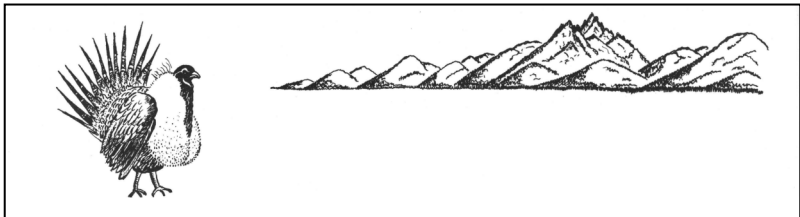


PLAINS & PEAKS



VOL. 41 - Iss. 7

NOVEMBER 2007

Murie Audubon Society

Casper Wyoming - Monthly Publication

<http://www.murieaudubon.org>

Calendar

- Nov. 9 - Gen. Mtg. - 7PM
- Nov. 10 - PFW starts
- No newsletter in Dec. - next deadline - Dec. 17
- Dec. 15 - Murie's CBC
- Jan. 1, 2008 - Bates Holes CBC
- Feb. 9 - Annual Banquet
- Brown Bag Lunch with the Birds every Thursday at 12 Noon

HAT 6 SAGE GROUSE SEASONAL HABITAT SELECTION STUDY



The status of the Greater-Sage Grouse has been the subject of numerous articles in newspapers throughout the state and the region for the last few years. In the efforts to keep this species off of the Endangered Species List, Sage Grouse Working Groups have been formed throughout the bird's range. These groups consist of volunteers from various walks of life who have an interest in preserving the populations of the grouse. Industry, agriculture, hunting, and conservation groups are represented on the

Groups. These Working Groups (in Wyoming the groups were formed generally according to geographic basins) each came up with plans to manage the habitat and the birds in their area. These conservation plans have now been finalized and are being implemented. For more information about these plans, you may visit gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/wildlife_management/sagegrouse/index.asp and go to the specific group's plan.

Almost everyone with an interest in birds in the Casper area has visited the Sage Grouse lek off of Hat 6 Road. For the past two seasons, Wyoming Game and Fish personnel have been

tracking birds that use this lek with radio telemetry to help find out where the birds nest and rear their young. While two years worth of data (the study is ongoing) doesn't tell the whole story, the data collected has proved interesting. Justin Binfet, Casper Wildlife Biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, will be our guest speaker at our November membership meeting and he will share what they have learned so far.

Our meeting will be held on Friday, November 9, 2007. The meeting time and place is 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd., and as always, the program is free and open to the public!

**BRUCE WALGREN,
PROGRAM CHAIR**

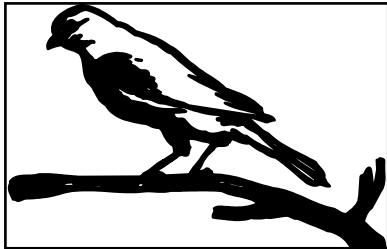
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BRUCE'S BRANCH

Donna and I took our guest speaker (Taldi Walter, Alaska Outreach Coordinator for National Audubon) out for dinner prior to the meeting on October 19. It was interesting to get to visit with someone from Audubon's Public Policy office in Washington DC.

Historically, Murie Audubon has been conservative when it comes to advocacy, and I feel that it's a good thing to hear from some of our friends that represent ideas that may differ from ours.



During her presentation to Murie Audubon, Ms Walter encouraged us to become involved in the decision making process involving proposed projects' impacts on wildlife and birds on public lands, not only in Wyoming, but throughout the United States. Among the projects highlighted in the talk were: a proposed oil and gas lease north and east of Lake Teshekpuk, continuing industrial logging in Tongass National Forest and the continued threat of drilling on the arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Teshekpuk Lake is a wetland wilderness that provides habitat for molting geese

from three nations, nesting birds from six continents, and also for the 45,000 head Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd. The Tongass National Forest is the largest of America's national forests and contains the largest remaining tract of coastal temperate rainforest in the world. Tongass is the home of 800 year old trees, more than 7,000 Bald Eagles, and Marbled Murrelets (they nest in the canopy of old-growth trees); also, all five species of wild salmon return

each year to spawn in their birth streams within the Tongass. ANWR, often referred to as "America's Serengeti," is a remote sanctuary for diverse populations of migratory birds, fish, mammals and marine life. Taldi's enthusiasm and well prepared presentation was well received. If you would like more information about these projects check out Audubon's web site at: www.audubon.org/campaign/index.html and follow the links to the Alaska Issues.

June Calmes is a long time supporter of Murie Audubon and is currently serving as Membership Chair. June believes one of the best ways to get people involved is through field trips, so in upcoming months you can expect to see more trips with more than birding involved.

Before I sign off, I want to

thank Tim and Carrie Schlager of Noland Feed for once again accommodating us by letting us sell sunflower seeds out of their store. Thanks also go to the following individuals for purchasing and donating seed to the Audubon Center at Garden Creek here in Casper: Jack Kearns, Ann and Wil Hines, Ken Keffer, J.P. Cavigelli, Rose-Mary King, Laurie Longtine, Chris Michelson, and Starla and Mikel Mammon.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME...
BRUCE WALGREN**

**PUTTING THE
AUDUBON CENTER AT
GARDEN CREEK ON
THE MAP**

Recent visitors to the Audubon Center at Garden Creek may have noticed people walking around taking measurements with yellow instruments in their hands. They aren't working for the power company or surveying for the railroad, although what they are doing has much in common with these applications. Instead, Carmen Springer-Davis, Ellen Lark and Wayne Neumiller are doing GPS surveys in order to map the Audubon Center at Garden Creek.

The three are members of Jeff Sun's Advanced GIS course at Casper College and are mapping the cen-

ter's property and important features as their class project. GPS means Global Positioning System and is a method of determining positions using satellites. While popular uses are navigation systems in cars or orienteering type games, GPS can also be used as survey tools and are used in various scientific projects where spatial analysis is important.

When the three have finished their measurements, they will edit their data and enter it into a GIS software system. GIS (Geographic Information Systems) is a tool that commonly produces a map as an end product, but in reality can be used to organize spatial information in a way that can be used for many different applications. For instance, in the case of the Audubon Center at Garden Creek, GIS might be used to produce maps which can be used by visitors to find trails and study areas. At the same time it could also be used as a system for storing scientific information about which animals have been seen on the property, the numbers and species of birds that have been banded at different netting sites, and list which bird species are using birdhouses and feeders on the property. As ACGC is looking for volunteers to help with projects, GIS might also be used to lo-

cate project areas and label these projects as to their priority.

The students will be presenting their project on December 12 (tentative date) and the public is invited to attend. Call Jeff Sun at Casper College (268-3560) or Ken Keffer (473-1987) for further information.

GPS STUDENTS

FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

A limited number of Fair Trade products are now being offered for sale through Murie Audubon. We don't plan on making huge profits on these items, but wish to educate our members and the public about Fair Trade products.

We have the following products in stock in limited quantities at our meetings:

➔Chocolate - Organic Very Dark (71% cocoa) \$2.50 each for 3.5 ounce bar.

➔Chocolate - Organic Dark with Almonds (55% cocoa) \$2.50 each for 3.5 ounce bar.

➔Tea - Organic Rooibos - \$3 for box of 25 bags.

➔Tea - Organic Earl Grey - \$3 for box of 25 bags.

➔Ground Coffee - Organic Mind Body and Soul - \$6 for 12 ounce bag.

➔Ground Coffee - Organic Breakfast Blend - \$6 for 12 ounce bag.

The following will give you an idea as to what Fair Trade

Products are about - look for the Fair Trade Certified logo.

Fair Trade Overview

Fair Trade is much more than a fair price! Fair Trade principles include:

- **Fair price:** Democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum floor price and an additional premium for certified organic products.

Farmer organizations are also eligible for pre-harvest credit.

- **Fair labor conditions:** Workers on Fair Trade farms enjoy freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labor is strictly prohibited.

- **Direct trade:** With Fair Trade, importers purchase from Fair Trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

- **Democratic and transparent organizations:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade revenues.

- **Community development:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers invest Fair Trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality



improvement trainings, and organic certification.

• **Environmental sustainability:** Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) are strictly prohibited in favor of environmentally sustainable farming methods that protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

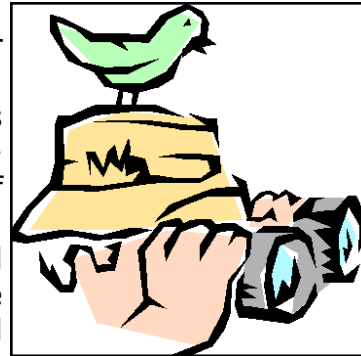
TransFair USA, a non-profit organization, is the only independent, third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the U.S. and one of 20 members of Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO). TransFair's rigorous audit system, which tracks products from farm to finished product, verifies industry compliance with Fair Trade criteria. TransFair allows U.S. companies to display the Fair Trade Certified label on products that meet strict Fair Trade standards.

Fair Trade Certification is currently available in the U.S. for coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, sugar, rice, and vanilla.

Fair Trade Certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace. **BRUCE WALGREN**

BIRD NOTES

Fall migration continues – large numbers of waterfowl on rivers, lakes and ponds; flocks of geese flying overhead; sparrows scratching in the leaves – many may be ID'd only as LBJs (little brown jobs); Steller's Jays, Western Tanagers, Mountain Chicks and other species moving down out of the mountains. There has been a Townsend's Solitaire singing on the Thorson Business Bldg at Casper College for the last two weeks. Susan O'Neill also reported mountain birds in their area down along the river; Jack Kearns has regular visits from Steller's Jays. In our yard, we have been visited by Am. Goldfinches and Pine Siskins cleaning the last seeds out of the sunflowers, Chipping Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos foraging in the fallen cottonwood leaves, and a couple



Blue Jays checking out the platform feeder to see if we put peanuts out (teen-agers, no doubt). Susan Patla reported Trumpeter Swans moving into northwest WY (along with a few Tundras). The field trip to the Buffalo area (Oct. 27) yielded a nice variety of waterfowl, gulls, grebes, and raptors. Of note is a Mew Gull seen by Chris Michelson at Soda Lake; and India Hayford had a Pine Grosbeak in their back yard. Unusual sightings like these are what keeps the spark of interest alive when fall

m i g r a t i o n seems to be winding down and getting "ho-hum"!! So watch your yard and neighborhood, and keep those binoculars handy!!!

September Yard Birds – I won't take up space with a repeat of the September yard birds from October's newsletter, but since I now have the complete compilation from Wayne's list, here is a synopsis of the reports. For September, we received a total of 181 yard bird selections from 16 states plus the Yukon and UK with 80 different species reported.

The most-reported species was Steller's Jay, indicating movement of mountain species down to lower elevations. In second place was Yellow-rumped Warbler, a typical September warbler migrant. Pine Siskin was third, closely followed by Western Tanager in fourth place.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in September!! Let's see what birds November will bring. Send your yard bird selections to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY

82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net.

DONNA WALGREN

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

At this time, seventy classrooms are enrolled in Audubon Adventures for the school year 2007-2008. The order has been placed and the teachers should be receiving their materials very shortly. We have a few new sponsors and we appreciate their donations. So many sponsors are devoted people who have contributed for many years. A "BIG thank you" to the following people who have once again sponsored one or more classrooms. Those who are sponsoring more than one classroom are: Liz Rea, Whitney Bradley, June Calmes, Chris Michelson, Sandy and Miquel Leotta, Gloria and Jim Lawrence, Bob Yonts, Bart Rea, Audrey and Jim Bailey, Jim Brown, Starla and Mikel Mammon. Those who have sponsored one classroom are: Frank Odasz, Barbara Bentzin, Ed Strube, Herb Waterman, Dinah Utah and Carolyn Logan, Pat Dixon, Marilyn Robinder, Ann & Wilmer Hines, Bobbie Roberts, Rose Mary King, Keith James, and Laurie Fletcher. Thank you all for

your loyalty to this program.

ANN HINES

BUFFALO FIELD TRIP REPORT

On the field trip to Buffalo on Saturday the 17th, we visited the Buffalo ponds on the east side of the interstate, the waste water treatment plant, the lake on the west of the frontage road that parallels I -90 to the south, Healy reservoir, and 2 areas on DeSmet reservoir and areas in between. On the trip to Buffalo, we had *Rough-legged Hawks*. Birding at the above locations, we located: Snow Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, *Swan species* (at DeSmet probably Tundra), Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, American Coot, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Northern Flicker, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark, American Robin, European Starling, Western Meadowlark, American Tree Sparrow

and Red-winged Blackbird.

Birders on the trip were

Jacqueline, Marilee (If I misspelled this, I apologize), and Dusty Downey, Verna Hayes, Jean and Gene Adams, RT Cox, Bob South, Bobbie Roberts, Ann and Wilmer Hines, Chris Michelson, and Jim and Gloria Lawrence.

Thanks to all of you for a wonderful day of birding.

GLORIA LAWRENCE

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

In February, volunteers throughout the U.S. and Canada are invited to "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!"

Millions of novice and accomplished bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During "Presidents' Day" weekend, February 15-18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at www.birdcount.org. These reports create an exciting

real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation.

"These volunteers are counting not only for fun but for the future," said Tom Bancroft, Chief Science Officer for Audubon. "It's fun to see how many different kinds of birds can be seen and counted right in your backyard or neighborhood park. Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing, and what that says about the health and the future of our environment."

"The GBBC is a great way to engage friends, family, and children in observing nature in their own backyard, where they will discover that the outdoors is full of color, behavior, flight, sounds, and mystery," said Janis Dickinson, Director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

In 2007, Great Backyard Bird Count participants made history, breaking records for the number of birds reported, and the number of checklists. Participants sent in 81,203 checklists tallying 11,082,387 birds of 613 species.

For more information on how to participate, including identification tips, photos, bird sounds, maps, and information on

over 500 bird species, visit www.birdcount.org.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited.

(From chapter leaders@audubon.org email newsletter.)

PROJECT FEEDER-WATCH

The survey starts on Saturday, November 10, 2007 and end on April 5, 2008.

It is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from November through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broad scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

There is a \$15 annual participation fee (\$12 for Lab members).

Send a check payable in U.S. dollars to: Project FeederWatch Cornell Lab of Ornithology P.O. Box 11 Ithaca NY 14851-0011. Credit card users may call to sign up: 1-800-843-2473.

22nd ANNUAL BANQUET AND BENEFIT

Mark your calendars for Feb. 9, 2008! Dr. David McDonald, UW Associate Pro-



fessor, Dept. of Zoology and Physiology, is our featured speaker. For nearly 20 years Dave studied the be-

havioral ecology of Long-tailed Manakins in Monteverde, Costa Rica. His presentation will address the development of coordinated singing in cooperatively displaying long-tailed manakins.

Tickets will be available at the Nov. 9th Gen. Mtg. and can be purchased from board members thereafter or call Rose-Mary King - 577-0568. The tickets are \$25.00/each or a table of 8 (reserved for you and your guests) for \$175.00.

The fun will start at 5:30pm at the Casper Petroleum Club. Dinner at 7:00 which will give you lots of time to bid on the silent auction items, put your tickets in for the raffle items, buy your 50-50 bird boxes, and "bird-talk" with your friends!

Please call me if you have silent auction items, raffle items, or would like to be on the Banquet committee. Top raffle items last year were, binoculars, bird books, gift certificates, and top silent auction items were bird pictures and books. We will have Ray Harm's White-breasted Nuthatch painting in the silent auction!