



## MURIE AUDUBON

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

### Calendar

- April 10—7PM—Gen. Mtg.
- April 11—Hat 6 Lek field trip—5:30 AM
- April 20—May newsletter deadline
- April 23—Bird ID Class 101—ACGC and Casper Mtn. Birds—7PM—ACGC
- April 25—Class Field Trip
- April 30—Bird ID Class 101—Waterfowl—7PM—ACGC
- May 2—Class Field Trip
- May 7—Bird ID Class 101—EKW birds—7PM—ACGC
- May 9—Class Field Trip—EKWSP  
 (Note—contact Jess at 473-1987 to sign up—\$5 each or all for \$12)

President's Pondering, AW BioBlitz Event	<b>2</b>
Bird Notes, Letter to the Editor	<b>4</b>
Welcome New Members & Friends, WOCC Birding Festival	<b>5</b>
Invasive Plant & Birds	<b>6</b>
On the Wyoming Range	<b>7</b>
MAS Board Splinters, ACGC, Top 10 Ways to Help Nesting Birds	<b>8</b>
April Field Trip	<b>9</b>

### A BIRDWATCHING AND DINOSAUR HUNTING EXPEDITION TO TANZANIA

**J**ean-Pierre (JP) Cavigelli will be the guest speaker at our April meeting. Tanzania is known for its large wildlife parks, but this is not a talk about the Serengeti or other wildlife parks. JP was invited to join an expedition to southwestern Tanzania in the summer of 2008 to collect dinosaur bones and other fossils. This program is the story of that expedition with a bit about the animals and birds they encountered.

JP is the prep lab manager and field trip organizer at the Tate Museum. JP came to Casper from Laramie, where he worked off and on in paleontology for 14 years, doing field work as well as a two year post as the collections manager for the University of Wyoming Department of Geology and Geophysics. He has had the good fortune of having been invited to join international paleontological expeditions to Mongolia, Niger (twice) and North Dakota.

Join us on Friday, April 10 at 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. The program is free and open to the public.

**J.P. CAVIGELLI AND BRUCE WALGREN**



## PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS



**I**n last month's newsletter, I gave a brief history of the Audubon Center on Garden Creek, touching on a few of the resources available to Murie members, friends and to the general public. Many visitors may not be aware of the scope of the Center's reference materials, a collection of library breadth housed in a room off the hallway and more extensively in the basement. There are hundreds of books and dozens of videos packed with information on just about everything you wanted to know about the natural world, including "Sex in the Garden" (warning: sprouts are involved). Bird books represent the majority, but not overwhelmingly so. Whatever your favorite bird species, chances are you'll be able to find a wealth of material. For examples, a set of Dover Books features warblers and woodpeckers in separate volumes, and treats thrushes, kinglets and their allies in another. Blackbirds, orioles, tanagers and their allies merit their own volume.

Quite a few birding guides of various publishers and vintages can be found on the shelves. Among flora and fauna covered in a Golden

Book Series are butterflies and moths, pond life, insects, flowers, mammals, fish and trees. Constellations, geology and fossils are also "Golden." Hiking and backpacking, ecology and history are among the subjects treated by other publishers. There are even "coffee table" books replete with beautiful illustrations of things that move and don't. Assortments of videos produced by the National Audubon Society are of the quality seen on the "Discovery" and "National Geographic" channels. All of these materials can be checked out, with signature sheets provided. I forgot to mention that on display in the main room of the Center are some items for purchase, including plush "Audubon Birds" emitting authentic calls when squeezed (not ouch!), Audubon Note Cards, Sibley Field Guides to Birds, and National Audubon's "Field Guide to the Rocky Mountain States." The Audubon Center on Garden Creek is a great place to relax, browse and learn about the natural world!

**PRESIDENT—JIM BROWN**

## AUDUBON WYOMING'S BIOBLITZ EVENT

**T**his summer, on June 20 and 21, Audubon Wyoming, along with Laramie Audubon and Murie Audubon and a number of resource agencies and other non-profit organizations will be hosting its first annual "bioblitz event" in the Shirley Basin. Bring your friends and family.

Have you ever held a bat? Or identified bugs under the light of the moon? This might be the perfect thing for you....

What is it?/Background:

A BioBlitz brings together scientists from various organizations and agencies in a race against time to see how many species they can count in a 24-hour biological survey. The public is invited to observe, interact and participate in the sampling activities. AW's "BioBlitz" will be a 24-hour event in which teams of scientists, volunteers, and community members join forces to find, identify, and learn about as many local plant, insect and animal species as possible. AW will be using the BioBlitz as a way for communities to learn about the biological diversity of their local lands (public and private ranches) and to better understand how to protect them. AW plans to hold one BioBlitz within an identified Important Bird Area (IBA), specifically The Shirley Basin/Bates Hole IBA. We believe the BioBlitz event will give us an excellent base-line inventory within one of our priority IBAs, which encompass several of Wyoming's species of critical conservation (developed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department) and their related habitats.

In addition to establishing baseline information, the bioblitz event will be an opportunity for adults, chil-

dren, and teens to join biologists in the field, participate in bona fide research expeditions, and learn from experts about inventorying and the importance of biodiversity.

The projects objectives are:

1. Collect baseline presence/absence data on birds, plants, mammals and insects inhabiting the Shirley Basin/Bates Hole situated within critical sagebrush habitat.
2. Use the baseline information to establish monitoring protocol specific and effective at determining changes to specific wildlife or plant species. Long-term monitoring plans are necessary to investigate changes in abundance or diversity resulting from habitat enhancement projects (phase 3 of the IBA goal process).
3. Help build a volunteer base for future monitoring and restoration projects within the area.
4. Build awareness in the local communities about the ecosystem that surrounds them and why we should be conserving the habitat and wildlife.
5. Build interest in local schools concerning science programs and the importance of conservation of our natural resources.

As expressed in the objectives, our target audience will be local communities; within those communities we will be working and involving local high school students, other NGOs, state

and federal agency members, and University members.

**In a nutshell we hope the outcome of our bioblitz will be:**

- **Fun.** The child naturalist within knows that crawling around in the woods and fields looking at plants and animals is about as good as it gets.

- **Brings out the Specialists.**

A one day event, especially one surrounded by colleagues and other naturalists, is about the only way that a local area can get good taxonomic information for some groups of species.

- **Identifying Rare and Unique Species/Groups.**

By bringing together the best in the field, their insights can be used to identify uncommon or special habitats for protection and management. In some cases rare species may be uncovered.

- **Documenting Species Occurrence.**

The lists of species generated for the site, while incomplete, are an excellent starting place for inventories. With such talent in place information will be added even for well covered species such as birds.

- **Media Attention!** Bring together an eclectic stew of ornithologists, herpetologists, entomologists, and botanists. Sprinkle well with other suspected misanthropes and you will have reporters eating out your hand.

- **Natural History Synergy.**

Naturalists are often isolated within larger agencies or departments. Getting out into the field with folks from other fields, leads to new insights, and presents possibilities for further interaction.

**We do not expect of the BioBlitz:**

- **A Complete Inventory.** A

one day event cannot come near to documenting all the species present. The species pool changes throughout the year, so no matter what day is chosen, species will be missed.

- **Basis for Monitoring.**

Repeating a Blitz on the same day each year should not be thought of as a means of tracking change over time. The loose nature of participants, the vagaries of species detection, weather, observer skill, and many other factors all conspire to limit the usefulness of among year comparisons. However, repeated blitzes will add to the accumulated species inventory and are a good means for identifying groups that would benefit from a more formal monitoring program.

This project is made possible by the Together-Green Grant. Interested members of the public will rendezvous between 10AM and 12pm at the Shirley Basin Reservoir campsite on June 20 for the event. Participants are urged to contact Audubon Wyoming for more information and to sign up for the event. (Members of the public may sign up by calling or emailing Alison Holloran or Mac Blewer at (307) 745-4848 ; a h o l l o r a n @ a u d u b o n . o r g or m b l e w e r @ a u d u b o n . o r g)

**ALISON HOLLORAN**

## BIRD NOTES



**A**fter a week of unseasonably warm weather here in Casper, winter returned with a vengeance!! As I write this, snow is literally blanketing Wyoming, with blizzard conditions in some parts of the state. The Red-wings are definitely back, and gulls are once again frequenting the fast-food parking lots (a great place to study gulls at your leisure). Also, the first cormorant of the year for the Casper area has been reported by Chris Michelson. Judith Key observed a "turkey parade" on March 18; she said 30 hens and toms were walking down Al-lendale Blvd. here in Casper.

Way up north in Whitehorse, Bruce Bennett reports temps are warming up a bit, with minus 22 F. mornings warming up to a balmy plus 14; he notes bird activity is sparse yet – Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Red Crossbill, a Pine Siskin, and a few Trumpeter Swans.

### February yard birds

– For the month of February, Wayne and I received 192 yard bird selections

from 15 states plus the Yukon, Belize, and Cambodia, with 77 different species reported. Good numbers of raptors and woodpeckers are still being reported, and blackbirds and robins are now being seen regularly. But the most reported species was Red Crossbill. American Robin was in second place. Third place was a tie between Red-winged Blackbird and Bald Eagle; with Sharp-shinned Hawk coming in fourth.

**Casper:** Pat Classen – Bald Eagle, Cecil Foote – Townsend's Solitaire, Brigid Herold – Black-capped Chickadee, Chris Michelson – Steller's Jay, Pineview School – Canada Goose, Ann Hines – Townsend's Solitaire, Garden Creek Audubon Center – Golden Eagle (imm.), Judith Key – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Casper College Greenhouse – House Finch, Lois Layton – Song Sparrow, Stacey Scott – Mountain Chickadee, Bruce Walgren – Bald Eagle, Donna Walgren – Red Crossbill; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki – Northern Shrike (juv.), Michael Kenney – White-winged Crossbill; **Douglas:** Billie Snell – Townsend's Solitaire; **Evanston:** Patti Gorman – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Tim Gorman – Eurasian Collared Dove; **Glenrock:** Bruce Walgren – Ring-necked Duck, Donna Walgren – Ruddy Duck; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – Hairy Woodpecker; **Sundance:** Jean Adams – Common Redpoll; **Table Rock:** Tim Gorman – Horned Lark. And out in San Diego, CA, Jim Herold is seeing Black-and-white Warblers!!

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in February!! Send your bird notes and yard bird reports to Donna Wal-

gren, 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net, or phone 234-7455. Good Birding!!!

**DONNA WALGREN**

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Dear Editor,**

The Low-Carbon Diet article by Mike Tidwell, page 46, in the January/February 2009 Audubon Magazine is misleading. It quotes a United Nations study that says 18% of the greenhouse gases produced each year are due to livestock, and therefore people should not eat meat. The UN study includes many items like the deforestation of the Amazon (approximately one third of the 18%) and all the cattle in India. While the deforestation of the Amazon is an environmental disaster, it has no influence on the greenhouse gases livestock produce in the United States. The cattle in India are not eaten at all. In fact, the EPA says that 6% of the greenhouse gas produced in the United States comes from all agriculture. In 2006, livestock in the US produced 181.9 teragrams of CO2 equivalent a year, or 2.58% of the 7,054.2 teragrams US produced greenhouse gases. As far as I can tell, that number does not include the greenhouse gases associated with corn production, or a credit for the carbon sequestration

that grazed pastures produce. Remember that the vegetarian diet is from food produced by farming practices that also use fossil fuels. So if you are a true environmentalist, you ought to eat grass fed beef that isn't fed the environmentally unfriendly corn. It is also much better for you.

Tofu is not the best choice as a meat substitute. If you are feeding tofu to a male of any age, you should really ask your urologist the effects of eating an estrogen substitute (even an natural one) on the probability of prostate cancer in men. Prostate cancer is common in older men, and you don't want to do anything that will bring on the cancer at an earlier age.

The article says that livestock production uses 250 gallons of fuel per year. That number doesn't seem reasonable. The per capita consumption of meat is about 200 pounds a year in the United States. If you use a \$3.00 per gallon price for gasoline, and diesel is 50 cents higher, then it would mean that the fuel cost of meat was well over \$3 per pound. Even beef, the most expensive meat, only averages just over \$3 a pound. If 250 gallons per year is correct, it would mean that over 100% of the cost of meat was in the fuel. There are a lot of costs associated with meat production, like labor, capital and a small profit for the grocery store, that don't have anything to

do with fuel. I don't know what the amount of fuel is for livestock production, but 250 gallons per year is not correct.

**STACEY SCOTT**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

**W**e welcome new members from Casper: Kristi Armijo, Sue Ford, Marie Hautins, and Mary Atkinson; and from Moran: Michael Inman

**Renewing members from Casper:** Brenda Baalhorn, Carol Coltrane, Robbie Fiechtner, Michael Mammon, Judie Lewis; from Douglas: Sally Goodman; from Jackson: Susan Patla and Faith Ryan

**We also welcome a new Friend of Murie from Casper:** Steven Sauerwein

**Renewing Friends of Murie from Casper:** Betty Rickman, Ruth Dove, and Mary Hein.

We welcome you all and encourage you to participate in any of our activities. Feel free to contact any Officer or Board Member should you have any questions or suggestions.

**BRUCE WALGREN AND  
JAN WHITNEY**

## WINGS OVER CARBON COUNTY BIRDING FESTIVAL

**T**he Wings Over Carbon County Birding Club is having a special birding weekend June 5, 6, and

7 in Saratoga. We would like to extend an invitation to anyone interested in joining us for a fun filled weekend. The main focus of the weekend will be on just plain fun. This will be a no frills event. Everyone is responsible for their midday lunch and beverages plus transportation to and from the birding areas. The cost of this weekend's fun will be \$50 per person before June 1st and \$60 after that date. Please plan on registering early as it makes planning an event such as this much easier. All events are subject to change according to weather conditions.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **Friday evening, June 5 - 6 to 8 PM** - A picnic will be hosted by club members in the backyard of Francis and Janice Bergquist, 1104 Club Court. We will discuss the weekend activities at this time. Directions to the home will be provided upon request via email or by calling 307-326-8073
- **Saturday, June 6 - 7 AM to 2PM** - A field trip is planned but the location will be decided later when snowpack levels will allow us to plan, club members will provide a continental breakfast but bring you own lunch and beverages.
- **5:30 PM** - A sit-down dinner, included in the fee, will be held at Medicine Bow Lodge. Steve Loose from the US Forest Service will be

our guest speaker again this year and he will be discussing hummingbirds. Drawing for door prizes and silent auctions will be held during the evening's events.

- **Sunday, June 7 - 7 AM to 10 AM** - Location of field trips will be decided later.

- **10:30 AM** - Club members will provide a hot breakfast at the home of Bob and Carol Randall and we will close out the weekend with some more bird watching on their property along the Platte River.

Please email Francis Bergquist (fcbjmb@hotmail.com) for more information. Please send your check for registration to: Joanne Jensen, PO Box 725, Encampment, Wyoming, 82325.

### FRANCES BERGQUIST

## INVASIVE PLANTS AND BIRDS

I was reading an article in a back issue of *North American Birds* (The Winter Season, 2007) discussing possible reasons for changes in winter bird distributions. Considering some of the causes of birds over-wintering increasingly farther north, the authors (Marshall Iliff and Derek Lovitch) noted the milder winters and general global climate change that may be responsible for southern species becoming more common in New Eng-

land, as well as northern species becoming less common. One example: several years ago Northern Mockingbirds were exciting finds for New England birders; now this species is seen quite frequently.

Data from Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, Project FeederWatch, eBird, along with sightings reported in *North American Birds* has indicated northward (and westward and even upslope) expansion of some species' ranges. Global warming always comes immediately to mind when considering this data, but researchers agree that other factors are also involved. An article by E. S. Brinkley (2006) mentions habitat modification, stochastic weather events, breeding success/failure, misoriented migrants, and also observer effort. Another factor to be considered is the proliferation of non-native and invasive plants, especially those that produce large quantities of fruit eaten by birds. Iliff and Lovitch discuss the impact in New England by such plants – multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and various species of honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.) to name a few. These plants provide an abundant supply of forage when native foods are less readily available. Many grow in disturbed areas and "green belts." Plus, seed dispersal by the frugivorous birds feeding on the fruits helps spread and increase these plants. Referring back to the mockingbirds in New England, these birds have moved northward with the multiflora rose plantings.

Two questions are posed

by Iliff and Lovitch; the first – Are invasive plants good for birding? The green belt areas many times serve as magnets for birds (from common migrants to rare vagrants), where birds gather to eat whatever is available. And more often than not, these areas contain non-native, invasive plants. It was noted that in eastern Massachusetts, a highly urbanized environment, packed with people and traffic, there are many good birding opportunities in these green spaces. Another example: Bohemian Waxwings have been noted wintering in good numbers in Anchorage, Alaska, thanks to plantings of non-native fruiting species for landscaping. Also, some of these plantings of non-natives have also provided habitat for non-native birds (additional interesting "finds" for birders). So it does seem that invasive plants could be considered good for birding in some locations.

The second question (probably the more important one) is: Are invasive plants good for birds? This is much more difficult to assess. Studies indicate that multiflora rose has been a positive factor in the case of the Northern Mockingbird expanding its range northward, and the rose fruit is a nutritious food for the mockingbird. However, some chemical compounds in the rose fruit may make these fruits unpalatable to

other bird species. Species have evolved with their forage foods and some can be very specific in their nutritional requirements (specialists); whereas others will utilize a variety of foods (generalists). Much of the research on fruit preferences and nutrition quality has been done on American Robins and Cedar Waxwings (both of these species tend to be generalists). The waxwings seem to like small, red berries; and most honeysuckle species, which have small, red berries, are abundant. Bush honeysuckle berries contain a carotenoid (rhodoxanthin) which has been shown to be the cause of the aberrant orange color being seen at times in the tail tips of Cedar Waxwings, usually in juvenal plumages. Rhodoxanthin is also implicated in the aberrant plumages in Baltimore Orioles, Yellow-breasted Chats, Kentucky Warblers, and White-throated Sparrows in which yellow pigmented feathers have changed to orange. The potential evolutionary impacts of such changes on mate selection, physical fitness, or other attributes are unknown. Also, many frugivores have specific digestive and physiological adaptations that allow them to process certain fruits more efficiently than others.

Some positive value can also be attributed to the invasive common reed or phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), which outcom-

petes native wetland environments. Kane (2000) notes that in New Jersey, phragmites wetlands provide habitat for dozens of species for nesting, wintering, and migration stopovers. And in Virginia, before they were destroyed by state agencies, large stands of phragmites hosted enormous roosts of Bobolinks, along with Eastern Kingbirds and Tree Swallows. Even the much-maligned purple loosestrife has its upside – it feeds Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and later in the fall, migrant sparrows.

The success of invasive plants is often to a lack of natural enemies, especially insects. For example, about 120 species of insects feed on Purple Loosestrife in Europe, but only 12 species were found in a Manitoba study. Insects are a vital part of the most birds' diets; even frugivorous birds consume insect matter during nesting season.

Considering all this, the value of invasive plants to birds is debatable, but most would probably agree that the negative impacts greatly outweigh the positives. Invasives are part of our environment and must be dealt with. I would very much like to hear from anyone who has more thoughts and information on this topic.

**DONNA WALGREN**



By Barb Gorges

## **ON THE WYOMING RANGE, THE MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD IS A HARBINGER OF SPRING**

**A** true Wyoming sign of spring is the migration of mountain bluebirds. Forget robins—there aren't too many to be found out on the open range.

By late February or early March we see mountain bluebirds take up their perches again on fence posts and other high spots out in the country—the open country—even though winter weather isn't quite over.

The flash of that incredible shade of blue, like a piece of sky, as a male mountain bluebird flies out from his perch is enough to endear the species to you forever. The female is gray with just a trace of blue. If you look hard, you'll see she isn't very far away from the male.

Ironically, mountain bluebirds prosper amidst farming and grazing or where forests have been cut, as long as there are fruits and seeds to forage for in the winter and insects in the summer. They've also been aided by people willing to put up nest boxes for them.

If you have rural property, consider starting

your own bluebird trail, a series of nest boxes. But not any old bird house will do. The openings must be 1 and 9/16 inches in diameter to keep out house sparrows.

The boxes must be deep enough to keep marauding raccoons, cats and birds from reaching inside and grabbing or pecking the nestlings. Raw wood is better than wood finishes. And it is necessary to install an easy way to open the box for cleaning.

No need to reinvent the wheel. Lots of advice is available through the North American Bluebird Society. While the two red-breasted species, the eastern bluebird and the western bluebird, are more recognizable, the society also addresses our solid blue mountain species.

The website, [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org), has lots of information on monitoring nest boxes, keeping them safe from predators and enticing bluebirds to use them. The website has plans for several kinds of nest boxes. You can also call 1-812-988-1876 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. MST, Monday - Friday. (Reprinted here by permission of Barb Gorges)

### MAS BOARD SPLINTERS

1. June Calmes suggested setting up weekly field trips sponsored by Murie Audubon. She would welcome

ideas and suggestions about where to go. (If anyone has suggestions, please contact June.)

2. It was noted that the domain for Murie's website is due for renewal; annual cost is \$7.95.

A Nominating Committee has been formed to find candidates for officers and board members to be voted on at the Annual Meeting (the membership meeting on May 8). If anyone has suggestions for nominees, please contact any member of the Committee (Bart Rea, JP Cavigelli, Lisa Fujita).

### AUDUBON CENTER AT GARDEN CREEK

**G**reetings nature lovers! Below are opportunities to spend time in nature and visit the ACGC. The birds are moving through and the warming temperatures remind us that Spring is around the corner. Please feel free to visit and enjoy the birds and wildlife!

**1) April 15-May 23: Steamboat Lake Waterfowl Survey.** The Steamboat Lake Survey starts on April 15th and takes place once a week for six weeks. We will need 6 surveys total. We'd really like to distribute the work and would love to have a different person do it each week. However, if someone is willing to do it more than once we would be forever grateful! Any help at all is appreciated. If people are interested in helping please call Larry at the Center at 473-1987.

**2) Every Thursday 12-1pm-Brown bag birding.** Bring your own lunch and join us for an in-

formal gathering of wildlife watching and conversation.

Thank you so much for your past visits to the Center and I look forward to seeing you in the future. Please forward this information on to anyone who might be interested.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me through the information provided below. Have a great week, try not to blow away, and enjoy the sunshine!

Jess Ryan

Casper Community Naturalist, 101 Garden Creek, Casper, WY 82601, (307) 473-1987.

### TOP 10 WAYS TO HELP NESTING BIRDS

by Bill Thompson, III

**S**pring is the start of the breeding season for most of our North American birds. They pair up with mates, build nests, lay eggs, raise young, and then some of them repeat the cycle -- as many as three times. There are some things that you can do to assist your backyard birds at this busy time of year. Here they are, in the time-honored Top Ten format.

**10. Keep your cat inside (and ask your neighbors to do the same).** Cats take an incredible toll on songbirds, but low-nesting species and their young are es-

pecially vulnerable to cat predation. Do the birds a favor and keep this unnatural predator away from places where birds nest.

**9. Provide nest boxes.** It may seem obvious, but a well-placed nest box can mean the difference between nesting success and failure for a cavity-nesting bird. It's hard for many species to compete with starlings and house sparrows, which can take all the best cavities. For great advice on being a landlord to the birds, read *A Guide to Bird Homes*, published by BWD Press (1-800-879-2473).

**8. Hold off trimming hedges and shrubs.** Lots of species use small hedges and shrubs for nesting. If you see a bird building a nest in such a place on your property, you've got a great excuse to avoid this bit of yard work for the next month or two.

**7. Put out short pieces of fiber, string, and yarn.** For birds that build woven nests (orioles, some sparrows, robins, and others), a few short pieces of yarn can come in mighty handy during building time. Offer the pieces in an onion bag or in a small basket. Keep the pieces shorter than two inches to reduce the risk of birds getting tangled in them.

**6. Offer pet or human hair in onion bags or put in obvious places.** If you looked at a hundred bird nests, chances are that most of them would have

some animal hair in them. It's soft, insulating, and easy to gather. When you groom your pet (or when you yourself are groomed), save the hair to spread around your backyard for the birds to use.

**5. Put out eggshells for birds.** Eggshells help female birds replace calcium lost during egg production and laying. Save your eggshells, dry them out in the oven (10-30 minutes at 250 degrees), crumble them into small pieces, and spread the pieces on an open spot on the ground.

**4. Continue to feed high-protein foods such as mealworms, peanuts, and suet.** Don't stop feeding your birds, unless you want to miss out on some fabulous behavior watching. Energy-packed foods such as those listed above will lure your backyard birds (and their young) to your feeders. These young birds will learn at an early age where your feeders are.

**3. Don't mow meadows or brushy areas between late April and mid-August.** We keep our farm fields long and grassy all summer long, mowing only a few paths that we keep short all year. This means that field sparrows, prairie warblers, meadowlarks, and other birds can nest in peace. And our box turtles, butterflies, rabbits, deer, foxes, and other creatures appreciate our "farming" style, too.

**2. If you find a nest -- stay away.** If you happen upon a bird's nest, don't linger, and don't make a return visit. We human beings leave scent trails wherever we go, and these scent trails can mean an easy meal to a hungry raccoon, opossum, fox, or other predator (We leave the

same trails leading to our outdoor pet-food dishes, garbage cans, and compost piles). These predators are smart enough to follow these trails to see if they might lead to a snack. For the birds' sake, don't help to blow a nest's cover by visiting it repeatedly.

**1. Provide water for bathing and drinking on hot days.** Actually, provide water all year long, if you can -- but make sure to keep it clean. Your birdbath may be the first place in your backyard a parent bird takes its offspring. Lots of family-style bathing takes place at summer birdbaths, and young birds can be dependent upon the only water source they know. So keep your bath filled and clean. Make sure the average water depth is less than three inches. Birds appreciate shallow water.

From - <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com>

## SAGE GROUSE STRUTTING FIELD TRIP

**Saturday, April 11, 5:30 AM**

We will meet at the east side Safeway parking lot to view the sage-grouse strutting at the Hat 6 lek. If you haven't seen this spectacular show, you ought to take advantage of it now. Call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for any additional details.

**STACEY SCOTT—FIELD TRIP CHAIR**