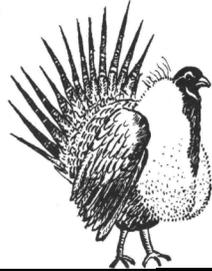


PLAINS & PEAKS



Vol. 45 – Iss. 2 – FEBRUARY – 2011

MURIE AUDUBON

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

WHAT – MURIE AUDUBON 25TH ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

WHEN – FEBRUARY 12, 2011, 5:30 PM

WHERE – PARKWAY PLAZA HOTEL and CONVENTION CENTRE

WHY – GOOD FUN, GOOD FOOD, GOOD FRIENDS!

QUEST SPEAKER – JIM BROWN, HIGH PLAINS REFLECTIONS – NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER – "THROUGH MY LENS"



Jim Brown © 2010

Jim's first camera, a Kodak Brownie, was given to him by his parents on his 11th birthday. It was his father who instilled in him a higher love for nature and photography. Since his youth, he has spent countless hours in the Wyoming wilderness hunting, fishing, tracking and photographing nature. He worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and studied in the field in close observation of wildlife behavior. Jim pursues his love and wonder of nature and extends his knowledge in the art of photography.

Join friends and families of the Murie Audubon Society for a teriyaki chicken dinner, a raffle and silent auction at the Parkway Plaza's Mardi Gras room.

CALENDAR

FEB. 12 – ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

FEB. 18-21 – GREAT BACK YARD BIRD COUNT

FEB. 19 – FIELD TRIP – PG. 4

FEB. 21 – MARCH ARTICLES DUE!

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

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Piano music will be provided by Joan Eisenbraun during the early evening.

Ticket price is \$25/each or a table of eight for \$175. Tickets may be purchased at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek or call Karen Anfang, banquet chairperson, at 472-0278.

ALONG THE PATHWAY WITH HARRY



It's been a rough month. Winter always seems to bring unexpected events. Bad weather, illness, more snow to shovel. But, the birding never ends.

My son Tony had a great time birding this season. He seemed to get energized thanks to Stacy Scott. Right after the CBC at Bates Hole, he was all excited and fired up. The next day he was on eBird (<http://ebird.org>) logging anything he spotted at the house and in town. For those of you who are not familiar with eBird, you may want to check it out as it is a great way to participate in "Citizen Science".

Anyway, he was logging everything. The street intersections where he saw a bird instantly became a hunt to vector in the coordinates using Google's mapping system to nail down the latitude and longitude grid lines down to the decimal degrees, minutes, and seconds. His excitement was contagious as "Mr. Scott" and his younger brother took notice of the detective work in progress.

"Dad! Dad!", he would say..."Look, I found the exact spot where I saw that hawk!". It's great listening to your kid as he figures out how the technology works. Younger Scott watches keenly, but not saying a word. He knows it requires thinking and he's not sure he wants to invest that much energy into an activity that doesn't fit into the big screen TV and powered by a Wii console. He can't help it though, his big brother makes an impression as I was hoping.

Yes, it is rubbing off. My sons are looking forward to the big 14th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count, which will be held February 18 - 21, 2011. I'm under direct orders to repair the bird feeders that have been destroyed by the marauding masked bandits (raccoons). I hear the house shake as undersized nails are being pounded into wood posts that hold up the roof. I go to inspect the damage and see that they have erected sinew feeders facing all windows. Location, location, location. It becomes everything. I respond with assurance, "let's use some real nails or screws so those feeders don't fall down on someone's head". They hang one story up, and those wire feeders look heavy.

Scott drags a lounge chair up to the balcony where the feeders hang. He plops down and throws a blanket over himself to ward off the freezing temperatures. He plans to sit outside so he can get a better look and a better bird count I presume. Yes, we are ready, or will be as soon as I fix two more feeders.

For more information about the Backyard Bird-count, please visit www.BirdCount.org and see how it's fun, family-friendly, and educational.

The next thing I want to mention is

the February 12th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser. I'm really excited and will be there. It will be my first opportunity to attend as work has always had me out of town. I hope to see you all there to enjoy good food and share some good birding stories.

Good Birding to you!
PRESIDENT—Harry Martin

BATES HOLE CHRISTMAS COUNT, JANUARY 1, 2011

As you will remember, the weather on January 1 was really bad for being outside. It was really cold and the wind was howling with lots of blowing snow. With the wind chill well below zero all day, it was a better day to stay inside and study your bird books. But that was in Casper. In Bates Hole, there wasn't any wind and the sun was shining. It was a really beautiful day to go birding. In the morning, I walked down Corral Creek and found one of the most cooperative Dipper's I have ever seen. It was far enough from us that you could focus your binoculars, but you really didn't need them to watch it. We also found very cooperative Bushtits. But we missed the Mountain Chickadee and the Robin, and so did everyone else.

In the afternoon, we headed for possible Sage-Grouse habitat. We all found the wind, but it had warmed up enough that it didn't seem that bad. I introduced Tony Martin to the Scott attitude toward getting stuck. As long as you have two shovels, it only delays you a short time. With that delay, I stopped on the way back to Charlie's and heard two owls because there still wasn't any wind along Bates Creek. Chris Michelson was with my brother, Charlie, and didn't have

any better luck at finding grouse than I did. But, he was reintroduced to the Scott attitude to vehicles that aren't running perfectly. It isn't that far back to the house; the circle is only 15 miles in diameter. Besides, the truck ought to keep running without a working alternator, and every 5 minutes or so the walking is a mile less than it was. They made it, but the lights weren't much use by the time they rolled to the shop.

Birds seen: Canada Goose—201, Green-winged Teal—5, Mallard—154, Common Goldeneye—93, Bald Eagle—16 (7 A., 9 Imm.), Northern Harrier—6, Red-tailed Hawk—1, Ferruginous Hawk—1, Rough-legged Hawk—9, Golden Eagle—16 (9 A., 7 Imm.), Merlin—1, Gray Partridge—26, Greater Sage-Grouse—42, Ring-necked Pheasant—17, Wild Turkey—185, Rock Dove (Domestic Pigeon)—57, Great-Horned Owl—4, Downy Woodpecker—3, Northern Flicker—3, Horned Lark—168, Black-Billed Magpie—196, Common Raven—19, American Crow—3, Pinon Jay—2, Black-capped Chickadee—11, Bushtit—6, American Dipper—3, Townsend's Solitaire—2, Northern Shrike—1, European Starling—7, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch—162, Black Rosy Finch—2, American Tree Sparrow—114, Song Sparrow—1, Dark-eyed Junco—50 (Slate-Colored 16, Pick-Sided 6, Oregon 2, Unknown 25), Western Meadowlark—1, Red-winged Blackbird—15, House Finch—36, American Goldfinch—5, House Sparrow—99.

Total Species—40, Total Individuals—1,743.

The observers were: Annette and Lewis Hein, Tony Martin, Chris Michelson, Wanda Peters, Stacey, Joe and Charlie Scott, Will Waterbury, Andy and Jessie Anderson.

P.S. When I got back home after dinner at the Two-Bar Bunk House, it was

really cold, and the howling wind was still blowing lots of snow around.

Stacy Scott



BIRD NOTES

Winter continues; tho not too much unusual has been reported. Common Goldeneye, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers and the usual array of waterfowl are being seen; Bald and Golden Eagles are plentiful, and a few Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs have been found in the Horned Lark flocks. As winter weather continues, with storms pushing birds around, the possibility of interesting birds showing up is there.

December yard birds – For the month of December, Wayne and I received 216 bird reports with 87 different species tallied. These observations came from 83 different locations in 20 states plus Yukon Territory, Columbia, and Mexico. December typically has lots of raptors and woodpeckers reported; and that was reflected in the Yard Bird Report – 9 species of woodpeckers, and 12 species of raptors. Reports of Pine Siskins, crossbills, and redpolls were down (which was also the case in December '09). There were a few "oddballs" like the House Wren in Miles City, MT, the Killdeer on the Dubois, WY

Christmas Bird Count, and the Spotted Towhees in Casper, WY and Corvallis, MT. For the second month in a row, Sharp-shinned Hawk was the most reported bird. Bald Eagle was in second place. Third place was a 4-way tie between Cooper's Hawk, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and American Goldfinch. #4 was a tie between Gray Partridge and Downy Woodpecker. Steller's Jays and Black-capped Chicks are usually in the top spots, but in December were knocked down to tie for fifth place along with Brown Creepers. It's going to be very interesting to see what happens in January.

Wyoming Yard Birds

Casper: Jeff Morton – Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ed Reish – Black-capped Chickadee, Jim Brown – Blue Jay, Chris Michelson – Purple Finch, Cecil Foote – Cedar Waxwing, Pat Classen – Black-billed Magpie, Casper College Greenhouse – American Crow, Rose-Mary King – Bohemian Waxwing, Barb Yonts – Dark-eyed Junco (slate), Bob Yonts – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Lois Layton – Spotted Towhee, Bruce Walgren – Bald Eagle; **Dubois CBC:** Northern Shrike, Michael Kenney – Killdeer; **Evanston:** Patti Gorman – Cooper's Hawk, Tim Gorman – Cassin's Finch; **Glenrock:** Donna Walgren – Common Raven; **Sheridan:** Peg Cullen – Eurasian Collared-Dove; **Sundance:** Jean Adams – Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in December!! We are now into 2011; birds continue to move around – let us know what you see. Here's wishing you'all a great New Year!!! 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

FIELD TRIP SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19



We will meet at 1:30 PM at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek for a field trip to Gray Reef and Alcova Dam. We should be back by 5:00 PM. Call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for details.

Stacy Scott

MEMORIALS

If you have loved ones or a dear friend whom you would like to honor with memorials, these gifts will be gratefully accepted and an acknowledgement will be sent to the family. Here in the Casper area, memorials may be sent to Murie Audubon and the Audubon Center at Garden Creek. The Murie chapter continues its work in conservation and education; and the Center also works diligently in these areas.

In the last few months, Wanda Peters' (director of the Audubon Center) father and brother have passed away, and Brigid Herald passed away—daughter of long-time Murie member Jim Herold. Many people have asked how they might honor their passing. Donations may be made to Murie to help with conservation and education projects (like *Audubon Adventures*). Donations to the Audubon Center at Garden Creek, can be monetary

or in the form of supplies and things needed by the Center. Bird seed (sunflower seeds, millet, etc.) is always needed to keep the feeders filled; and office supply items are also necessary in the Center's operation. In next month's *Plains and Peaks*, we will publish the Audubon Center's "Wish List." You may want to contribute toward some of the more expensive things needed.

You may contact any Murie board member for information about making donations to either Murie or the Audubon Center. (Contact info is listed on pages 6&7 of this newsletter.)

Bruce & Donna Walgren

FRIENDS OF MURIE AUDUBON

For the last couple of months, Jan Whitney and I have begun to add an "Expired" notification on mailing labels of Friends who haven't renewed their support as a Friend of Murie Audubon. The "Expired" notation will appear to the left of your name on your mailing label, will be highlighted in yellow, and will appear when your membership expires. If we do not hear from you in three months, we will have to drop you from our mailing list. If you have recently renewed and our records are in error, please contact us.

Bruce Walgren

Our deepest sympathies to Wanda Peters whose brother passed away recently.

9TH ANNUAL SAGE GROUSE FESTIVAL

April 15- 16, 2011

Dubois, Idaho

SAGE GROUSE VIEWING AND
CONSERVATION

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- * Friday evening social dinner and then off to bed early!
- * Early morning guided lek tours to view the amazing courtship display of the male Greater Sage-Grouse.
- * Delicious late breakfast following lek tour.
- * Outstanding bird presentations in the early afternoon-Falconry, Birding in Costa Rica, Teton Raptor Center
- * Raffle to raise funds for sage-grouse conservation projects.
- * Additional local birding opportunities before or after event.

Registration fee is \$35 in advance or \$40 at the door.

For information: Dubois Grouse Days, jeff_liday_179@hotmail.com
(208)313-2730

www.grousedays.org

Kit Struthers, Snake River Audubon Society, Idaho Falls, ID, 208-529-2028,
kit619@ida.net