald Eagle, Donna Walgren – Red-winged Blackbird, Lois Layton – Spotted Towhee; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – Townsend's Solitaire; **Evansville:** Bruce Walgren – Tundra Swan, Donna Walgren – Common Loon, Chris Michelson – Black-legged Kittiwake; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki – Hairy Woodpecker; **Evanston:** Patti Gorman – Black-capped Chickadee, Tim Gorman – Sharp-shinned Hawk; **Audubon Center at Garden Creek:** Bruce Walgren – Black-billed Magpie, Donna Walgren – Dark-eyed Junco; **Yant's Puddle:** Chris Michelson – Red Phalarope.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in November!! We are now into “Winter Birding Season,” and of course – Christmas Bird Counts. It is always interesting to see what species show up. Send your observations to Donna Walgren, 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net, or phone 234-7455. Good Birding!!!

**DONNA WALGREN**

### **A CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT THANK YOU!!!**

**A**nother Christmas Bird Count is in the books. A whole flock of volunteers annually participate in

the count here in Casper. As I read about and participate in other counts in the area, I realize how fortunate we are to have so many people who want to help with Casper's count. Not only do we usually have 30+ people in the field, but also almost 20 feeder watchers who contribute their time and expertise to the effort. In addition, the organizers of the count recruit participants, assign areas, and finally compile the results to submit to National Audubon. Also, volunteers organize a potluck meal for all of the participants to enjoy at the end of the count day. Anyway, a big Thank You to all who organized and participated in this year's count!!!

**A THANKFUL OBSERVER**

### **MAS CBC – DEC. 18, 2010**

**T**emperatures ranged from -3 to +22 over the circle and the time of day with a couple of snow showers. With good coverage in the field a new high species count was obtained at 69 but the numbers of many species were rather small especially among the smaller birds. One new species was recorded for the count, northern pygmy-owl.

#### **Results follow:**

Canada goose-1547, gadwall-3, American wigeon-19, mallard-789, northern pintail-1, green-winged teal-8, lesser scaup-2, bufflehead-3, common goldeneye-155, hooded merganser-3, common merganser-12, chukar-4, gray partridge-2, wild turkey-74, great blue heron-2, bald eagle-33 (24 adult, 9 immature), northern harrier-5, sharp-shinned hawk-5, red-tailed hawk-8, ferruginous hawk-2, rough-legged hawk-10, golden eagle-11 (all adult), American kestrel-2, merlin-1, prairie falcon-1, American coot-4, ring-billed gull-1, rock pigeon-1130, Eurasian-collared dove-859, eastern screech-owl-1, great horned owl-4, northern pygmy-owl-1, belted kingfisher-1, downy woodpecker-24, hairy woodpecker-9, northern flicker-115 (114 red, 1 yellow), northern shrike-2, Steller's jay-9, blue jay-114, Clark's nutcracker-24, black-billed magpie-177, American crow-126, common raven-15, horned lark-93, black-capped chickadee-75, mountain chickadee-34, bushtit-30, red-breasted nuthatch-11, white-breasted nuthatch-3, brown creeper-1, canyon wren-1, Townsend's solitaire-32, American robin-292, European starling-2873, Bohemian waxwing-178, cedar waxwing-121, spotted towhee-1, American tree sparrow-19, song sparrow-5, Harris's sparrow-3, dark-eyed junco-159 (oregon-8, pink-sided-13, slate-colored-37, unknown-101), red-winged blackbird-2, gray-crowned rosy finch-140, house finch-1149, red

crossbill-40, pine siskin-52, American goldfinch-32, evening grosbeak-51, house sparrow-3915.

Total species 69

Total individuals 14,630

**CHRIS MICHELSON - COMPILER**

## GBBC – FEBRUARY 18-21, 2011

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. We'll be adding updated GBBC materials for the next count as they become available.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the [Great Backyard Bird Count website](#).

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

We need your help. Make sure the birds from your community are well represented in the count. It doesn't matter whether you report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

Your counts can help us answer many questions:

1. How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
2. Where are winter finches and other "irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
3. How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?
4. How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus,

affecting birds in different regions?

5. What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
6. Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

Scientists use the counts, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to give us an immense picture of our winter birds. Each year that these data are collected makes them more meaningful and allows scientists to investigate far-reaching questions.

For highlights of past results, visit the Science Stories section of the [GBBC web site](#).

## GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Here's How to do the Great Backyard Bird Count  
It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!



1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count each day or just some of the days and you can count in different places. Just be sure to keep a separate list of birds for each day and each location.

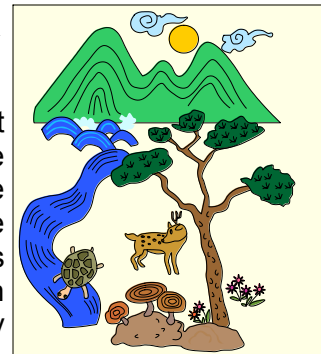
2. For each type of bird you see, count the most you see at any one time. For example, maybe you see two chickadees when you start watching, then five chickadees a few minutes later. The number you put on your list for chickadees is five. Do not add two plus five. (This way you don't accidentally count the same bird twice.)

3. Enter your results on the [Great Backyard Bird Count web site](#)! Then watch the maps as more and more people enter their reports.

That's it! Now get ready to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count **because when it comes to watching birds, kids count!**

## THE RIPPLING WAY

The Audubon Center at Garden Creek is once again transformed by the white blanket of snow. Ice crystals adorn the trees and the edges of Garden Creek. Nature has certainly perfected the art of deco-





rating. The House Finches, Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, Juncos and House Sparrows keep the feeder area a flurry of activity along with the magpies, a few crows and the occasional visits by a Stellar's Jay, Blue Jays, and a Hairy Woodpecker. The rutting deer and squirrel antics round out the dramas that provide countless moments of joyful observations for myself and visitors alike. A visiting 5th grade class from St. Anthony's witnessed the lightening fast speed of a sharp-shinned hawk getting it's breakfast of sparrow. There's never a shortage of lessons when using the outdoors as a classroom.

It seems to surprise many that the Center is open in the winter. Nature doesn't stop it's beauty or it's opportunities for discovery, and renewal. Walking on the snow covered trail is slower, more deliberate, as one gets the chance to notice the tracks, the patterns, the silence and sounds of the winter world.

Don't forget that the Center has an assortment of very soft and cute Audubon plush birds and Field Guides available to purchase.

All of us at Audubon Wyoming wish you a nature-filled holiday with time to enjoy friends, family and the feathered fliers who pass your way!

Simple, Waste-less Holidays to you all!

**Wanda Peters**

(Ed.'s Note – my apologies, Wanda, for losing this in my email program shuffle in November.)



## 41ST ANNUAL RIVERS & WILD- LIFE CELEBRATION MARCH 17-20, 2011

**G**ather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through the heart of the Central Flyway. The Nebraska Bird Partnership is proud to co-host the nation's longest running wildlife festival with Audubon Nebraska.

Check the web often for updates, because the agenda is still shaping up. Here are a few highlights of what we have planned for the 2011 Celebra-

tion:

Photography workshop with Michael Forsberg

Friday night keynote address by Rick Wright, "Oops My Mistake: Ten Big Birding Boobos and How I Survived Them"

Saturday night keynote address by Dr. Richard Beilfuss, President of the International Crane Foundation

An expanded "Wild Experience Room", with live animal shows returning from Raptor Recovery Nebraska and Dan Fogell with Nebraska snakes

A variety of field trips to choose from to see cranes, waterfowl, prairie chickens, and other birds and wildlife.

### REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN JANUARY 2011

Any other questions about the Celebration? Email us (Rivers\_Wildlife\_Celebration@mail.vresp.com or call 402-797-2301.

Looking for other things to do during your stay? Visit [nebraskaflyway.com](http://nebraskaflyway.com) for help planning your visit to central Nebraska during spring migration.

## NOTES OF SYMPATHY

**W**e extend our heartfelt sympathies to the family of Brigid Herold who passed away Nov. 8, 2010.

Brigid graduated with a BA from UCLA, Westwood, CA and with a MA from UW, Laramie, WY and received additional theatre education in Eiling, England. Theatre work included experience in NYC, NY and also a theatre group in Ellis Island which put on immigrant plays as members of the US Park Service. Brigid worked for the Barnett Newman Foundation in NYC, NY and worked for a short time for the Goodstein Library in Casper, WY.

Brigid participated in MAS activities when she came to Casper visiting. I remember her on bird walks and at the summer picnics with Gina in tow signing to her dad about a bird seen or something said to Jim. After she moved to Casper, she was a supporter of Murie's Annual Banquet and Fundraiser donating items for the raffle.

MAS would like to thank all who have made donations to Murie in Brigid's name.

We, also, extend our sympathies to Wanda Peters whose father passed away unexpectedly on December 10, 2010.

**ED. – ROSE-MARY KING**