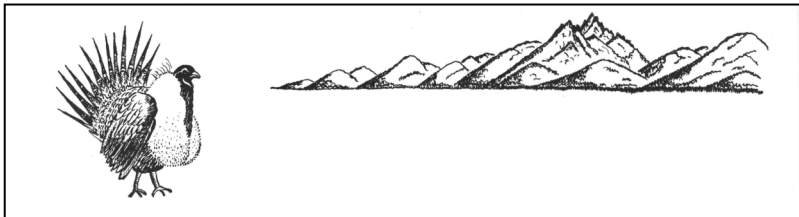


PLAINS & PEAKS



VOL. 41 - Iss. 6

OCTOBER 2007

Murie Audubon Society

Casper Wyoming - Monthly Publication

<http://www.murieaudubon.org>

Calendar

- 10-18 – Delicate Networks – Topic - Laying Pipe
- **10-19 – Gen. Mtg**
- 10-26 – Nov./Dec. newsletter deadline
- 10-27 – Buffalo field trip
- 11-1 – Delicate Networks – Topic - Pursuing Energy
- 11-6 – Nov. Bd. Mtg.
- 11-15 – Delicate Networks – Topic - Thinking Ahead
- 11-22 – Thanksgiving Bird Count
- Brown Bag Lunch every Thursday – 12 – 1:00 pm at ACGC

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From Black Gold to the Black Oystercatcher: Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska

Alaska is the largest of our states, encompassing more than 600,000 sq. miles of rugged mountains, grinding glaciers, endless tundra, diverse temperate rainforest, and winding coast lines. From the Spectacled Eider and Yellow-billed Loon found in America's Arctic to the Black Oystercatcher and the Kittlitz's Murrelet found on the southern coastline, Alaska's birdlife diversity is astounding. Alaska also has an abundance of other iconic wildlife species including grizzlies, caribou, Bald Eagles, humpback whales and wolves, many of which are endangered elsewhere. The current administration and some members of

congress have advocated vastly accelerating the extraction of oil, gas, and mineral deposits in this important ecological area. Audubon seeks a balance between resource extraction and protecting internationally critical habitat.



Taldi Walter, Alaska Outreach Coordinator for the National Audubon Society's Public Policy Office in Washington D.C., will be our guest speaker at the **October 19th meeting**. Taldi will present an informative slideshow showcasing some of the important natural areas and brilliant birds found in wild

Alaska. The presentation will explore some of Alaska's natural treasures set aside decades ago for the benefit of wildlife and the American public. She will also highlight the imminent and compelling challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Tongass National Forest, Chugach National Forest, and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

Our meeting will be held on **October 19, 2007**. Please note that this is a change from our usual meeting day as Ms Walter is visiting several chapters during her trip to Wyoming. The meeting time and place is the same; 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

BRUCE'S BRANCH

The Platte River Revival cleanup was held September 22nd in conjunction with National Public Lands

Day and was a great success. Several Murie Audubon members participated in the effort. This

cleanup day was more extensive than some efforts in the past in that trash was being removed from the river itself and not just along the Platte River Parkway trail. The City of Casper (Keep Casper Beautiful) headed up the effort and coordinated a host of sponsors who provided everything from garbage bags and gloves to drinking water and lunch. Casper Fire Department personnel helped supervise the volunteers and kept everyone safe. Larger items, brush and branches from the tree removal were removed and gathered by heavy equipment.

Board member Fred Eiserman reminded everyone in an editorial to the Casper Star-Tribune about how far the river has come since 1948 when the U.S.

Public Health Service reported that the reach of the North Platte from Casper to the Nebraska border was so polluted there were doubts that recovery could ever be obtained. Waste from three refineries, a slaughterhouse, and the City of Casper's sewage were all being directly dumped into the river.

Cooperative efforts of industry and government entities, lead by the State Department of Public Health and the Pollution Advisory Council, began to help clean up the river. By 1958, a sewage plant was on line in Casper. By 1959, the refineries were no longer dumping their waste into the river. Casper was not alone in the cleanup, all towns along the river joined in the cleanup effort.

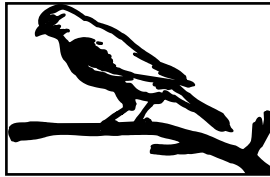
As this chapter of the river is being written, remember what has been done in the past and let us learn from those lessons so that they are not repeated.

Before I sign off, I want to thank Melissa Connelly of Casper College for filling in at the last minute for our scheduled speaker in September. Your presentation on Mongolia was great! We will reschedule Dr. Robinson's presentation.

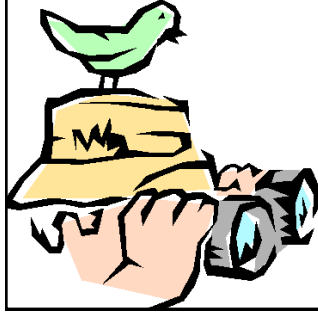
Until next time...Bruce

BIRD NOTES

Full migration seems to be moving along in intermittent starts and stops. There hasn't been a lot of unusual migrants reported, but enough to keep us watching. In the Wood Warbler group, Wilson's and Yellow-rumped Warblers have been "seen aplenty" with a Townsend's, Tennessee, Magnolia, and Blackpoll showing up here and there. The New World Sparrows (also known as Little Brown Jobs) are officially classified as Emberizids; there haven't been large numbers of these guys reported yet, but those seen so far include Chipping, Clay-colored, and White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Spotted Towhees. Reports of Cardinalids include Lazuli Buntings and numerous Black-headed Grosbeaks. The Blackbird family (Icterids) may be one of the least popular families of birds; not very many people are sorry to see the grackles leaving, but large flocks of Brewer's and Red-winged Blackbirds (along with Common Grackles) are moving southward; Western Meadowlarks are becoming scarce, and the Bullock's Orioles are gone. (Of note is a wayward Baltimore Oriole that showed up in September at the Garden Creek Audubon Center in Casper.)



Western Tanagers are also starting to be seen (check the September Yard Bird Report). Since we are mentioning bird families, FYI – the tanagers are called Thraupids (from the family Thraupidae).



Fall migration also includes lots of waterfowl going southward. Also watch the rivers, lakes and ponds for various gulls and shorebirds. Most recently reported in the Casper area were Franklin's and Bonaparte's Gulls, plus a less common Sabine's Gull. (A Sabine's was also reported east of Cody.) Two shorebird species seen at this writing: American Golden Plover and Black-bellied Plover. (Most of the shorebirds seem to have moved through at this time.)

August Yard Birds – For the month of August, Wayne and I received 180 yard bird selections from 19 states plus the Yukon with 92 different species reported. The top species reported was Black-headed Grosbeak, followed by Wilson's Warbler in second place; Evening Grosbeak was third.

Casper: In Casper: Casper College Greenhouse – Killdeer, Jim Herold – Black-headed Grosbeak, Jim Lawrence – Rufous Hummingbird, Gloria Lawrence –

Red-breasted Nuthatch, Sandy/Miguel Leotta – Spotted Towhee, Chris Michelson – Eurasian Collared Dove, Bruce Walgren – Black-capped Chickadee,

Donna Walgren – Common Nighthawk, Bob Yonts – Common Nighthawk; **Du-Bois:** Anna Moscicki – Rufous Hummingbird; **Lance Creek:** JP Cavigelli – Upland Sandpiper; **Lovell:** Glen Olsen – Rufous Hummingbird.

September Yard Birds – I haven't received Wayne's complete compilation yet, but here is what we have for Wyoming. (Note that quite a few mountain species are showing up at lower elevations.) **Casper:** Tammy Brown – Steller's Jay, Casper College Greenhouse – Mountain Chickadee, JP Cavigelli – Western Tanager, Pat Classen – Downy Woodpecker, Cecil Foote – Steller's Jay, Garden Creek Audubon Center – Baltimore Oriole, India Hayford – Pine Grosbeak, Jim Herold – Brown Thrasher, Rose-Mary King – Western Tanager, Gloria Lawrence – Steller's Jay, Jim Lawrence – Mountain Chickadee, Laurie Longtine – White-breasted Nuthatch, Chris Michelson – Cooper's Hawk, Tate Museum – Townsend's Warbler, Doris von Holdt – Ruby-crowned

Kinglet, Bruce Walgren – Wilson's Warbler, Donna Walgren – Pine Siskin, Bob Yonts – Western Tanager; **Buffalo:** Deane Bjerke – Wilson's Warbler; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – Townsend's Solitaire; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – Townsend's Warbler, Bob Hargis – Prairie Falcon.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in August and September!! Fall migration continues – keep those binoculars handy!! Send your yard bird selection for October to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to piranga@bresnan.net.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

69 Classrooms have sign up and we still need more sponsors! If you would like to sponsor one or more classrooms, please use the "Friends of Murie" form on the last page of this newsletter.



MURIE is in need of a Publicity Chairman. The responsibilities would include notices to the Casper Star Tribune and Casper Journal of our meetings, field trips and special events (seed sale and annual banquet).

Call Bruce Walgren at 235-7455 or email him at Timperley-Walgren@bresnan.net if you are interested.



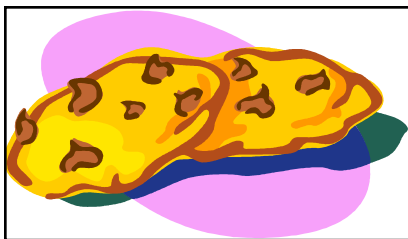
RAFFLE PRIZES AND SILENT AUCTION ITEMS are needed for the February 9, 2008 Banquet. If you would like to donate something, or if you would like to be a member of the Banquet Committee, please call Rose-Mary King at 577-0568 or email her at rking7453@bresnan.net



Audubon Wyoming has a new office location, 358 N. 5th, Laramie, WY



October's "good eatin'" at our General Meeting is provided by Doris Von Holdt and Betty Rickman. Call Betty Krause (37-2392) if you would like to bake goodies for any of the next meetings.



DELICATE NETWORKS: WYOMING'S LAND AND WATER AND THE DECISIONS DEMANDED BY GROWTH

This free public lecture series looks at some of the challenges of residential and industrial development in Wyoming. Intricate connections between dry land and scarce water sustain life here, but are threatened by today's burst in new housing and energy activity. Speakers from around the state will discuss how their communities address the impact of growth on land and water.

This series is moderated by Anne MacKinnon and all lectures will be held at Wheeler Auditorium, Room 103 in the Casper College Physical Science Building (Wold) from 7 to 9 PM.

See dates on Calendar - page 1.



FALL SEED SALE

This year's seed sale is coming up! (see details below) Seeds are more expensive this year as more farmers are growing corn for ethanol than are growing sunflowers! Even if you can't use seeds yourself, consider buying some to donate to the Audubon Center at Garden Creek.

What: Murie Audubon Sunflower Seed Sale - \$17.50 for 50 pounds

When: Saturday, October 13 from 8 AM to Noon

Where: Noland Feed, 268 Industrial Avenue. Look for us at the overhead door at the south end of old Indian Ice facility next door (to the east) of Noland Feed storefront.

Why: For the benefit of Murie Audubon's conservation activities

Again this year, if you can't be there, but want seeds, let us know and we can make arrangements to get the seeds to you.

Contact: Bruce Walgren at 234-7455 or Timperley-Walgren@bresnan.net



OCTOBER FIELD TRIP

October's field trip will be to the Buffalo and Lake DeSmet area on October 27, 2007, weather permitting. Meet in the east side Safeway parking lot at 7:00am to depart for Buffalo. This will put us in Buffalo about 9:00am. In the Buffalo area we will expect to look at ponds, the waste water treatment facility and Healy Reservoir. We will then go to Lake DeSmet. The target birds for the trip will be migrating waterfowl. Hopefully, we will find some scoters and loons. If weather is good, we may look for gray partridge and sharp-tailed grouse. Dress for the weather and bring your lunch.

Chris Michelson - trip leader

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. Feeder-Watchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from Novem-

ber through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided (plantings, food, or water). For each species, you will report only the highest number of individuals that you see *in view at one time*. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more

than once. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over our web site or on paper Data Forms.

There is a \$15 annual participation fee (\$12 for Lab members), which covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and a year-end report (*Winter Bird Highlights*). You can sign up via Cornell's website at www.birds.cornell.edu/ or phone or write to address below.

Participants receive a Research Kit, which con-

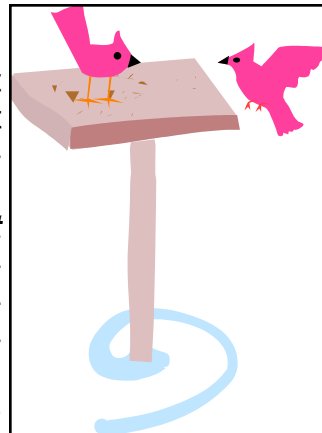
tains instructions, a bird identification poster, a wall calendar, a resource guide to bird feeding, and data forms—everything you need to start counting your birds. Your kit will arrive in the fall (or about 3 weeks after you signup when you signup during the FeederWatch season).

You designate an area that you can consistently observe throughout your count days. Participants are advised to choose obvious boundaries, such as the border of a yard or the area within a courtyard.

Our survey is conducted each winter starting on the second Saturday of November (November 10, 2007) and running

for 21 weeks, through early April. You may join at any time of year. The last day to sign up for any given season is Feb. 28. On Mar. 1 we begin taking sign-ups for the following season. Kits are shipped in the fall or, if you sign up during the season, about 3 weeks after you sign up.

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



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

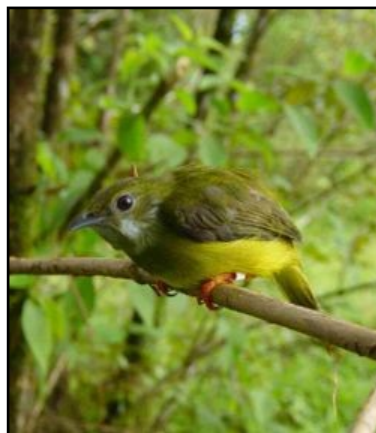
September/October is renewal time for those who choose to become a "Friend of Murie". The form for renewing is on the last page of this newsletter. If you are a National Member, you will be notified by National when your subscription is due. If you would like to make a donation to Murie's Bird Hospital, support the WyoBirds Listserve or sponsor an Audubon Adventures classroom, please use the form on the last page, as well.

SCHOLARSHIPS

At Murie's September Board Meeting, it was decided to remove the scholarship money from the budget due to lack of requests. However, anyone seeking financial help to attend a conference, workshop, and/or class that pertains to the natural world, can submit a proposal to the Murie Board for consideration. Send your proposal to Murie Audubon Society, Box 2112, Casper, WY 82602 and write "Scholarship" in the lower left corner.

ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

Mark your 2008 calendars! February 9th is the date of our annual banquet and it will be held at the Casper Petroleum Club. Dave McDonald, associate professor of Zoology and Physiology at UW, will speak about *Manakins of Costa Rica* - not the life size dolls you see in store but real live birds! Dave's name may be recognized from postings on the WyoBirds Listserve where his knowledge and quick wit have come through cyberspace. Plan now to attend, tell your friends and neighbors! Tickets will be on sale soon.



The **Manakins** are a family of some sixty small passerine bird species of subtropical and tropical mainland Central and South America,

and Trinidad and Tobago.

These are compact forest birds, the males typically being brightly colored, although the females of most species are duller and usually green-plumaged. Manakins feed on small fruits, berries and insects.

Many manakin species have spectacular lekking courtship rituals, which are especially elaborate in the genus *Pipra*. Manakins make buzzing, snapping, and other sounds with their wings, which are heavily modified in two species (the White-collared and Orange-collared Manakins). Manakins display **Moonwalking** during their courtship. It may be said that Michael Jackson stole the idea of moonwalking from the Manakin bird.

Nest-building, incubation for 18-21 days, and care of the young are undertaken by the female alone, since manakins do not form stable pairs. The normal clutch is two eggs.

(From Wikipedia)

