

MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY

CASPER, WYOMING

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APRIL 2007



CALENDAR

- **April 13** - General Meeting - 7PM - 2211 King Blvd.
 - **April 14** - Greater Sage-Grouse Field trip - 5:30AM
 - **April 17** - Bd. Mtg. - 7PM - ACGC - 101 Garden Creek Rd.
 - **April 23** - newsletter deadline for May articles
 - **Every Thursday** come to ACGC for Brown Bag lunch with the birds - 12 NOON
 - **April 26** - 7PM - Beginning Birding Class - ACGC
 - **April 28** - Bird Class Field Trip
 - **May 3 & 5** - Bird Class & Field Trip
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BIRDING AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES

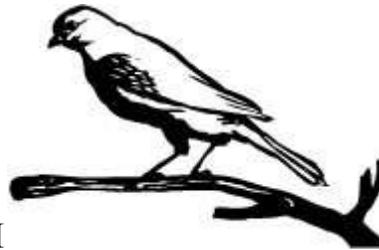


Stonehenge on the Salisbury Plains, medieval fortresses, the Giant's Causeway, murre and razorbills, thousands of seabirds, including a large colony of gannets, also orchids and other native and introduced plants – these are but a small sampling of the sights and scenes that will be seen and discussed at the next Murie Audubon Society meeting. Bart and Liz Rea were part of a group that explored the British Isles in June 2006. The tour started in London and continued almost all the way around Great Britain. Many stops on the outlying islands off the coast let the

participants discover the birds, flowers, ancient monuments, history, archaeology, and geology of the British Isles.

Seeing Bart's photos and Liz's artwork is always an enjoyable way to spend an evening, and as you will see, this trip has a little bit of everything. So join us on Friday, April 13, 2007 at 7PM at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. for the whole story of the Reas' latest trip. As always, the program is free and open to the public!

President - BRUCE WALGREN



BRUCE'S BRANCH

I found a recent story about Sasquatch sightings in Wyoming that aired on Wyoming Public Radio's Open Spaces program quite interesting. Several sightings of this creature as well as footprints provide compelling evidence of the creature's existence. One theory is that they migrated to the North American continent from Asia during the ice ages. Many believe that Sasquatch is a relative of Gigantopithecus, an extinct giant cousin of the orangutan. Almost all of the Native American tribes have a name for these creatures, one has to wonder why? On the other side of the argument, archaeologists have never found a corpse or skeleton of one of these creatures. Another expert explains that to be a viable population, there would have to be numbers similar to those of the current Yellowstone Grizzlies; (with such numbers there would be more sightings) and without a large enough population, they would be extinct. I just thought I'd give those of you headed to the backcountry something to think about!



As you may have heard, the Yellowstone Grizzly Bear is scheduled to be removed from the endangered species list. Four populations of Grizzlies in northern Montana and in parts of Idaho and Washington will remain protected under the Endangered Species Act. This announcement has brought about mixed emotions from the public. What delisting ultimately means is that the State of Wyoming will assume full management of the bears. In Wyoming, specifically Park and Teton Counties, Grizzly Bears will once again be hunted, though in very limited numbers. Population estimates of the Grizzly Bear population are between 500 and 680 individuals, compared to the 136 to 312 bears that were present in 1975 when they were first listed. Critics of de-listing are afraid climate change is reducing a vital food source (i.e. whitebark pine nuts and cutthroat trout), and human population growth is increasing the chances of lethal run-ins.

Within Murie Audubon, we have good news and bad news. June Calmes, who has served as Recording Secretary this past year, has agreed to become Membership Chair. June has already lined up Jackie Ellis to help her in this project and they have some great ideas to create excitement and to help our membership grow. Thank you, June, for taking on this important duty. Of course, with June vacating the secretary's office, we'll be looking for someone to take her place. If you're interested in being secretary or being on the Board of directors, please contact Committee Chair Jim Brown or any other officer or board member.

Until next time - **BRUCE**

KEN'S CORNER



Spring is in the air, so that means we all need to refresh our birding eyes and ears. Beginning Birding Classes are a great way to get inspired after a long winter. This year's classes will be Thursday evenings from 7 PM – 9 PM and will include follow up field trips on Saturdays. The classes will run April 26th and 28th, May 3rd and 5th, as well as May 10th and 12th. Field trips will include Soda Lake, Hat 6 lek and Ayers Natural Bridge, as well as Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park. For information contact Community Naturalist Ken Keffer at kkeffer_AT_audubonDOTorg or 473-1987.

Now that things are warming up outside, Larry Keffer, the Audubon Center at Garden Creek assistant has big plans for the coming weeks, and he needs your help. With the warmer weather Larry will get going on some outdoor projects. Contact AGCG if you want to get out and about and lend a helping hand. Larry will be working on lawn, trail, and bridge maintenance work, some small staining and painting projects, as well as gearing up for the coming bird banding season. Remember manual labor is fun, or at least hanging out with Larry and helping out your local Audubon Center is great.

Speaking of bird banding, mark your calendars for Tuesday mornings in June and July (except June 19 and July 10). Once again the Audubon Center at Garden Creek is running a MAPS bird banding station this summer. We'll meet stupid early in the morning and band birds until noon. Banding is a great way to experience nature, but more importantly, monitoring birds on an international scale helps to detect avian population trends. It is also a convenient excuse to nap on Tuesday afternoons.

Now flip your calendar back to June 19th. Mark that as the annual ACGC spring (or early summer) clean-up.

Spring is also the time of year when bird monitoring starts back up at Pathfinder and Edness Kimball Wilkins. Contact Bob Yonts if you are interested in being a part of this exciting citizen science opportunity. We all enjoy birds and birding, now is the time of year to really put that passion to work on citizen science projects.

Springtime brings plenty of chances to connect with nature for the young and old, for the beginning and the advanced, for you and for me.

Audubon Wyoming is please to announce that we finally have a new website up and running. I want to invite everyone to check us out at Audubon Wyoming. **KEN KEFFER**

ANNUAL WINTER TRIP, PART II

Last month we ended the article by going to lunch at the "Wedding of the Waters" south of Thermopolis. After finishing lunch and leaving the "Wedding of the Waters", we would travel eastward along the Old Highway to the bridge, cross it, and then go to the road's connection with the present highway. At the start of this drive, there is a ranch headquarters and in the holding pens surrounding the ranch house, there are big populations of American crows. Jim Lawrence mentioned to me that crow populations now are huge. Maybe all the crows in America winter in the Bighorn Basin. In the river by the bridge, we've seen large numbers of American wigeon, as well as Canada geese. At times we have been fortunate to see large numbers of Bohemian waxwing in the surrounding Russian olive bushes turned trees. We usually see robins and house finches. Since there have been a number of estate type houses built in this area, there are also the usual house sparrows.

Our travel through Thermopolis usually pointed up more crows, a few northern flickers, robins and house finches. Our usual destination was the area around the hot springs. The hot springs were the reason for the town's establishment. The town was platted in 1897, not really all that long ago. The mineral waters of the hot springs are reputed to have great medicinal value. The town grew rapidly. In the northeastern part of town there are T and Monument Hills. We usually went to T Hill first to try our luck at spotting chukars. The highway, which is high above the hot springs area, forms the bottom part of a "V" at this point. There is a pull out here. The railroad tracks run a bit below the highway. It is between the highway & the railroad tracks that we have seen chukars. If we had no success here, we would go back to the park and drive around the Monument Hill area. We have seen chukars a bit to the north of the corral area, between the corral and present day houses. However, we would still ride around the "roaded" areas of Monument Hill and if lucky, find the herd of buffalo there. Taking a more southerly road down to the flatlands, there is a small canyon where we some times find downy woodpeckers.

Back on the flatlands of the park, we would wind our way to the north and to the river to a noticeable bend. There is also a parking area here where we would set up our scopes. If good fortune shined upon us, we were able at times to see Barrow's goldeneye, common goldeneyes, common mergansers, red-breasted mergansers, bufflehead, mallards, some Northern flickers, and robins. It almost felt like spring.

From here one has the choice of driving the east or the west side of the river. The road on the east side would eventually juncture with Hwy 172 and a bit east of Lucerne. More often than not we stuck with the paved Hwy. 20. We would drive somewhat northeastward following the river for a mile or so before leaving it. From T Hill we drove about 6 miles to the Owl Creek take off. I don't think I ever really knew where I was here, but it was a paved road heading west. I think it maybe called S. Sunnyside Lane, although I don't think it really followed Owl Creek. There was an Owl Creek settlement in the late 1800's and it was this settlement that moved to Thermopolis when it was founded. The Owl Creek area is mostly flat land, good for hay crops. We stopped whenever we spotted a bird. Sometimes we would see ring-necked pheasants, which are always a pleasure to see. However, our destination was the end of the road where we would come upon the entrance to fenced ranch land. The road traveled onward but we would turn back to a little stream we had crossed by a rather well worn bunch of vine covered buildings. It was at this small stream that we were able to find one great bird for ourselves, Harris' sparrow, along with a song sparrow, dark-eyed juncos, and house finches.

Back on Hwy. 20 and again heading northward, we would head east when we arrived at Hwy. 172. This was the Lucerne area which was named by railroad officials for the principal crop in the region; Luzerne is French for alfalfa. The road affords another approach to the river and the land beyond. Once across the river, we would take the first road north to where there was a fishing access area. From here we went eastward to the main north-south road. At this point we turned south & drove back to Hwy 172, took a right & headed back to the river. We had driven a rectangular pattern. We sometimes went into the fishing access area if the trail road looked good enough to drive. We found a number of bald eagles here along with common goldeneye. Within the rectangular pattern there was plenty of riparian vegetation and one might find northern shrike and dark-eyed

juncos. On the north-south road of the east boundary, the road seemed to parallel open rangeland to the east and riparian vegetation to the west. In the trees along the road we would see golden eagles, rough-legged hawks, and sometimes red-tailed hawks. At the bridge crossing there usually were common goldeneye, green-winged teal, and mallards.

Returning to the highway, with a destination now of Worland, we did venture off to the river at Kirby Creek Road. Near the river area we saw 200 gray-crowned rosy finches, a rough-legged hawk, common golden eyes, Northern flickers, black-billed magpie, a belted kingfisher, and a large flock of starlings. We now really needed to stop birding if we wanted to have an evening meal in Worland. So off we went.

Our ride to Worland was usually without stop. Although we did look for big birds, we had little success until we were nearing the outskirts of Worland and we were blessed with the sighting of a great-horned owl.

We'll spend the night in Worland and start from here next time.



The Hummer. (aka Jim Herold)

WINGS OVER CARBON COUNTY BIRDING CLUB

The Wings Over Carbon County Birding Club is having a special birding weekend June 8, 9, and 10 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. Breakfast on Saturday morning will be provided. The cost of this weekend's fun will be \$40 per person. And like usual all events are subject to change according to weather conditions.



Schedule Of Events

Friday Evening

6 to 8 PM--Reception at the home 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

7AM to 2PM--Battle Creek birding with Greg Bergquist, breakfast will be provided but bring your own lunch and beverages.

5:30 PM--A sit-down dinner will be provided. Steve Loose from the US Forest Service will be our guest speaker. Drawing for door prizes and silent auctions will be held during the evening

Sunday--7 AM to 10 AM

Saratoga Lake/Storer Wetlands (easy walking as we will be using our walking trails.) or Cedar Canyon Trail (moderate to difficult walking).

10:30 AM

Breakfast will be held 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 river.

Please email Francis Bergquist--fcbjmb_AT_hotmailDOTcom for more information or send \$40 per person for registration to: Joanne Jensen, PO Box 725, Encampment Wyoming 82325.



BIRD NOTES

Winter isn't over yet, but signs of Spring edging in are becoming more evident. Ducks and geese are working their way northward in steadily increasing numbers – Snow Geese, Redheads, Canvasbacks, and Ring-necked Ducks are being seen in the lakes and ponds, American Tree Sparrows have gone to their northern breeding grounds, Sandhill Cranes have been reported, Red-winged Blackbirds are singing, and American Robins are being seen in increasing numbers.

I have been working on a database of the species seen in the Casper area and a few people have been sending me their sightings from their neighborhoods, EKW, and the various areas around Casper – thanks to all of you who have done this!! Robins and flickers have stepped up their territory vocalizations and courtship activity, and there are reports of nesting Great Horned Owls (2 nests at EKW), the arrival of a Mourning Dove, Tree Swallows, Mountain Bluebirds, a few Eastern Bluebirds, plus a White-crowned Sparrow and a Marsh Wren – and Mourning Cloak butterflies have started to come out of hibernation. Full-fledged spring migration may not be here yet, but it is definitely on its way!!

February Yard Birds – For the month of February, Wayne and I received 195 yard bird selections from 21 states plus the Yukon and Iraq with 78 different species reported. Hints of Spring are beginning to show in the bird species being reported. While woodpeckers and sparrows are still being seen regularly, American Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds are making strong showings; and Sharp-shinned Hawks are still visiting neighborhoods regularly. Way out in first place is American Robins, with Evening Grosbeaks in second place (there haven't been many of these guys reported this winter). Red-winged Blackbird came in third, and fourth place was a three-way tie between Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black-capped Chickadee, and Hairy Woodpecker. **Casper:** Jim Herold – Northern Flicker, Chris Michelson – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pat Classen – Black-capped Chickadee, Cecil Foote – American Robin, Jim Brown – Eurasian Collared-Dove, Casper College Greenhouse – American Crow, Rose-Mary King – Townsend's Solitaire, Stacey Scott – Hairy Woodpecker, Garden Creek Audubon Center – Dark-eyed Junco, Bob Yonts – Eurasian Collared Dove, Bruce Walgren – Red-tailed Hawk, Donna Walgren – Northern Flicker; **Buffalo:** Deane Bjerke – American Tree Sparrow; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – Cedar Waxwing; **Douglas:** Billie Snell – Eurasian Collared-Dove; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – Hairy Woodpecker, Bob Hargis – Red-winged Blackbird; **Sundance:** Jean Adams – Merlin.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in February!! As Winter gives way to Spring, we will be seeing different species returning or moving through. We will all be interested in what birds you see. Send your yard bird selection for March to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga_AT_bresnanDOTnet. **DONNA WALGREN**

BIRD SPECIES SHOWING UP FARTHER NORTH

By Patrick O'Driscoll, USA TODAY

More bird species in the USA are ranging farther north and even staying there for the winter in a possible sign of adaptation to global warming, ornithologists and conservation groups say.

Some indicators come from the recent Great Backyard Bird Count, which found more swallows, orioles and other common birds in uncommon locations.

"We've got Baltimore orioles in 14 states, orchard orioles in five different reports and Scott's oriole in Pennsylvania. They shouldn't be here. They should be way south," says Paul Green of the National Audubon Society, co-sponsor of the count with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Scientists cannot say yet whether the birds' movements are climate-related or a short-term reaction to storms, hot or cold spells, disruption of habitat or food availability.

However, the results of the four-day tally performed in February are "a tempting indicator of change, which may turn out to be the early stages of the effects of changing climate on bird distribution," Green says. "We won't know for certain until we have another 20 years of data."

Birds may have nature's best advantage against temperature rise: They can fly away. That can make them bellwethers of climate change, says Cornell ornithologist David Winkler. Birds "really are the canary in the coal mine — a very sensitive indicator of what's going on in the environment," he says. "We will see changes in their distribution long before we see big drops in their abundance."

Unusual sightings this winter include tree swallows in 22 states, twice as many as a decade ago, and red-bellied woodpeckers in New Brunswick, Canada.

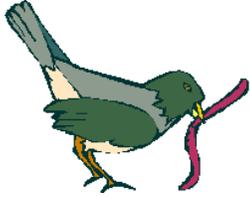
Greg Butcher, Audubon's bird conservation director, says, "We know that things like Carolina wrens, eastern bluebirds, robins, crows and mourning doves are all spending winters farther north, and probably many more."

The backyard count, started in 1998, and an annual Christmas tally since 1900 provide two sets of data critical to gauging how birds react to warming: sheer numbers of birds and movement of species beyond traditional ranges.

Other factors can account for unusual sightings, such as the growing popularity of backyard bird feeders and loss of native habitat to development. "But when you see populations of birds" shifting, Butcher says, "you take notice."

The American Bird Conservancy noted last month that seven warbler species have shifted more than 65 miles north in a quarter-century.

It also said a Colorado study found robins arriving two weeks sooner at breeding sites still covered in snow, hindering access to food. "As a result," the conservancy says, "the 'early birds' may not get the worm."



NWRA SYMPOSIUM 2007

The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Symposium was held March 13-17 at Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomingdale, IL.

Some of the highlights for me:

- Waking up every morning to a male N. Cardinal singing in the trees outside my window and watching the antics of the Canada Geese on the rooftops - yes rooftops! Because of the layout of the octagonal shaped hotel, I could look out on the roof below.
- Seeing a Great Lake - Lake Michigan - for the first time.
- Second Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc. (located in Casper and where I get the most amazing experiences up close and personal with a variety of birds and mammals) is in the processing of obtaining the needed permits to keep a Golden Eagle as an educational bird. Because of this, I went to every raptor class that was offered, as well as two classes on training educational raptors - one specifically on eagles. Too bad I couldn't take the eagle with me so he/she could go to the training class! Also, learned about pododermatitis - commonly called bumblefoot - how to recognize it and treat it. Pododermatitis is an inflammation, and infection, of the plantar surface and connective tissue of the foot/feet. Bumblefoot refers to the raised keratinized lump resulting from the ulceration. Although a lot of animals can be afflicted with pododermatitis, permanent (or caged animals) birds are susceptible if there is not a variety of perch textures and room to move about from one to the other.
- Listening to renown field guide author, David Allen Sibley! Neener, neener, neener, I have a signed David Sibley Birds of the West Field Guide! Just had to put that in for all of you who have signed field guides by the other biggies! It was interesting to hear how he began drawing, birding, and figuring out how to design and illustrate a field guide. Now he is working on a tree guide. He considers himself an illustrator, not an artist.

It was a great symposium and thanks, Merlyn & Lynn, for getting me involved in giving nature a healing, caring hand! **SCWR, Inc. volunteer - Rose-Mary King**

AUDUBON CENTER - SUMMER CAMPS - SCHOLARSHIPS



Beginning in March, Audubon Centers will be taking applications for scholarships for a week of summer camp. Choose from the venerable Hog Island Camp on the beautiful coast of Maine or a broad

selection of day camps near you. (The complete list can be seen at Audubon Summer Camps) Ones nearest Wyoming are in Nebraska, Ohio and right here in Casper, WY.

Wild Birds Unlimited scholarship eligibility is determined by each Audubon Center. For more information on details about general registration, camp programs and scholarships please contact the camp where you or your children want to connect to nature.

Audubon has a long history of providing life-changing experiences in natural settings. Our first summer camp--Hog Island--started in 1936 and made vivid impressions on people like Rachel Carson and Roger Tory Peterson.



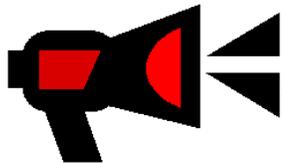
By offering scholarships to 200 young people who may not otherwise be able to attend our camps, we increase the diversity and number of children who begin their journey down the pathway to citizens concerned with our environment.



Audubon, Wild Birds Unlimited and NFWF share a belief that when children spend quality time outside, it can have a lasting, positive impact on their personal lives and the future of our great natural heritage.

---From the "Audubon Newswire" and <http://www.audubon.org/educate/cw/index.html>

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR'S REPORT



A Murie Audubon Membership Drive is underway!!!!

Can you recruit a friend, relative or neighbor?

We will cordially welcome anyone who joins us.

A contest for kids ages 8-12 is in the planning stage. Any child who signs up one new member wins a prize and whoever signs up the most new members will win a pair of binoculars - the GRAND PRIZE!

We begin our drive in April and continue through the summer with the contest ending in September.

Help us achieve our goal of strengthening our group by adding new members.

Membership Chair - June Calmes

RARE, TINY OWL SPOTTED IN WILD

From Associated Press

March 23, 2007 — An extremely rare species of tiny owl has been seen in the wild for the first time reported the American Bird Conservancy. The long-whiskered owlet, one of the world's smallest owls, was discovered in 1976. Researchers have caught a few specimens in nets after dark but had not seen it in nature.

It was spotted in the wild in February by researchers monitoring a private conservation area in Peru's northern jungle.

The conservancy said in a news release that investigators encountered the owl three times during daylight hours and recorded its calls frequently at night. The group said the sighting "is considered a holy grail of South American ornithology."



The owl is so distinct that it has been named in its own genus, "Xenoglaux," meaning "strange owl," due to the long wispy feathers around its reddish-orange eyes.

The owl inhabits the dense undergrowth of highland forests in a remote region of Peru.

"Seeing the long-whiskered owl is a huge thrill," said David Geale of the Association of Andean Ecosystems, who was a member of the research team. "Its population is estimated to be less than 1,000 birds and possibly as few as 250."

He said the species is threatened by the rapid destruction of its forest habitat and its small range.

The researchers captured a bird in a mist-net and later released it onto a tree branch, where it was photographed before disappearing into the night. Photos provided by the conservancy show a bright-eyed bird not much bigger than the fist of the person holding it.

(Thanks, Angie, for sending this to me. - Editor)

“QUICK CHIRPS”



NOMINATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2007-2008

The process of selecting a slate of officers and directors for next year continues; the Nomination Committee will present the slate to be voted on at the May Membership Meeting (May 11). If you have candidates for consideration, contact Committee chair Jim Brown or any current board member or officer; we welcome your input and suggestions. It is **YOUR BOARD!!!!** Who would you like to see leading Murie Audubon?

MURIE AUDUBON MEMORIALS

As loved ones pass on, friends and family can make contributions to Murie Audubon in their name. We will gratefully accept your gift and send an acknowledgement to the loved one's family.

You may designate a particular project you would like the gift to go toward – education, Audubon Adventures, Murie's Bird Hospital, the general fund, etc. Contact Chris Michelson, P.O. Box 2112, Casper, WY 82601; ph. (307) 234-8726

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

The theme for Audubon Adventures for the school year 2007-2008 will be "Back from the Brink: Success Stories from Endangered Species Act. The four topics will be: Bald Eagle, American Alligator, Grizzly Bear and Gray Whales.

We have fifty teachers who have been enrolled for five years or more and will be automatically enrolled for the next school year. **Ann Hines**

FIELD TRIP

The field trip to see the Greater Sage-Grouse at the Hat 6 Lek will leave from the east-side Safeway parking lot at 5:30AM on Saturday April 14. For more information, please call Stacey Scott at 265-6213 any evening before 8:30. All are welcome - invite your friends!

ATTENTION

Volunteers are needed to assist with spring migration surveys at Pathfinder and for point counts at EKW.

Migration surveys at Pathfinder NWR will begin the first week of April and continue weekly for 9 weeks. Each survey will require approximately four hours, leaving Casper around 3:30 – 4:00 PM.

Point counts at EKW will be conducted weekly for 4 weeks starting in mid-May.

Individuals do not have to participate in all the surveys—select those that fit your time and interest. These surveys provide for great birding as well as an opportunity to sharpen bird identification skills while at the same time assisting in the collection of valuable conservation data.

Schedules are being developed now - volunteers interested in assisting in these citizen science events or for more details, please contact Bob Yonts at 473-3045 or Ken Keffer at the ACGC (473-1987) as soon as possible.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 8-10, 2007 Seventh Annual Campout: Green River – Cheyenne High Plains Audubon Society. More information, contact Mark Gorges - 634-0463, bgorges4@msn.com.

Cheyenne High Plains Audubon Society - May 18 - BIG DAY BIRD COUNT potluck, Cheyenne Botanic Garden greenhouse, 5-7p.m. May 19 - BIG DAY BIRD COUNT

July 21 FIELD TRIP: Rosy Finch Survey, Snowy Range. Alison Holloran, aholloran_AT_audubonDOTorg., 745-4848.
