



MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY

CASPER, WYOMING

VOLUME 41 - ISSUE 1

MONTHLY PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 2007



## CALENDAR

- Feb. 13 - 6:30 PM, Banquet Com. Mtg. - *ACGC*
- Feb. 13 - 7:00 PM, Bd. Mtg. - *ACGC*
- Feb. 16-19 - *GBBC*
- Feb. 16 - John James Audubon
- Feb. 17 - 5:30 PM - MAS's 21st Annual Banquet (no Gen. Mtg. this month)
- Feb. 19 - 3:30 PM - Eagle Field Trip
- Feb. 23 - March newsletter deadline

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **21st Annual Banquet Set for February 17, 2007**
- **Audubon Adventures**
- **Jackson Canyon Eagle Watch Field Trip**
- **Don Eckelberry – Master Wildlife Artist 1979 (1921-2001)**
- **Bruce's Branch**
- **10th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count**
- **Bird Notes**
- **Audubon Wyoming to Premiere PBS Documentary on John James Audubon**
- **Esterbrook 2 - Going Eastward**
- **Casper CBC**
- **Bate's Hole CBC**
- **Cpl. Jason Corbett**
- **Rivers and Wildlife Celebration**
- **Wings & Wetlands Weekend**
- **A Peek at the Raffle and Silent Auction Items**

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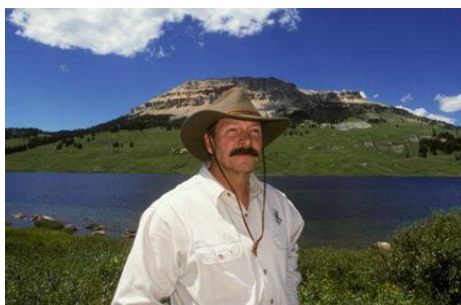
## 21ST ANNUAL BANQUET SET FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2007

### A VIEW TO A KILL

### A GOLDEN EAGLE PERSPECTIVE ON BEING A PREDATOR



The Golden Eagle is one of the largest and most powerful aerial predators in the Northern Hemisphere. This great bird can bring down prey as large as reindeer and pronghorn, and has been used by falconers to hunt wolves in some parts of the world. Golden Eagles also occasionally prey on domestic sheep and other livestock, earning the ill-will of some stock growers. *A View to a Kill* is a richly illustrated presentation that explores the Golden Eagle's predatory life, including diet, hunting methods, impact on prey populations, and relationship with various human cultures, ending with a look at the current status and future of this much revered and much maligned bird of prey.



Dr. Charles R. Preston, Chief Curator of the five museums of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and the Founding Curator-in-Charge of the Draper Museum of Natural History in Cody, WY will be our guest speaker for this year's banquet/ fund raiser.

The Casper Petroleum Club will once again be the setting for the banquet. The tickets are \$25 each or reserve a table of eight for \$175; contact Rose-Mary King (577-0568) or Bruce Walgren (234-7455) for tickets. The Petroleum Club will seat around 120 people, so get your tickets early so that you won't be left out. As usual, we will begin the evening with a social hour at 5:30 PM. Dinner will be at 6:30 PM, so you should have time to visit and check out the raffle and silent auction items. Proceeds from the event will be used to support Murie Audubon's education programs and the bird hospital.

**President - Bruce Walgren**

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## AUDUBON ADVENTURES

At this time, sixty-seven of the seventy-one classrooms have been sponsored. I would like to thank these people for their continued support of this important part of Murie Audubon.

Sponsoring more than one class: Mr. and Mrs. Jim O'Neil, Liz Rea, Bart Rea, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Narotzky, Judi VanRensselaer and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kearns.

Sponsoring one class: Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mammon, Wilmer and Ann Hines, Laurie Longtine, Mary Hein and Keith James

**Education Chairman - Ann Hines**

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## JACKSON CANYON EAGLE WATCH FIELD TRIP

We will meet at 3:30 on Feb. 19 (Monday) at the turn-out across from Goose Egg Road for the Jackson Canyon eagle watching field trip. We will car-pool in a ways and walk the rest of the way. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes. If interested in eating at the Goose Egg Inn following the trip, please let Stacey Scott (265-6213) know. Questions, call Stacey.



## DON ECKELBERRY – MASTER WILDLIFE ARTIST 1979 (1921-2001)



As we look forward to Murie's 21st annual banquet/fundraiser, we want to mention one of the items that will be in the silent auction: a print of a painting, *Woodcock and Young*, by Don Eckelberry. This framed print was donated by Bill Mixer, and Murie is very fortunate to be able to offer a piece of work by this artist. Roger Tory Peterson said of him, "Eckelberry is the most inventive and original of the various successful popular bird artists. I would give my soul to have what he has."

Eckelberry was highly respected for his bird artistry; one of the projects he is known for is the three-volume set of Audubon bird guides (East, West, and Waterbirds) written by Richard Pough – now out of print. Because of his talent and dedication, he was voted a Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union, one of the very few members of that prestigious organization who was not a professional biologist.

He served two terms on the board of directors of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, where he also lectured and exhibited his work. Many of his best paintings are owned by private collectors and have never been reproduced anywhere.

He was always ready to help fellow artists; a book by wildlife artist Guy Coheleach is dedicated "To Don Eckelberry, whose unselfish genius is responsible for everything good in this book." He was honored with the Master Wildlife Artist award in 1979.

There will be many other items at our banquet, in the raffle and in the silent auction – the Eckelberry print is one we think you will want to bid on. We hope you all will come – have dinner, enjoy Dr. Chuck Preston's talk, and spend the evening with friends (old and new!).

(information on Don Eckelberry is from *Birdwatcher's Digest*, May/June 1990, and *Birds in Art: The Masters* by Inga Brynildson & Woody Hagge)

**Donna Walgren**

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### BRUCE'S BRANCH



The end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007 have brought a taste of winter the likes of which we have not experienced for quite a few years. The snow that we received before Christmas is still on the ground and subsequent storms have added to the winter landscape. Colder temperatures and the absence of warm winds have allowed the snow to stick around. Our weather has been relatively kind to us when compared to other areas where ice storms have left hundreds of thousands of people without electricity with threats of additional storms on the way. Even so, the weather hasn't brought any reports of unusual birds to the area, at least that I've heard about.

The behind-the-scenes activities at Murie Audubon may not be very exciting, but are important to keep the organization running. One of the outcomes of our 50th Anniversary celebration a couple of years ago, was the uncovering of lots of records, various scrapbooks, and related “stuff” accumulated over the course of the existence of Murie Audubon. One of my goals as President this year is to go through all these records and hopefully get them organized, reduce any duplication, and inventory the things that we want to keep. We’re starting with the treasurer’s records and we’ll proceed from there as we get time. As we go through this process, we hope to establish some guidelines or at least suggestions as to what records need to be kept and for how long.

As most of you know, our annual banquet is coming up. This event is a chance to have a guest speaker that we may not always have an opportunity to hear. The details of this year’s banquet are elsewhere in this issue. I hope to see you there.

**President – Bruce Walgren**

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## 10TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Mark your calendars! February 16-19, the 10th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record." Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down. Enter your results at [Birdsource](#).



### BIRD NOTES

We’ve been having some old-fashioned Wyoming winter weather – complete with snow and very chilly temperatures. But we can be thankful we are not getting some of the nasty ice storms they are experiencing in other parts of the country. The climatologists and scientists are debating how much of this is related to global warming, pointing out that one result of global warming would be an increase in the amount of moisture in the atmosphere – and an increase in precipitation events. How bird movements will be affected remains to be seen. One species that may be changing its migration patterns is the Mourning Dove. Bob Yonts had a Mourning Dove in his yard recently (one very cold day, he notes), along with several Eurasian Collared-Doves. There have been winter reports of Mourning Doves for several years now in Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and in some of the Great Lakes states. Eurasian Collared-Doves have also been the subject of winter reports for several years. Are these species adapting to winter weather, or have our winters just been so mild that they have had little or no trouble surviving them?

Temperature-wise, this winter has definitely been colder than what we’ve experienced for awhile; and not just here in Wyoming. Bruce Bennett in Whitehorse, YT noted that they had some record temps of -45oC. in

November. (He was complaining that his yard birds had been reduced down to a handful of species: Boreal Chickadees, Black-capped Chickadees, Black-billed Magpies, Hairy Woodpeckers, Common Ravens, Pine Grosbeaks, and Common Redpolls – some of us might not mind having some of those birds hanging around our yard.)

**December Yard Birds** – For the month of December, Wayne and I received 175 yard bird selections from 20 states and the Yukon with 75 different species reported. There didn't seem to be quite as many Rosy-Finches as is usual for this time of year, but lots of woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, juncos, and redpolls were reported, - plus the usual accipiters checking out the “feeder buffets.” Jean Adams in Sundance seems to have the monopoly on the Gray-crowned Rosys – and this week she “upped the ante” with 600+ Gray-crowns. The most reported bird for December was the Sharp-shinned Hawk, followed by Northern Flicker in second place. Third place was a tie between Common Redpoll and Bald Eagle; and 4th place was a three tie between Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, and Pileated Woodpecker.

**Casper:** Pat Classen – American Robin, Cecil Foote – White-crowned Sparrow, Jim Herold – Black-capped Chickadee, Chris Michelson – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sandy/Miguel Leotta – House Finch, Bob Yonts – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Rose-Mary King – Northern Flicker (red-sh.), Gloria Lawrence – White-crowned Sparrow, Jim Lawrence – Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Garden Creek Audubon Center – Evening Grosbeak, Bruce Walgren – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Donna Walgren – Cedar Waxwing; **Buffalo:** Deane Bjerke – Blue Jay; **Sundance:** Jean Adams – Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (450+).

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in December!! Perhaps this spell of cold weather will eventually push some different birds our way. The January yard bird report should be very interesting. Send your yard bird for November to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net.

**Donna Walgren**

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**Audubon** WYOMING  
**AUDUBON WYOMING TO PREMIERE PBS DOCUMENTARY  
ON JOHN JAMES AUDUBON**

On February 16th, Audubon Wyoming will be launching its statewide premier of a PBS Documentary, John James Audubon: Drawn From Nature, a film tracing Audubon's art and life from his unlikely beginning, to his eventual success, and his continuing legacy. This film by award winning producers [Larry Hott](#) and [Diane Garey](#) of [Florentine Films/Hott Productions](#) is set to release nationally in early May. Wyoming's residents will get a sneak preview in Casper on February 16th with premieres to follow in Lander on February 23rd, Jackson on March 9th, Cody on March 23rd, Sheridan on April 6th, Cheyenne on April 23rd, and Laramie TBA. These events are free and open to the public. The February 16th premier will be held at Durham Hall in the Fine Arts Building of Casper College. Light snacks and refreshments will be served from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm with the movie to follow.

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## ESTERBROOK 2 - GOING EASTWARD



In my last episode of my trip to the Village of Esterbrook, I forgot to mention that a man was doing slash piling a short distance to the south of the sheer wall area. He was doing some thinning work along the drainage of shrubs as well as trees of varying sizes plus any deadwood on the ground or standing and creating a spacing between larger trees of about 50 feet. The reason behind this is that the thinning of shrubs and small trees plus clearing the area of deadwood helps to reduce fire fuel. The spacing between trees helps to reduce the chance of the fire crowning. Of course, the wind may have other ideas and it can do almost anything with fire, so the best efforts may not carry the day. Also of note is that most of the Esterbrook area has been logged with some of it as much as 50%. It was no doubt used when mining started up in the area and I'm sure, continues to this day.

Now on to our eastward journey. From the start of F.S. Road 633, one travels about 0.3 miles. This is where we usually found pygmy nuthatches. Then go approx. 0.2 miles and you cross a cattle guard which marks the entrance to the Laramie Peak Division of the Medicine Bow National Forest. Another 0.6 miles and you enter Albany County. About 15-20 years ago, this area was heavily cut. Slash piles were created which were burned during autumn and spring, usually while snow was on the ground. Quite a few blowdowns resulted from the logging and tree spacing. Also during the cutting and burning stages, the area was opened for firewood by permit. Under permit, it had long been a post and pole sale area. It would seem the quality of birding went down hill from my 1st time there in about 1982 to the last time in 2000. Ponderosa pine has a heavy seed and the seeds aren't dispersed very far from the tree, so it is a slow process restocking the area. As the area restocks, it should also be thinned. In our past birding there, we saw hairy and downy woodpecker, Williamson sapsucker, all 3 nuthatches, Townsend solitaire, robins, chipping sparrows, and mountain bluebirds. It is 3 miles from Esterbrook to the Forest Service campground. Unfortunately I have never stayed at this campground. I did note in passing through, in bygone days, that it was a very busy place during the camping season and especially over any holiday. The most famous bird I know of that was found in the campground was found by Wil and Ann Hines, Bobbie Roberts and Rose-Mary King. It was the northern pygmy owl. I would just love to see that bird in Wyoming.

When you leave the Forest Service campground (approx. elev. 6350 feet), you turn left on Harris Park Road. You also begin a descent of 950 feet in approx. 1 1/2 miles as the crow flies. This may be a 7-15% descent achieved by a number of switchbacks. Avoid the boulder outcrops in the road, they are bad for oil pans. You will end up where the road junctures at the bottom of the hill. I looked at a number of maps to see what the name of the creek flowing down the road we would journey was called. Not satisfied, I went to the Natrona County Library to view US Geological Survey 7 1/2 Min. Quads for Esterbrook, Spring Creek, and Sibley Peak. I'm glad I did. I thought I was heading down Cottonwood Creek, when all this time I was heading down Horseshoe Creek. The juncture area is interesting in itself. If you go right on the Harris Park Road, you will cross Three Cripples Creek (I'm sure there is a story here). A little farther along the road and the creek will be Soldier Creek as you travel towards Harris Park. However, we need to travel down Horseshoe Creek Road to get to where I'm going. It will take us somewhat down the creek area, but not along it. Our journey will take us 11 miles from Esterbrook to the 1st creek crossing. At this point we will be 11 miles from Glendo. These mileage figures don't sound far except in back country. This is such a beautiful drive although you should be aware that the road is improved dirt (graded once a year) and any moisture in the area will no doubt cause traveling difficulties.

The drive from the juncture at the bottom of the hill to the 1st crossing of Horseshoe Creek has some hills and valleys, some ups and downs, and then a glide to the creek. Good area for kestrel. There maybe a few American goldfinch. The big bird for us back then was the lark sparrow. Most of the other birds we saw, we had already seen, but we were listers so we listed them. Good thing. We saw vesper sparrows, green-tailed and spotted

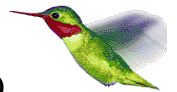
towhees, sage thrashers, and mourning doves. It sure is hard to drive this road and see everything, like, chipping sparrow, loggerhead shrike, lark bunting, and turkey vultures. Not to mention Bullock's orioles in the strangest places.

We always stopped at the bridge over Horseshoe Creek coming or going in the hope of finding something special, not the least of which was the beauty of the country, to admire it and to see what changes were being wrought. It also marked a change in vegetative character from rangeland to tree covered grassland, to more views of stream vegetation and hardwood trees, to sparse covered foothills, to juniper and ponderosa pine covered hills, to irrigated meadows. At the bridge one might find a belted kingfisher and northern flickers.

There must have been a pond or 2 along the remaining drive where we found water species such as pintail, mallard, American wigeon, American coot, green-winged teal, Wilson's phalaropes, and gadwalls. I'm sure there were water spots along the creek where we saw American avocets and common mergansers. Close to the irrigated meadowlands we again found lark, chipping, and vesper sparrows, Bullock's oriole, eastern and western kingbirds, and western meadowlarks. Our 2nd crossing of Horseshoe Creek (about 4 miles from Glendo) was eagerly looked forward to. The creek made a "Z" here and usually in the bends of the creek we were able to find wood ducks. It is always such a joy to see wood ducks.

It would be a shame not to mention all the cliff swallows we stirred up driving under the I-25 overpass on our way to Glendo and the taxi strip to the I-25 race track, where we headed to Cheyenne and their BIG Day.

**The Hummer (aka Jim Herold)**



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## CASPER CBC

The Casper CBC was conducted on Dec. 16, 2006. A record 69 species were recorded along with a record 13,396 individuals. The results follow: snow goose-1, Canada goose-948, gadwall-8, American widgeon-42, mallard-923, green-winged teal-3, bufflehead-6, common goldeneye-473, common merganser-34, gray partridge-4, greater sage-grouse-5, dusky grouse-4, wild turkey-194, turkey vulture-2, bald eagle-43(25 a, 17 im), northern harrier-3, sharp-shinned hawk-7, Cooper's hawk-cw, northern goshawk-1, red-tailed hawk-16, ferruginous hawk-2, rough-legged hawk-12, Swainson's hawk-2, golden eagle-74(47a, 27im), American kestrel-1, merlin-3, prairie falcon-1, ring-billed gull-109, California gull-1, glaucous gull-1, rock pigeon-783, Eurasian collared-dove-44, mourning dove-1, eastern screech owl-1, great horned owl-11, belted kingfisher-4, downy woodpecker-9, hairy woodpecker-12, northern flicker-173(2 yellow), northern shrike-1, Steller's jay-13, blue jay-68, Clark's nutcracker-74, black-billed magpie-176, American crow-414, common raven-18, horned lark-cw, black-capped chickadee-134, mountain chickadee-134, bushtit-10, red-breasted nuthatch-17, white-breasted nuthatch-19, pygmy nuthatch-8, brown creeper-6, American dipper-1, Townsend's solitaire-46, American robin-593, European starling-3179, Bohemian waxwing-13, cedar waxwing-98, yellow-rumped warbler-1, American tree sparrow-20, song sparrow-3, dark-eyed junco-64, common grackle-3, Cassin's finch-cw, house finch-652, red crossbill-158, pine siskin-32, American goldfinch-15, evening grosbeak-43, house sparrow -3423.

Eastern screech owl and glaucous gull were new species for Casper's CBC.

**Compiler - Chris Michelson**

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## BATE'S HOLE CBC

On Jan. 1, 2007 the Bates Hole CBC was conducted. The day began and ended with some productive owling. During the day some 10 participants searched the count circle for birds. The weather was cold at the beginning and ending but quite mild during the afternoon. The unofficial results follow: Canada goose-35, gadwall-2, American widgeon-57, mallard-264, Northern pintail-9, green-winged teal-7, redhead-8, ring-necked duck-2, common goldeneye-333, common merganser-4, ring-necked pheasant-8, greater sage-grouse-103, wild turkey-110, great blue heron-5, bald eagle-8 (a.-5, imm.-3), northern harrier-3, northern goshawk-2, red-tailed hawk-3, rough-legged hawk-14, golden eagle-19 (a.-14, imm.-5), American kestrel-1, prairie falcon-2, Wilson's snipe-2, ring-billed gull-2, rock pigeon-34, eastern screech owl-1, great horned owl-30, belted kingfisher-2, downy woodpecker-2, northern flicker-9 (all red-shafted), northern shrike-2, Clark's nutcracker-19, black-billed magpie-200, American crow-209, common raven-15, horned lark-82, black-capped chickadee-21, mountain chickadee-4, white-breasted nuthatch-6, Townsend's solitaire-6, European starling-213, American tree sparrow-152, song sparrow-19, Harris's sparrow-3, dark-eyed junco-60 (slate-colored-38, Oregon-22), white-crowned sparrow-1, red-winged blackbird-31, gray-crowned rosy finch-14, Cassin's finch-1, house finch-47, American goldfinch-13, house sparrow-211. Total 52 species and 2,410 individuals.

There was a general lack of small land birds. The feeling was that this may have been due to the prolonged drought which has reduced food supply. This lack may be the cause of missing both Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. Numbers were down but diversity was good for such a rural count area.

**Compiler - Chris Michelson**

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## CPL. JASON CORBETT

Murie Audubon offers our condolences to Board Member Laurie Longtine and her family. Laurie's nephew, Cpl. Jason Corbett died January 15, 2007 of injuries sustained when his military unit came in contact with enemy forces during combat in Karmah, Iraq. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Casper College foundation, 125 College Dr., Casper, WY 82601, where a memorial scholarship is being created in his honor.

Our thoughts are with Laurie, her sister and their family during this difficult time.

**Bruce Walgren**

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## RIVERS AND WILDLIFE CELEBRATION



Each spring over a half-million Sandhill Cranes congregate on Nebraska's Platte River in one of the world's greatest migration spectacles. Along with these majestic birds, thousands of birdwatchers flock to Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary near Kearney to see and hear this astounding migration display.

In conjunction with the Sandhill Crane migration, the 37th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, presented by Audubon Nebraska, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, and the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation, will be held March 16-18, 2007, in Kearney, NE.



Wildlife enthusiasts from around the world travel to central Nebraska each year to participate in this weekend of field trips, presentations by nationally known environmental speakers, and more. Featured presenters this year include: Bruce Babbitt - Former U. S. Secretary of the Interior, Clinton Administration; John Acorn - Television's "Acorn, The Nature Nut" as seen on Discovery Channel and Animal Planet; Scott Hereford - Wildlife biologist, Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge; Dr. Paul Johnsgard - Renowned Ornithologist.

For a registration brochure or for more information about the Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, please visit [Audubon Nebraska](#)

For crane viewing information, please visit [Rowe Sanctuary](#).

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## WINGS & WETLANDS WEEKEND



Registration is now open for the Wings & Wetlands Weekend, April 27-29 in Great Bend, KS. Early registration is \$85.00 per person until April 14th. \$100.00 per person after April 14. Reg. fee includes reception and dessert on Friday evening, reception and buffet dinner on Saturday evening, full buffet breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, afternoon break on Saturday, guided field trips (inc. transportation), all workshops (bird ID, raptor program, and wildlife photography tips).

I went 2 years ago and it was a great birding experience. There were field trips each morning and late afternoon to Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. I made the mistake of going to one wetland each day when I could have gone to both each day and seen a different variety of birds in the AM & PM.

I added 3 shorebirds and the American Bittern - what a great booming sound they make - to my life list. Most of what I say can be seen here in Wyoming during migration but where we see 2 or 3, at the wetland lands we saw upwards of 30 or more of the same specie.

The tour guides were very knowledgeable and all birders, no matter their level of expertise, had a great time and the experienced helped the inexperienced.

If you haven't gone before, I highly recommend it and if you have gone before, go again, it's worth it!

**Editor - Rose-Mary King**

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## A PEEK AT THE RAFFLE AND SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

Here's a sample of some of the items that will be available as raffle or silent auction items at our 21st Annual Banquet and Fund-raiser, Feb. 17 at the Casper Petroleum Club, social hour at 5:30, banquet at 6:30 (main entrée is herbed grilled pork loin).

- *The Grail Bird* by Tim Gallagher (autographed)
- *All Things Reconsidered – My Birding Adventures* (Roger Tory Peterson)
- *Bird Songs - 250 NA Birds in Song* (recordings by Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
- *Where the Red-winged Blackbirds Sing* - CD & cassette - Jim Schulz
- *Birds of NA, Western Region* - Smithsonian Handbooks
- *A Guide to Birding* - J. Forshaw, S. Howell, T. Linsey, R. Stallcup

- *Teton Thunderstorm*, photographic print by Frederic Joy
- *Red-Tailed Hawk* (Wild Bird Guide), Dr. Charles R. Preston
- The ever popular “Bird Tie” hand sewn by Paula Knudson
- Brunton Coupons
- Lighted Bird-feeder
- Numerous gift certificates
- 50lb. bags of BOSS
- AND, of course, *Woodcock and Young*.

For tickets - call Rose-Mary 577-0568.