



PLAINS AND PEAKS
MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY CASPER, WYOMING
MONTHLY PUBLICATION

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Murie's website - <http://www.murieaudubon.org>

BEARS, BIRDS AND BLOOMS OF BAFFIN ISLAND

At our January membership meeting, Bart and Liz Rea will be sharing their trip to Baffin Island, an Arctic Island in the Canadian territory of Nunavut. Last August, the Reas were part of a World Wildlife Fund tour aboard a Russian icebreaker turned cruise ship that circumnavigated Baffin Island. The trip included excursions to the island itself aboard zodiac rubber boats, sightings of over 30 polar bears, a few species of birds and a distant look at musk ox.



Baffin Island is the easternmost member of the Arctic Archipelago, the largest island in Canada, and the 5th largest island in the world. The island is named for British explorer William Baffin who was pilot on two arctic expeditions (1615-16) sent to search for the elusive Northwest Passage. Baffin Island is geographically and geologically a continuation of Labrador, from which it is separated by Hudson Strait.

The western side of the island is covered largely by tundra. There are many freshwater lakes, including Nettilling and Amadjuak. In the east, snow-covered mountain ranges rise more than 8,000 ft. The deeply indented coastline has many fjords. Most of the island's inhabitants are Inuits who live mainly at coastal trading posts. Whaling, fur trading, and fishing are the chief occupations. The trading

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Calendar

- Jan. 1, 2006 Bates Holes CBC - contact Charles Scott473-2512
- Jan. 6 - Membership Mtg.
- Jan. 7 - Grey Reef Field Trip
- Jan. 10 - Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, 101 Garden Creek Rd.
- Jan. 13 - Feb. Newsletter deadline
- Jan. 28 - Annual Murie Audubon Benefit Banquet
- Feb. 3 - Membership Mtg.
- Feb. 14 - Bd. Mtg.
- Feb. 17-20 - Great Backyard Bird-count

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I have been freezing in my 72° home for weeks now. I surely do admire the 25 individuals who braved the elements on Dec. 17th for Murie's CBC. Most drove (quite a few miles!), some walked and there was even birding by skis! Details of

the count are on page 4. Congratulations to all who participated and THANKS for your contribution to "Citizen Science".

Murie's Banquet committee has been quite busy contacting merchants for raffle/silent auction items. We have

several new donors this year and many returning faithful ones!

It has been awhile since I asked if there are any



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posts have stores, post offices, police stations, schools, and occasionally hospitals. Martin Frobisher visited the island between 1576 and 1578,

and Iqaluit, formerly Frobisher Bay, in the southeast, is the principal town and capital of Nunavut.

Join us on Friday, January 6,

2006 at 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. As always, the program is free and open to the public.

Bruce Walgren - Program Chair

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reading this newsletter who would like to save Murie printing & postage costs and receive their newsletter via the Internet. If you do, please let me know and we will remove your name from newsletter mailing list and I will contact you via email when the newsletter has been posted to the website.

Our program on Jan. 6th

will be a great slide show of the Rea's August trip. The picture of the polar bears on the front page was taken by Bart.

We will have a field trip to Grey Reef on Jan. 7 meeting at the Piggery (across the highway from Mountain Plaza) at 9:00 AM. This is always a good trip to see the winter waterfowl and high flying raptors. Start your year list with this trip and you will be off to a good be-

ginning.

Then our Annual Banquet and Fundraiser will be Jan. 28 at the Casper Petroleum Club with a social hour 5:30 - 6:30. This is the time of fast and furious action around the silent auction items and it can heat up when closing time draws near sparking bidding wars. This is also the time to fill the baskets by the raffle items with your tickets. It can be said, "All you need to win

is one ticket." But I always feel more confident with several tickets in the basket of something I really want.

REMEMBER to bring your used printer ink cartridges and "bird" greeting cards to the Jan. 6th membership meeting.

See you in 2006!

Rose-Mary King

TWENTIETH ANNUAL MURIE AUDUBON BENEFIT

January 28, 2006

Chris Madson, editor of *Wyoming Wildlife* magazine, will be our guest speaker this year. He will present "Lessons From a Life: George Bird Grinnell and Conservation in the 21st Century". Chris has an A.B. in biology and a minor in English from Grinnell College in Iowa, with an M.S. in wildlife ecology from the University of Wisconsin. He began his career with the Kansas Fish and Game Commission where he spent six years as the editor of *Kansas Wildlife* magazine. In 1983, he moved to Cheyenne to assume the editorship of *Wyoming Wildlife* magazine with the Wyoming

Game and Fish Department; a position he occupies today. During his tenure with the magazine, *Wyoming Wildlife* has won 65 national awards for excellence in writing, photography, and design.

Chris has also contributed nearly 200 articles to other publications, including *Audubon*, *National Wildlife*, *Outdoor Life*, *Nature Conservancy Magazine*, *Ducks Unlimited*, *Bugle*, and *Pheasants Forever*. He has spoken on issues of conservation and hunting to NASA, the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, and many other groups.

George Bird Grinnell



(1849-1938) was an explorer, big-game hunter, rancher, naturalist, ethnologist, editor, author, and conservationist. Grinnell is probably best known for his writings on the American Indian, but he made his greatest impact on American history in the field of conservation. In his obituary, the *New York Times* referred

to him the "father of American conservation." Theodore Roosevelt, the outdoorsman, was so impressed with Grinnell's views that he incorporated many of these same philosophies into law and the first National Parks in the United States after he became President. Until he was slowed by health problem, Grinnell continued to be important in most of the environmental campaigns of his day. It is worth noting that he was protesting such "contemporary" problems as air and ocean pollution more than fifty years ago.

The benefit/banquet will

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BIRD NOTES

December is always interesting because besides our usual birding treks hither and yon, we have the opportunity to participate in Christmas Bird Counts – and one never knows what might show up on these counts. This year on the Casper CBC, we had most of the usual suspects tallied, plus a few odds and ends: 1 Black Rosy-Finch, 59 Eurasian Collared-Doves, a high count of European Starlings (4466!), a Northern Mockingbird in count week, 1 Mountain Bluebird, 1 Spotted Towhee – and the Lawrences always manage to find Bushtits! Not found this year were Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, and Pine Siskins (though some were reported for count week). Also reported was a Mourning Dove, which is not supposed to be here in winter months, but has been reported with increasing frequency in Montana and eastern Idaho. Another interesting note comes from Sundance: a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was reported in Sundance the day after their CBC (gnatcatchers aren't supposed to be in Wyoming in winter either!).



November Yard Birds – For the month of November, Wayne and I received 186 yard bird selections from 20 states, Yukon Territory and New Zealand with 80 different species reported. At this time of year we usually get goldfinches, siskins, woodpeckers, chickadees, and sparrows visiting our yards – along with Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks taking advantage of ready access to "buffets." For November, the most reported yard bird was the Sharpie, followed by Northern Flicker, with Black-capped Chickadee in third place. Notably, siskins, sparrows, and goldfinches have not been as numerous this year.

Casper: Jan Whitney – Northern Flicker (red-sh.), Ed Whitney – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pat Classen – Black-capped Chickadee, Cecil Foote – Blue Jay, Chris Michelson – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Jim Lawrence – Harris's Sparrow, Gloria Lawrence – Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Rose-Mary King – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Stacey Scott – White-crowned

Sparrow, Bruce Walgren – Black-billed Magpie, Donna Walgren – House Sparrow; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – Sharp-shinned Hawk; **Douglas:** Billie Snell – Townsend's Solitaire; **Evanston:** Patti Gorman – Cassin's Finch, Tim Gorman – Merlin; **Lovell:** Glen Olsen – Blue Jay; and Jim Herold on vacation had a Tomtit in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in November!! December is a busy month, especially with all the holiday activities, but take some time to watch the birds in your yard (or the yard your are visiting), and pick the bird you most enjoyed seeing, and send your choice to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper 82601, or email to bwalgren@coffey.com. Thanks again!!

Donna Walgren

To find out what birds have been seen in Casper and around the state, call Murie Audubon's Bird Hotline: in Casper, **265-BIRD**, outside of Casper, **1-888-265-BIRD**.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES UPDATE: Thank you, all of you generous sponsors! We now have sixty-eight classrooms sponsored of the 70 who are enrolled!. Those who sponsored over two classrooms are: Mary Hein and Bert and Jack Kearns. Betty Rickman and Laurie Longtine also sponsored a class. There has been a wonderful response this year.

Ann Hines - Education Chair

Dear Murie Audubon,

Thank you for allowing Second Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc. the use of the Digital Projector to show our Education Programs. We only were able to use the projector for the last 7 presentations but look forward to using it for our programs in the coming years.

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take place on January 28, 2006 at the Casper Petroleum Club. Tickets are \$25 each or \$175 for a ta-

ble of eight. Tickets will be available at the January 6 regular meeting of Murie Audubon and thereafter from Murie Audubon board members

or by calling 234-7455. There will be raffle and silent auction items to add to the festivities during the evening. Social hour will begin at 5:30

PM with Diane VonGuntten playing at the piano. Dinner and the presentation will follow at 6:30 PM.

Bruce Walgren

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For 2005 we had 59 presentations reaching 170 adults and 1,655 children.

Thank you again. Merlyn Herold, Director, Second Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc.

MURIE - CASPER CBC - DECEMBER 17, 2005

Canada Goose – **1256**, Gadwall – **9**, American Wigeon – **24**, Mallard – **835**, Northern Shoveler – **4**, Northern Pintail – **2**, American Green-winged Teal – **29**, Lesser Scaup – **3**, Common Goldeneye – **178**, Common Merganser – **32**, Gray Partridge – **12**, Ring-necked Pheasant – **1**, Blue Grouse – **1**, Wild Turkey – **28**, Bald Eagle MATURE – **20**, Bald Eagle IMMATURE – **13**, Northern Harrier – **4**, Sharp-shinned Hawk – **6**, Northern Goshawk – **1**, Red-tailed Hawk – **5**, Rough-legged Hawk – **4**, Golden Eagle MATURE – **13**, Golden Eagle IMMATURE – **15**, Golden Eagle UNKNOWN – **3**, American Kestrel – **1**, Merlin – **2**, Prairie Falcon – **2**, Wilson's Snipe – **3**, Rock Pigeon – **643**, Eurasian Collared-Dove – **59**, Mourning Dove – **1**, Great Horned Owl – **7**, Belted Kingfisher – **3**, Downy Woodpecker – **15**, Hairy Woodpecker – **11**, Northern Flicker (Red Shafted) – **100**, Northern Flicker (Yellow Shafted) – **3**, Northern Shrike – **1**, Steller's Jay – **4**, Blue Jay – **47**, Clark's Nutcracker – **33**, Black-billed Magpie – **113**, American Crow – **84**, Common Raven – **1**, Horned Lark – **49**, Black-capped Chickadee – **125**, Mountain Chickadee – **71**, Bushtit – **12**, Red-breasted Nuthatch – **11**, White-breasted Nuthatch – **5**, Brown Creeper – **8**, Mountain Bluebird – **1**, Townsend's Solitaire – **51**, American Robin – **282**, Northern Mockingbird – **ew**, European Starling – **4466**, Cedar Waxwing – **1**, Spotted Towhee – **1**, American Tree Sparrow – **9**, Song Sparrow – **8**, Harris' Sparrow – **2**, White-crowned Sparrow – **1**, DE Junco - SLATE COLORED - **14**, DE Junco - OREGON FORM – **1**, DE Junco - PINK-SIDED FORM – **3**, DE Junco – Unknown – **50**, Western Meadowlark – **26**, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch – **117**, Black Rosy Finch – **1**, Cassin's Finch – **18**, House Finch – **576**, Red Crossbill – **42**, Pine Siskin – **ew**, American Goldfinch – **29**, House Sparrow – **3468**.

Number of Species - **66** - Total Individuals - **13079**

Miles - Driving - **502.6**, Walking - **23**, Other (Skiing) - **6**

Hours - Driving - **56.25**, Walking - **28**, Skiing - **6**, Owling - **2**

Participants by Party - In Field - **25**, Feeder Watchers - **8**

Bruce Walgren - Compiler

BIRDING EVENTS - 2006

MURIE CENTER DATES

April 22 – 5th Annual ECO Fair

August 14-22 – Sheenjek 2006

50th Anniversary of the Muries' Landmark Expedition. This special journey marks the 50th anniversary of the Muries' influential expedition to the Sheenjek River Valley in 1956. Nine-day river trip is designed to offer participants a chance to experience for themselves a part of the Brooks Range that touched the hearts of the Olaf & Mardy and played a key role in the establishment for ANWR. Cost - \$3,900 per person from Fairbanks. \$1,000 deposit required to reserve a space – fully refundable until May 14.

October 14 – 4th Annual Chocolate Moose Festival and Auction.

Contact Info for all Murie Center activities: PO Box 399, Moose WY 83012 (307-739-2246, info@muriecenter.org, or visit their website at www.muriecenter.org.

WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

The 2006 Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival, which coincides with the presence of wintering waterfowl and eagles, will take place February 16-19,

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2006. The purpose of the Festival is to share information, increase awareness of community resources, and gain an understanding of the area's wildlife resources, especially the birds of the Klamath Basin.

The Festival, formerly known as the Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference, is supported by a number of organizations, including the Klamath Basin Audubon Society (KBAS). The KBAS was the originator of the conference in 1979.

Festival participants will be able to take guided tours with local birding experts. In addition, there will be trips to Crater Lake National Park for snowshoeing; Klamath National Wildlife Refuges for birding; and Lava Beds National Monument for caving and rock art.

Dave Eshbaugh, executive director of Audubon Oregon, will be on hand at the Festival to lead presentations and workshops about birding and Klamath Basin birds, the 2006 Great Backyard Bird Count and IBAs in the Klamath Basin.

Hot Air Balloons will launch at sunrise from the Running Y Ranch on Saturday and Sunday morning, February 18-19. Come out early (5:30 am) to watch as the balloons are inflated and then take off in a colorful display. You can reserve a spot to go along for the ride, or sign up to help with the chase crew that tracks down the balloon after it lands. On the ground, enjoy hot chocolate and hay rides. For more information, call 541-850-5543.

Contact Info: Great Basin Visitor Association

(General Information about Klamath County)

205 Riverside Drive
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Phone: 541-882-1501 or 1-800-445-6728

Web: www.greatbasinvisitor.info

E-Mail: marilyn@greatbasinvisitor.info

Conference Registrar: Anne Wenner

Phone: 541-882-1219

E-Mail: karlw12733@aol.com

Conference Coordinator: Leslie Lowe

E-Mail: inharmony46@charter.net

Website: <http://www.winterwingsfest.org/>.

FESTIVAL OF OWLS

March 3-5, Houston High School, Houston, MN
Address: Houston High School, Houston, MN 55943
Phone: 507-896-4668, Fax: 507-896-5668
E-Mail: nature@acegroup.cc

Immerse yourself in owls at this all-owl family event. Kids will delight in the owl face painting, owl origami and owl storytelling. Adults will enjoy presentations by prominent "owlologists," including a banquet address by David H. Johnson, Director of the Global Owl Project. Everyone will relish the live owl presentations with six species of owls, owl calling workshop, media celebrity hooting contest, and owl prowls to call in wild owls. The festival is filled out with a raffle, silent auction, owl merchandise, owl-themed food, and a special reservation-only photographers' brunch with the owls.

RIVERS AND WILDLIFE CELEBRATION

March 17-19, Holiday Inn, Kearney, Nebraska

Field trips

Sunset and sunrise visits to crane viewing blinds along the Platte River—not to be missed!

Crane behavior classes

Trips to a nearby prairie-chicken booming ground and prairie dog town

Day-long excursions to local wetlands and lakes

Featured speakers

Michael Male & Judy Fieth - Natural history filmmakers

Marty Folk - Florida crane biologist

Bobby Harrison - One of the discoverers of the ivory-billed woodpecker

Dr. Paul Johnsgard - Renowned ornithologist who will speak on his trip to the Galapagos Islands

Conference activities are held in the convention center at the Holiday Inn in Kearney, (308) 237-5971. Discount room rates are available for conference registrants. Lodging and local area information can be found at www.kearneycoc.org.

To obtain a registration brochure, or for more information about the RWC, write or call Audubon Nebraska, P.O. Box 117, Denton, NE 68339; (402) 797-2301. Email - nebraska@audubon.org

For crane viewing information, write or call Rowe Sanctuary, 44450 Elm Island Road, Gibbon, NE 68840; (308) 468-5282; Email - rowe@nctc.net. Rowe Sanctuary website at www.rowesanctuary.org.

FIRST ANNUAL WINGS OF SPRING CONFLUENCE BIRDING FESTIVAL

Alton, IL - The first annual Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival will be held on Friday and Saturday, April 28-29. A partnership of organizations within

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the Confluence Greenway is planning the Festival to spotlight birding opportunities where the great rivers meet. The Festival is reserved for school groups on Friday, April 28. The public is invited to attend the Festival on Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival will be based at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary near Alton, Illinois. "The Festival will offer programs and events for all levels of birding interest including educational programs, speakers, vendors, on-site tours of migratory shore birds and guided birding tours at other Confluence sites," said Ken Buchholz, program chair. Buchholz, representing Audubon Missouri, continued, "The Festival will celebrate the Confluence, part of the Mississippi Flyway, as an important area for birds and a destination for bird watching."

The Festival program will be released in the spring.

For more information on the Festival contact the Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-258-6645 or visit the website at www.wingsofspring.org. Persons or businesses that would like to be part of the Festival should contact Ken Buchholz at 314-368-7639.

VERDE VALLEY BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL

April 27 - 30

Dead Horse Ranch State Park, Cottonwood, AZ
Address: Dead Horse Ranch State Park, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Phone: 928.282.2202, Fax: 928.282.6239

E-Mail: bhart@pr.state.az.us

Description: Located in Central Arizona in the habitat rich Verde Valley, the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival has become the center of attraction for birds and birders. Along one of Arizona's last flowing watersheds, the Verde River's lush riparian habitat provides excellent local birding. The surrounding topography adds to the species list with mountains, marshes, grassland, and canyons. The highlights of this festival are the unusual field trips: they bird on horseback, bikes, canoe or train. Good food and great leaders add to the experience. Geology and rock hounding, bats and butterflies are all a part of the adventure.

9TH ANNUAL SPRING WINGS BIRD FESTIVAL FALLON, NEVADA - MAY 12-14

The Spring Wings Bird Festival coincides with International Migratory Bird Day and the height of spring migration in the Lahontan Valley wetlands. These internationally recognized wetlands are temporary home to

over 260 species of birds, including thousands of White-faced ibis, Long-billed Dowitcher, American white pelicans, Black-necked stilts, American avocets, and many other waterfowl and waterbirds. During the 2005 festival, 106 different species were logged.

Spring Wings 2006 is pleased to announce this year's keynote speaker - direct from London!! - is Mr. Jonathan Stacey, Program Manager of "Birds and the Environment" of Rio-Tinto and Birdlife International. Don't miss his presentation regarding Birdlife International's worldwide focus on birds, and how they have influenced birds and birding in Nevada.

Saturday night's speaker will be Don McIvor from Lahontan Audubon's Important Bird Area Program who will discuss his local and statewide efforts.

Contact:

Janet Schmidt, Spring Wings Coordinator
P.O. Box 6332

Fallon, Nevada 89407

Telephone: (775)428-6452 Fax: (775)423-5158

E-mail - info@springwings.org

UTE MOUNTAIN MESA VERDE BIRDING FESTIVAL

May 5-7, Cortez, CO

Phone: 970-565-1151, Fax: 970-565-4075

E-Mail: director-cultural@fone.net

Tours to the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Mesa Verde National Park, the Dolores River area, Owl Hoot, Navajo "Bird Songs at First Light"...and so many more...lectures on Saturday and a keynote speaker dinner Saturday night. Kids tours.

8TH ANNUAL GREAT SALT LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL

May 18-23, Davis County Fair Park, 151 S. 1100 W., Farmington, UT 84025

Phone: 801-451-3286, Fax: 801-451-3281

E-Mail: tour@co.davis.ut.us

Come to the 8th Annual Great Salt Lake Bird Festival and see birds on and around the world famous Great Salt Lake. The Festival features bus/van trips with guides, workshops, speakers, Dutch oven dinner, artists, booths, kayaks, food, and youth activities. The 2006 keynote speaker is Arthur Morris, nature photographer and writer. Arthur Morris will also present photography workshops on Saturday, May 20th. Dr. Kevin Colver will present "Birding by Ear" on Friday, May 19th.