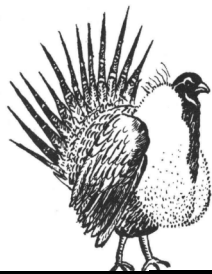


# PLAINS & PEAKS



Vol. 44—Iss. 3 — APRIL—2010

**MURIE AUDUBON**

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

## SOME MOTHS OF WYOMING

Dwaine Wagoner, from here in Casper, will be the guest speaker for Murie Audubon's April program. Dwaine has combined his expertise in photography and observation and will show us a collection of his photos of Wyoming's moths. With the exception of "miller" moths, we seldom notice moths, yet there are more than 12,000 species in North America north of Mexico. Worldwide there are more species of moths than all the species of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles put together. This talk will explore a very few of those moths that may be seen in Wyoming.

Dwaine was born in Indiana and grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. He first came to Wyoming in the summer of 1998 to volunteer with the Tate Museum and continued spending summers here until 2005 when he moved here permanently. Dwaine continues to volunteer at the Tate (he assisted in the excavation of the mammoth, "Dee", now on display at the Tate) and he also leads field trips at the Audubon Center.

Many of you will remember Dwaine's previous program on butterflies and this one promises to be just as educational and entertaining, so please join us on Friday, April 9, 2010 at 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. The program is free and open to the public!



### CALENDAR

April 6—Bd. Mtg.—7PM—ACGC  
 April 9—Gen. Mtg.—7PM—OGCC Bldg.  
 April 10—Field Trip—pg. 5  
 April 16—Newsletter deadline for May  
 April 21—Walk & Talk—pg. 3  
 April 29, May 6, 13—Bird ID Classes—pg. 5  
 May 1, 8, 15—Class Field Trips  
 May 15—Cheyenne Big Day  
 May 31—Field Trip—pg. 5  
 June 18-20—Wings over Carbon County  
 Birding Festival  
 June 25-27—Wyoming Chapters Summer  
 Birding Weekend

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

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presidential Ponderings, Bird Notes  
 Greeting from ACGC  
 "Give Birds a Break"  
 2010-11 Slate of Officers, Field Trips, Beginning Bird ID Classes, Wyoming Chapters Summer Birding Weekend  
 Audubon Adventures, Wings Over Carbon County Birding Festival, *Birds of Wyoming*, Lead and Raptors  
 "Tweeting on Twitter"  
 2010 Great Backyard Bird County Wyoming Results

### PAGE #

2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6  
 8  
 9

(The photo at the beginning of this article is a Hera Buckmoth by Dwaine Wagoner.)

**PROGRAM CHAIR—BRUCE WALGREN**

## PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

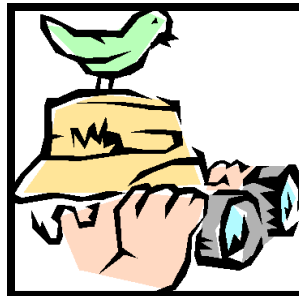


Today we're going on a field trip. What magical words spoken by a teacher to a fourth grade class in the days before the school required permission slips and waivers wreathed in fine print! The trip might be nothing more than a stroll to the town library or a walk to a nearby park criss-crossed by a bubbling brook. The important thing was that we were OUTSIDE, a wonderful break in routine. Move the clock forward a decade or two (or maybe a few more for some of us) and I'll wager that "field trip" still conjures up feelings of rejuvenation and a hint of adventure. Well, do I have a deal for you! Throughout the year and especially during Spring migration, the Murie Audubon Society under the auspices of Field Trip Chairman Stacey Scott and equally zealous leaders offers the opportunities to learn about butterflies, botany and birds with a dash of zoology and geology. These excursions are announced at our second-Friday-of-the-month general meetings and well advertised in the Newsletter. Field trips offer the opportunity to learn, socialize and scout out new locations for viewing nature on your own. Participants are always happy to share their knowledge, even with people like me who once got excited about the exotic orange bird in the junipers at Alcova one January. It was a robin. But no one said, "it's a robin, stupid!" And that's the point.

No matter how naïve or uninformed we may think or actually know we are about wildlife, the enthusiasm of others and their willingness to help, makes learning on field trips a joyful experience. And there's no quiz at the end of the day! Whether field trips target the grounds of the Audubon Center at Garden Creek, Casper Mountain, Alcova, Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park, Soda Lake, Rotary Park or other places where birds, butterflies, wild flowers and animals congregate, all offer respite from the routines that often keep us indoors on a glorious Saturday. And sometimes the wind doesn't blow! So, the next time you hear a Murie Audubon member say, "we're going on a field trip," jump up, clap your hands and shout, "yea, me too" and give your leader an apple.

**JIM BROWN**

## BIRD NOTES



In spite of some snow storms that I move through intermittently, there are indications that Spring may be coming – eventually! Bluebirds are beginning to be sighted around Wyoming, as well as Red-winged Blackbirds. (The boys are back!!! Females will make their appearance a bit later.) Pine Siskins are still scarce here in the Casper area, but large groups of Evening Grosbeaks are still being seen at feeding stations. Bald and Golden Eagles are fairly numerous along with a few Prairie Falcons. Flocks of robins are being seen and some are starting to sing – another hint of Spring. Buds on some tree species are starting to swell; and if you take a walk across the prairie and look closely, the phlox is starting to show signs of greening up. **February yard birds** – For the month of February, Wayne and I received 204

yard bird selections from 19 states plus the Yukon, with 83 different species reported. Good numbers of raptors are still being seen (11 species) plus 3 species of owls, including a Snowy. There were 4 species of woodpeckers in February; and chickadees and nuthatches are still being reported. The most reported bird was Bald Eagle; American Robin was in second place. Third place was a 3-way tie between Red-winged Blackbird, Downy Woodpecker, and Pileated Woodpecker. American Goldfinch came in fourth.

### Wyoming Yard Birds

**Casper:** Brigid Herold – Downy Woodpecker, Pat Classen – Black-capped Chickadee, Cecil Foote – N. Flicker, Chris Michelson – Red-breasted Nuthatch, JP Cavigelli – Prairie Falcon, Casper College Greenhouse – Canada Goose, Rose-Mary King – Black-capped Chickadee, Lois Layton – Spotted Towhee, Tate Museum – Golden Eagle, Bruce Walgren – Bald Eagle, Donna Walgren – Golden Eagle; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – A. Goldfinch; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki – Clark's Nutcracker, Michael Kenney – Pine Grosbeak; **Evanston:** Tim Gorman – Pine Siskin, Patti Gorman – Eurasian Collared-Dove; **Mills:** Bruce Walgren – Canada Goose; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – N. Goshawk.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in February!! Send your bird notes and yard bird reports to Donna Walgren, 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net, or phone 234-7455. Good Birding!!!

**DONNA WALGREN**

## GREETINGS FROM AUDUBON CENTER AT GARDEN CREEK

There are definitely signs of spring around the Center, de-

spite the snow still covering much of the trail. The 24 young participants in the Spring Break Explore and Create class discovered changes in twig colors and budding on the branches. The thatch ants have been out and active on warm days. Goldfinches, and juncos are becoming more numerous and the first red-winged blackbird has been spotted.

The March photography class brought 14 people to the Center to learn from professional photographer Bruce Nichols. Thanks Bruce and all who participated for helping to boost this month's income by over \$300.

The first Walk and Talk benefited from a beautiful "spring like" evening as 16 people braved the slippery trail. Thanks to Bruce and Donna Walgren and Dwaine Wagener who served as trail guides and made the walk educational and fun. We appreciated Robin Kepple sharing her information about mountain lions. Several people asked about future walks, so the next one will be during "Earth Week", Wednesday April 21. Earth Day is April 22 so April is the perfect month to see if we can make even a small change to benefit this planet we call home. Acknowledge and feel good about things you are already doing. Here's just a few ideas if you are ready to go beyond recycling, turning off lights and turning down the heat. Say no to plastic shopping bags! I've had to force myself to go out to the car and get them or struggle with carrying items in my arms, but when I do that a few times in a row - I start remembering. Examine your cleaning supplies and replace the most toxic with a more earth friendly one - Bon Ami, vinegar and water, baking soda. Use a re-useable water bottle instead of buying water in plastic bottles. Turn off computers and electronics easily with a green power strip. Look at your garbage and see if you can reduce it some way. Join up with a

neighbor and take those rinsed and de-labeled tin cans to either Pacific Steel and Recycling or Wyoming Steel and Recycling, both on Yellowstone Highway in Mills. Compost those food scraps, burying in a garden space or start a worm bin. Cut apart 6 pack rings and save the necks (and lives) of wildlife. Whatever you do - Celebrate the birds that arrive, the beauty of the coming spring and enjoy the added daylight hours! See you at the Center!

WANDA PETERS

## 2010-11 SLATE OF OFFICERS

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT.....Harry Martin  
VICE-PRESIDENT.....OPEN  
SECRETARY.....OPEN  
TREASURER.....Stacey Scott

### BOARD MEMBERS:

Bob Yonts, Chris Michelson, Amy Olsen, Fred Eiserman, Kathy Davis, Will Waterton, Karl Oswald

Election to be held at the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, April 10.** We will meet at the east-side Safeway parking lot at 5:30 AM to watch the Sage-Grouse strutting at the Hat-6 Lek. People will tell you that they also strut at dusk, but the morning show is so much better there really isn't any comparison. For questions or details, call Stacey Scott at 262-0055.

**Saturday, May 15.** We will meet at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek at 8:00 AM for a trip to Edness Kimble Wilkins State Park to see migrating birds. This trip is in conjunction with our spring bird class, and will be led by JP Cavigelli.

**Monday, May 31, Memorial Day.** We will meet at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek at 8:00 AM for a trip to Bates Creek on the Garrett Ranch. We will walk up the creek looking for the resi-

dent birds. Call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for details or questions.

**March 13th field trip report** - Seven of us went to Gray Reef and Lusby's. The weather was really nice, and we had a good assortment of birds. Probably the best bird for me was the Barrow's Goldeneye, but we also had Rudy Duck, Hooded Merganser and the other ducks expected at this time of year. At Lusby's, we heard a Great-horned Owl calling at 4:30 in the afternoon. We heard him many times, but couldn't spot him. He was on the other side of the river and probably in some trees or brush along the river. It was a really nice afternoon, and I enjoy birding with so many others that are better at spotting the birds than I am.

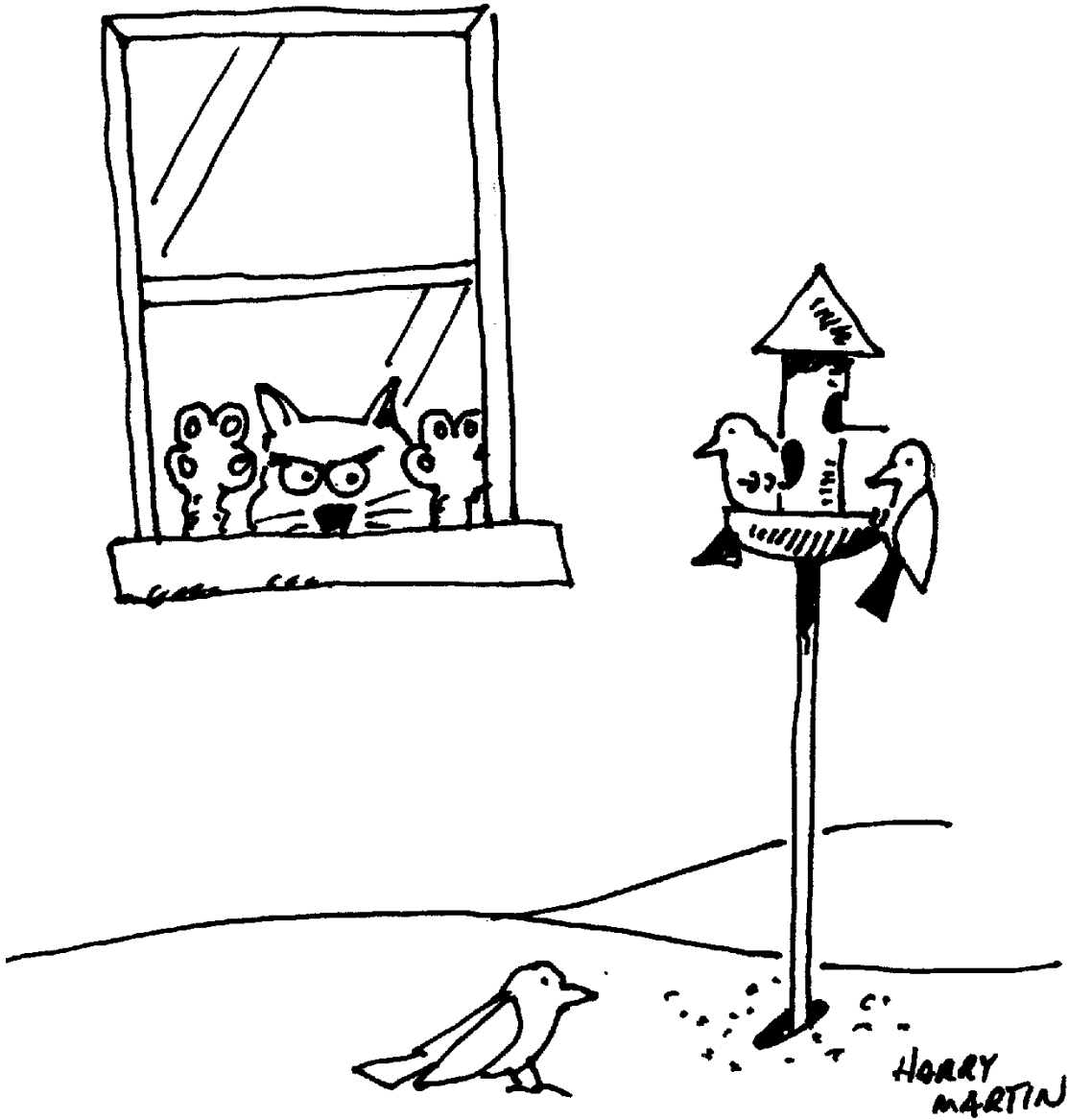
Bird List: Eared Grebe, Canada Goose, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, N. Shoveler, Gadwall, A. Widgeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser Scaups, Barrow's and Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Merganser, Rudy Duck, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, California Gull, Great-horned Owl, Flicker, Magpie, Raven, Robin, European Starling, Eurasian Collared Dove, Tree Sparrow (singing), and Red-winged Blackbird.

**FIELD TRIP CHAIRMAN  
STACEY SCOTT**

## BEGINNING BIRD ID CLASSES

Murie Audubon and Audubon Wyoming will be offering the annual beginning Bird ID classes on three consecutive Thursday evenings: April 29, May 6 and 13. The class will also feature a weekly field trip on the Saturday following the class which is free and open to the public. The classes meet at 7PM at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek and will

# GIVE BIRDS A BREAK – KEEP YOUR CAT IN THE HOUSE!



Harry Martin Cartoon by Harry Martin

cost five dollars per session or all three for \$12.00. Each class will focus on a different theme: birds of ACGC and Casper Mountain, Waterfowl, and Birds of Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park. Contact Wanda Peters (Audubon Center at Garden Creek), 473-1987, for more details.

## WYOMING CHAPTERS SUMMER BIRDING WEEKEND

June 25-27, Riverton, Wyoming. Contact info: Bob Hargis - bhargis@wyoming.com - 307-851-0662 or Cell, 307-851-0662, or Barb Gorges - bgorges4@msn.com - (307) 634-0463.

## AUDUBON ADVENTURES

**A** BIG thank you to Bart Rea for sponsoring numerous classes of Audubon Adventures and also to Dana Vanburg. They both have been generous sponsors in the past.

Notices have gone out to teachers informing them of their sponsors. Hopefully, you will be receiving thank you notes soon.

**EDUCATION CHAIRMAN  
ANN HINES**

## WINGS OVER CARBON COUNTY BIRDING FESTIVAL

**T**he Wings Over Carbon County Birding Club is having a special birding weekend June 18, 19 and 20 in Saratoga. We have moved the date for our birding weekend one week later in hopes of better weather than we have had the past few years. 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. We will be hosting the weekend at the Jack Creek Forest Service lodge. The Jack Creek campground is just about a mile from this lodge so anyone wanting to camp should put their reservation in soon. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr/recreation/cabinrentals/jackcreekcq.shtml>. All plans have not been completed but anyone wanting more info please email [FCBJMB@hotmail.com](mailto:FCBJMB@hotmail.com). The final program will be completed before May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**FRANCES & JANICE BERGQUIST**

## BIRDS OF WYOMING

**B**irds of Wyoming, by Douglas Faulkner is due out April 15, so between now and then you can ask your favorite bookstore to order it. The publisher's info is below. You can also order it directly from the publisher or on Amazon, but why not support your local bookstore?

Ben Roberts, Roberts and Company Publishers, 4950 South Yosemite Street, F2 #197, Greenwood Village, CO 80111 USA, Phone: (303) 221-3325, Fax: (303) 221-3326, Internet: [www.roberts-publishers.com](http://www.roberts-publishers.com)

**BARB GORGES**

## LEAD AND RAPTORS

**L**ast December Bruce and I received a Golden Eagle with some classic symptoms of lead poisoning – lethargy, inability to stand upright on its legs, balled up feet, green defecation. Dr. Keith James sent in a blood sample from the bird, but before the test results came back, the bird had died. (The next day we received the results – positive.) Unfortunately, raptors coming into Murie's Bird Hospital with lead poisoning have been all too common over the years.

Lead is a poisonous metal found in

many commercial products and also as an environmental contaminant in many urban and rural habitats around the world. Serious problems arise when lead is ingested or inhaled; the body "mistakes" it for calcium, it then gets routed into nerve cells, bones, and other tissues. The harmful effects of lead have been known since ancient times; the Romans had correlated various ailments with lead plumbing. And now medical studies published in recent years have shown significant effects at much lower levels than previously thought.

When it was found that ducks and geese died from consuming lead shot while foraging in wetland areas where waterfowl hunting took place, and that bald eagles were dying of secondary lead poisoning after feeding on dead and dying waterfowl, a ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting was instituted in 1991. Studies in 2001 and 2006 by E. Dewailly and P. Johansen et al. on lead exposure in Arctic subsistence hunters using lead shot indicate that this ban has also benefited humans as well as eagles and waterfowl. Researchers have also found that mourning doves confuse lead shot pellets for grit and grain around hunted stock ponds and die in large numbers (J.H. Schulz et al. 2002).

An excellent article in the Autumn 2009 issue of *Living Bird*, "Getting the Lead Out" by Matthew L. Miller, discusses the impacts of lead poisoning in raptors and other wildlife. Derek Craighead and Bryan Bedrosian from the Craighead Beringia South Institute in Wyoming have been investigating blood levels of lead in wildlife around Teton National Park. (This area also happens to be an area with one of the highest densities of elk hunters in the United States.) They found that 50% of the ravens and 75% of the eagles had elevated blood lead levels. They also noted that spikes in the blood levels correlated with the beginning of hunting season. (More info at their web-

site [www.beringiasouth.org](http://www.beringiasouth.org).)

The Peregrine Fund researchers were working on higher than expected numbers of deaths of released California Condors. X-rays and tests of the Condor bodies showed lead. Studies from 2000 to the present indicate that ingestion of lead rifle bullet fragments from animal remains and gut piles may be the most significant obstacle to Condor establishment in Arizona and Utah.

William Cornatzen, a North Dakota physician, has joined the Board of The Peregrine Fund. After viewing a film on California Condors feeding on a deer carcass killed with lead ammunition, he was very surprised to see the X-ray of the carcass showing hundreds of pieces of lead fragments. Cornatzen, a big game hunter, had always felt that proper butchering would remove the lead from game meat. He then decided to test random samples of rifle-killed venison. He and two other researchers worked with Hunters for the Hungry Food Bank, where hunters donate venison. Ground venison packets from different processors were analyzed by the state health department. 59 of 100 packets were found to contain very small fragments of pure lead. These fragments were so small and soft that they would not be felt when you bite down on them – more like lead powder, which would be much more easily absorbed into the blood stream. Lead ingestion is a cumulative problem. It only stays in the blood for about 2 weeks; then it is deposited in soft tissue. After 3 months it moves into bone, marrow, and brain tissue. North Dakota then recalled all the meat from the Hunters for the Hungry program, as did neighboring Minnesota.

Most of the rifle bullets used for big game hunting have a lead core encased in a copper jacket. These bullets mushroom on impact, sending a spray of tiny lead frag-

ments, especially if the bullet hits a bone. Rob Domenech, golden eagle researcher with the Raptor View Research Institute in Missoula, Montana, ([www.raptorview.org](http://www.raptorview.org)) notes that most avian researchers had not realized how much lead-core bullets fragment. This fact has been echoed by many medical researchers studying the effects of consumption of game meat killed with lead-core bullets.

An important step in understanding this problem and gathering information was brought about in May 2008 with the organization of a conference, “Ingestion of Spent Lead Ammunition: Implications for Wildlife and Humans” held in Boise, Idaho. The organizing partners were The Peregrine Fund, Boise State University, U.S. Geological Survey, and Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine. (Find more information about this conference at [www.peregrine.org/lead\\_conference/2008PbConf\\_Proceedings.htm](http://www.peregrine.org/lead_conference/2008PbConf_Proceedings.htm).)

All-copper rifle bullets are available as an alternative to lead ammo; they have been tested extensively and many gun magazines have noted that their ballistic properties are highly rated. Cornatzen recommends that hunters begin using non-lead ammo. People have said that they’ve been eating lead-shot game for forty years. He replies “the same could have been said about smoking cigarettes forty years ago, just because problems don’t manifest themselves immediately, doesn’t mean they aren’t going to have long-term health consequences.” You can find info about ammo tests at the Craighead Beringia South website.

Many researchers feel that the important thing is to get the information out.

DONNA WALGREN

## 2010 GREAT BACK YARD BIRD COUNT RESULTS FOR WYOMING

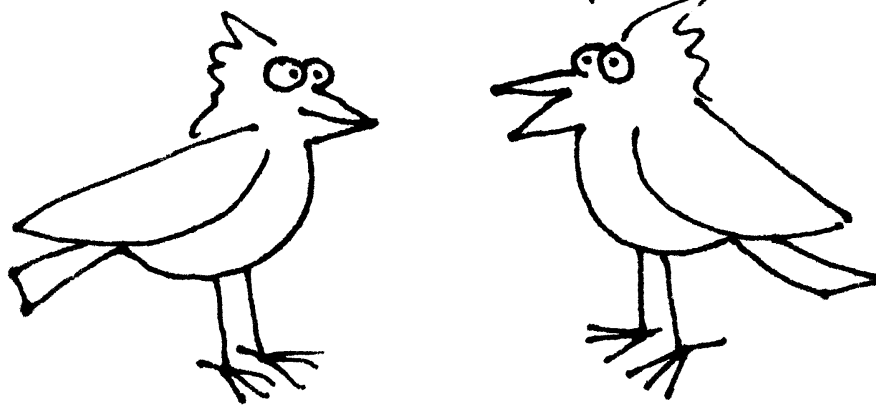
The first number following the specie is the number of birds sighted and the second number is the number of checklists reporting that specie.

**Snow Goose 9 – 2; Cackling Goose 1 – 1; Canada Goose 4,201 – 21; Trumpeter Swan 28 – 2; Mallard 1,562 – 20; N. Pintail 1 – 1; Common Goldeneye 33 – 6; Barrow's Goldeneye 45 – 5; Common Merganser 32 – 3; Ring-necked Pheasant 46 – 10; Ruffed Grouse 3 – 1; Greater Sage-Grouse 8 – 2; Sharp-tailed Grouse 35 – 3; Wild Turkey 387 – 17; Bald Eagle 45 – 29; N. Harrier 10 – 6; Sharp-shinned Hawk 9 – 8; Cooper's Hawk 1 – 1; N. Goshawk 1 – 1; Red-tailed Hawk 9 – 6; Ferruginous Hawk 5 – 4; Rough-legged Hawk 35 – 19; Golden Eagle 56 – 27; A. Kestrel 3 – 2; Merlin 5 – 5; Prairie Falcon 1 – 1; Wilson's Snipe 2 – 1; Rock Pigeon 367 – 24; Eurasian Collared-Dove 125 – 40; Mourning Dove 10 – 3; W. Screech-Owl 2 – 2; Great Horned Owl 17 – 10; N. Pygmy-Owl 1 – 1; Long-eared Owl 1 – 1; N. Saw-**

whet Owl 1 – 1; Downy Woodpecker 47 – 36; Hairy Woodpecker 16 – 11; A. Three-toed Woodpecker 4 – 4; N. Flicker 80 – 40; N. Shrike 1 – 1; Gray Jay 1 – 1; Steller's Jay 8 – 4; Blue Jay 47 – 14; Clark's Nutcracker 46 – 10; Black-billed Magpie 193 – 48; A. Crow whet Owl 1 – 1; Downy Woodpecker 47 – 36; Hairy Woodpecker 16 – 11; A. Three-toed Woodpecker 4 – 4; N. Flicker 80 – 40; N. Shrike 1 – 1; Gray Jay 1 – 1; Steller's Jay 8 – 4; Blue Jay 47 – 14; Clark's Nutcracker 46 – 10; Black-billed Magpie 193 – 48; A. Crow 417 – 47; Common Raven 210 – 31; Horned Lark 249 – 12; Black-capped Chickadee 325 – 71; Mtn. Chickadee 56 – 18; Juniper Titmouse 2 – 1; Red-breasted Nuthatch 36 – 15; White-breasted Nuthatch 42 – 22; Pygmy Nuthatch 3 – 2; Brown Creeper 1 – 1; A. Dipper 2 – 2; Mtn. Bluebird 20 – 1; Townsend's Solitaire 23 – 16; A. Robin 112 – 25; European Starling 934 – 31; A. Tree Sparrow 171 – 20; Song Sparrow 5 – 4; Harris's Sparrow 1 – 1; White-crowned Sparrow 7 – 2; Dark-eyed Junco 284 – 57; Red-winged Blackbird 54 – 7; Common Grackle 3 – 1; Brown-headed Cowbird 5 – 1; Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch 1,198 – 18; Black Rosy-Finch 54 – 6; Purple Finch 11 – 4; Cassin's Finch 44 – 12; House Finch 910 – 63; Red Crossbill 1 – 1; Common Redpoll 16 – 2; Pine Siskin 214 – 21; A. Goldfinch 918 – 49; Evening Grosbeak 31 – 5; House Sparrow 1,582 – 76; Total 15,481.

**BIRDS HAVE BEEN AHEAD OF US HUMANS  
FOR A LONG, LONG, LONG TIME!!**

I'VE BEEN TWEETING  
ON TWITTER



HARRY  
MARTIN