

**PLAINS AND PEAKS**  
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**AUDUBON WYOMING...MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR BIRDS**

**A**lison Lyon-Holloran, Conservation Programs Manager for Audubon Wyoming will be our guest speaker for the May monthly meeting. Alison will inform us about Audubon Wyoming conservation programs around the state, who and how we partner, IBA adoption information, and what bird monitoring opportunities that are available for volunteers.

Alison graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Wildlife Management from the University of West Virginia in 1994 and obtained her Masters of Science in Zoology and Physiology in 2000 from the University of Wyoming. During formal education she also studied in Kenya, Africa during the summer of 1992 with the School for Field Studies and worked as a Research Assistant for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii Vol-

canoes National Park in 1993.

After graduating from West Virginia University, Alison served two years with the United States Peace Corps as a Wildlands Promoter in Honduras. During the two years in Honduras, she collaborated with Honduran nationals to create the first operative plan for the Montana Verde Wildlife Reserve, inventoried species (flora and fauna) encountered in the Reserve, and promoted environmental awareness of the Reserve to surrounding villages.

Upon completion of her Master's degree in 2000, Alison went to work for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit developing and executing a research plan examining the potential effects of natural gas development on sage grouse populations. She has been

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**

**T**his is my last letter to you as your President. It has been a great 2 yrs. and I have enjoyed serving in this office. I will continue as the newsletter editor, webmaster and will try to fill Peg Cullen's shoes as Banquet chair.

Speaking of the Banquet, I am looking for more permanent raf-

file ticket holders - you know the paper sacks that stood in front of each item and held the tickets. If you have plastic containers with a lid about 1-3 lb. size, please let me know and I can pick them up or collect them at the general meetings. The type of containers I am thinking about hold drink mixes, such as

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**Calendar**

- April 28-29 - Audubon Wyoming board meeting, Casper
- May 5 - 7 PM Gen. Mtg. OGCC Bldg.
- May 9 - Bd. Mtg. - ACGC - 7 PM
- May 13 - IMBD
- May 13 - MG Plant Sale - 8 AM - ARLC
- May 19-20 - CHPAS Big Day
- June 3-5 - "Wings over Carbon County" Festival
- June 20, 2006 - Annual ACGC Clean-up
- June 23-25 - CHPAS Birding Weekend

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## AUDUBON CENTER AT GARDEN CREEK MAPS BIRD BANDING SCHEDULE 2006

Although attending the volunteer training day on June 2 at 9:30 would be helpful, it is not a prerequisite for volunteering for the rest of the summer. Banding is so much fun you will not want to miss a single morning, however if you can only make it for a few banding sessions, that is alright too.

All banding takes place at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek. Set-up starts at

5:30 AM and banding begins at 6 AM. Feel free to stop by anytime during the morning, although if you aren't here by 5:30 AM you'd better expect people to give you a hard time about sleeping in. Harassment may decrease if you bring bagels or doughnuts. Most of the birds are banded between 7:30 – 9:30 when the weather cooperates.

If you can't wait for banding proper to begin,

feel free to stop by the Audubon Center at Garden Creek anytime between now and then. We still have plenty of nets to repair from last season, or you can just watch the banded Black-capped Chickadees and Downy Woodpecker that are visiting the feeders. Spread the word, bring your friends, and we'll see you in June.

June 2, 2006 - 9:30AM  
– Friday - banding vol-

unteer training

Banding days are as follows:

June 6, 13, 27 – All Tuesdays; July 7, 2006 – Friday; July 19, 2006 – Wednesday; July 25, 2006 – Tuesday; August 1, 2006 – Tuesday - Final Banding Day!

Any questions - call or email Alison or Ken - contact info on Page 7.

## WEEKEND SUMMER BIRDING EVENTS

**T**he “Wings Over Carbon County Birding Club” is having a special birding weekend June 3-4-5 in Saratoga Wyoming. We would like to extend an invitation to anyone interested in joining us for a fun filled weekend.

There will be several

guided tours of this rich birding area's special hotspots, a banquet on Saturday night, a guest speaker, slide show, etc. However, the main focus of the weekend will be on just plain fun. This will be a no frills event. Everyone is responsible for their own lunch and beverages plus transportation to and from the

birding areas. Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday morning will be provided. The cost of this event will be \$40 per person.

There will be maximum allowable number of forty people for this event as this is the total that our banquet hall will accommodate. This event will fill rapidly so

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with Audubon Wyoming for 5 years where she is now the Conservation Programs Manager.

Join us on Friday, May 5, 2006 at 7 pm at the

Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. The program is free and open to the public.

**Program Chair - Bruce Walgren**

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Tang, or coffee grounds or “Wet-ones”. I will need at least 50, so be collecting!

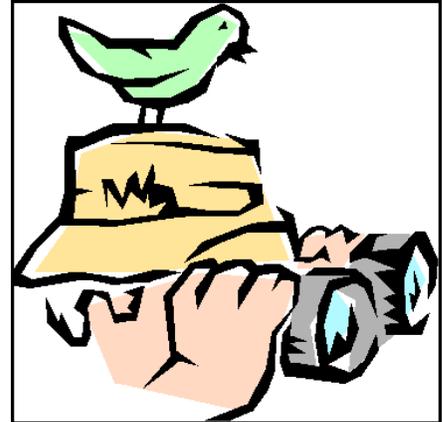
At this month's meeting we will hold our election of officers. Alison's program sounds like a

great one! We will also have one more raffle (have anything to donate? - contact me) and then the year-end loser's raffle.

May is the “Birdathon” month! Get your team together and gather those sponsors.

**President - Rose-Mary King**

## BIRD NOTES



It does appear that spring is finally starting to make its way to Wyoming – every day more birdsong fills the air, trees unfurl more leaves, and more flowers push up between new blades of grass. Increasing numbers of waterfowl are being reported (both on the water and in the skies) as they move northward. Dark-eyed Juncos are making their way to higher elevations, stopping in neighborhood yards on their way, as indicated by the number of reports to the Yard Bird Project, (Arlene Carr noted that she had Oregons and Pink-sided



in her yard). Kelley Bacon had a pair of Wild Turkeys in her yard in Dempsey Acres, Marci Andre has a flock on the west side of Casper, Ken Keffer had 24 at the Garden Creek Audubon Center (pictured at left); these are just a few of the rash of turkey reports.

**March Yard Birds** – For the month of March, Wayne and I received 191 yard bird selections from 20 states plus the Yukon Territory, Ecuador, Mexico, and the Virgin Islands, with 86 different species reported. Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds are still making their presence known in

neighborhoods around the state and around the country. More different species of sparrows are being seen as spring migration gets under way. Very few warblers were reported (only two for March – Lucy's Warbler in Green Valley, AZ and Golden-cheeked Warbler in Killeen, TX), but that should change as those little birds start moving toward their summer nesting grounds. The number one bird for March was Dark-eyed Junco; American Robins are still numerous – this species was number two. Third place was a three-way tie between Red-winged Blackbird, Western Bluebird, and American Goldfinch. We received 20 yard birds from Wyoming with 15 different species reported. Dark-eyed Junco was also the most reported bird for the state, and American Robin was in second place.

**Casper:** Ken Keffer – Wild Turkey, Jim Herold – Dark-eyed Junco, Pat Classen – American Robin, Cecil Foote – American Kestrel, Chris Michelson – Dark-eyed Junco, Bart Rea – Dark-eyed Junco, Ed Reish – House Finch, Bob Yonts – American Robin, Arlene Carr – Eurasian Collared-Dove, Rose-Mary King - Mourning Dove, Bruce Walgren – American Crow, Donna Walgren – Northern Harrier; **Buffalo:** Deane Bjerke – White-crowned Sparrow; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – American Robin; **Douglas:** Billie Snell – Great Horned Owl; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki – Steller's Jay; **Lovell:** Glen Olsen – Pine Siskin; **Rawlins:** Karen Lambertsen – Dark-eyed Junco; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – Wood Duck, Jan Whitney – Sandhill Crane; **Sheridan:** Peg Cullen – Northern Flicker (red-sh.).

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in March!! It's starting to look more like spring these days – fewer snow storms, warmer days, and more wildflowers poking their heads up into the sunshine. Send your yard bird for April to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper 82601, or email to [bwalgren@coffey.com](mailto:bwalgren@coffey.com). Thanks again!!

**Donna Walgren**

## HUMMINGBIRD HILL

As we draw closer to the month of May, all thoughts turn to Hummingbird Hill. I do reflect on the cabins on the Hill that I have known. Over time there have been a number of cabins visited during the birding season prior to the time we settled into Hummingbird Hill.

Lou Demorest owned a cabin in the woods near Star Wallow. It marked the road we would take to the cabin where we sought out mainly woodpeckers. In early stages of spring we would go to Mr. & Mrs. Smith's cabin near the road that is across the street from the entrance to Crimson Dawn Road. The Smith cabin was just above Carl & Winnie Belz cabin so we had a nice little birding ground there. Probably the cabin I used most for birding was Lucy Rognstad's cabin near the eastern boundary of Crimson Dawn Park. Verna and I also spent a number of overnights there.

Lucy had a beautiful modern cabin, complete with running water & electricity, with a beautiful view to the south. Many a year Lucy hosted Dr. Oliver Scott's birthday party at the cabin. I use to go there a lot to see the mountain birds & especially so for hummingbirds & blue grouse. There was also another 20 acres attached to the cabin going south. Ten acres of that land now borders on 10 acres that is now part of Hummingbird Hill. Visits sort of ceased after Hummingbird Hill came into existence & the bears started raiding Lucy's hummingbird feeders. Lucy opted not to feed the hummingbirds anymore. Shame on the bears!

For Hummingbird Hill the season sort of starts about May 1st. It depends a lot on the amount of snow received, the use made of snowmobiles during the winter, & just how bad the drifts are & how many. We anticipate being into the cabin by May 15th, give or take a bit. The cabin is built on a good slope so road walking is the way to go when seeking other birds. Otherwise, sitting inside the cabin is the thing to do & watching the birds. The cabin is backwoods: no running water, no electricity, thus no TV or lights. We wanted to be back to real nature without "city control". Oh yes, we have an Out House. We also have a beautiful view. I enjoy sitting inside & looking over at Muddy Mountain where I worked for an off & on period of 35 years. I would say the road to the cabin is best suited to 4WD, but I drive a Van or SUV in anyway, front wheel drive preferred. Lucy would

probably snicker & say, "What road???"

Hummingbirds are our specialty birds. After all, we named the hill where the cabin stands after the bird. In actuality the site is named as a memorial to our son Hank, who loved hummingbirds, especially the Anna variety. In the days when Verna was running the shop, we had quite a few birders at the cabin. Maybe Brigid will take her mother's place eventually.

Hummingbird season sort of coincides with the break through by vehicle to the cabin. We usually set out our 1st hummingbird feeder as soon as we arrive on the scene.



This may build up to 4-6 hummingbird feeders by mid June. We carry the feeders up to Sept. 15th, when we hope the hummers will have had sense enough to go to warmer climes. In past years we've had up to

nearly 50 hummingbirds. Of course the number can fluctuate considerably, depending on who is tending shop. There is lots of infighting among hummers. This can be very true when the rufous hummingbird arrives about mid July. The rufous is very possessive & dominates the feeders. It is a wonder any bird gets fed, including the rufous. If we are lucky, we might see a calliope hummingbird. In the last couple of years it has been quite noticeable that hummers have been fewer & it is apparent that they aren't going to share any better with fewer numbers if they don't have to. Thus the making of juice becomes unpredictable. However, we are committed to feeding this tiny bird. If the bear becomes a problem, we will plan overnight stays & take the feeders in at night. We will then put them out by dawn's early light. So it can go, all summer long.

We do entertain a few other species of bird at Hummingbird Hill. The most common among these are the Cassin's finch & the pine siskin. There are both mountain & black-capped chickadees, three species of nuthatches: red-breasted, white-breasted, & pygmy. We have Steller's jays, dark-eyed juncos, downy & hairy woodpeckers, & a number of mourning doves. We see an occasional western tanager. Early morning & late afternoon

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finds turkeys coming into feed. Blue grouse may show up in the late afternoon. Sometimes we see turkey vultures in the sky overhead or down in the trough between mountains. We may see red-tailed or Cooper's hawks. Some times we get lucky & see a northern goshawk.

We feed sunflower seed, white proso millet, niger seed, & corn. We also hang commercial suet. We haul in about 15 gallons of water a day at the height of the season. Water is our most important commodity.

There are a few other creatures in the woods to entertain us. The deer are partly responsible for the use of the water we bring in. This use depends on the their primary source of water & when it

starts to dry up. We have squirrels & chipmunks. There is an occasional little red fox & if food supplies dwindle, then a bear or two. Really dislike that bear up on the deck, but hard to keep it down if it insists.

We do have other work on the 40 acres. There seems to be a never ending amount of slash to clean up. We either save some of this for fire wood or pile it for burning in place or take it to the Community Slash Pile. Our primary purpose is to reduce the fire load.

We hope you have enjoyed visiting Hummingbird Hill.

**The Hummer.**

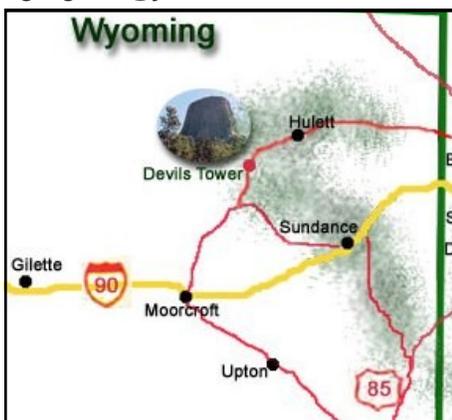
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if you are interested please email us at fcbjmb@hotmail.com or dngeherold@carbonpower.net and a registration form will be sent to you.

The Bergquists

## CHPAS Black Hills annual chapter campout

- Although there is no registration fee, please sign up by June 9. Contact Jane Dorn, 640-4002, linglebird@yahoo.com or Barb Gorges, 634-0463, bgorges2@juno.com.



For our 6<sup>th</sup> annual chapter campout we are heading for the hills June 23-25. The Bearlodge is Wyoming's part of the Black Hills National Forest.

We will stay at the Reuter Campground above Sundance, or you can stay at a Sundance motel nearby. The general schedule will include arriving Friday afternoon or evening, birding beginning Saturday morning, a Saturday evening potluck and campfire program (unless we go looking for owls again) and possibly some more birding Sunday morning.

AW Manager Alison Lyon-Holloran hopes bird lists we provide can be the basis for an Important Bird Area nomination. Forest Service wildlife biologist Mark Stefanich can make use of the information as well.

The RMBO completed five years of bird surveys last year. Go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills/projects/wildlife/index.shtml> to see them. There is also a bird guide, or checklist, you can

print. You'll notice all the species for which more information would be appreciated, such as Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and Golden-winged Warblers. There's even a possibility for Flammulated Owls--the stars of last year's campout.

The Web site says: "The Black Hills represent an ecological crossroads, with wildlife and plant species typical of habitats of the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, northern boreal forests, and eastern deciduous forests....Goshawks and osprey nest in the forest .... Many songbird species are present, including brilliantly colored mountain bluebirds and western tanagers."

The other purpose of the annual campout, as important as collecting bird information, is to meet Auduboners from around the state and other birders. We hope to meet Dusty and Jacelyn Downey, the AW Community Naturalists who are working to start a Gillette Audubon chapter, and Community Naturalist Ken Keffer from Casper.

## NATIONAL AUDUBON'S TOP 10 ENDANGERED BIRDS & THEIR HABITATS

The birds named in the report are: Ivory-billed Woodpecker; California Condor; Whooping Crane; Gunnison Sage-Grouse; Kirtland's Warbler; Piping Plover; Florida Scrub-Jay; Ashy Storm-Petrel; Golden-cheeked Warbler; Kittlitz's Murrelet; and ten island birds of Hawaii. Their habitats span the entire East Coast and are dotted across the nation, in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin.

## GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT UPDATE

The 9th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, which took place February 17–20, set new records as participation soared across the United States and Canada. From backyards to wildlife refuges, bird watchers tallied a record-breaking **623 bird species** and **7.5 million individual birds** during the four-day event, coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. Participants sent in more than **60,000 checklists**, providing a wealth of information unmatched in previous years.

American Robins are typically reported in greatest number by observers in the balmy southern states, but they inundated the Northwest this year, including Washington State, where flocks of 40,000 or more were seen and totals skyrocketed to 96 percent above last year's count. In contrast, tallies of robins were down to less than one-half of

their 2005 numbers in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi for reasons that are as yet unclear.

Although most insect-loving birds travel south of the United States in winter, warm weather may also have enticed some swallow and warbler species to stay farther north than usual, living on a partly vegetarian diet. The number of bird watchers who reported Orange-crowned Warblers rose by more than 50 percent compared with last year and they reported twice as many birds, some of which were eating suet and nectar from feeders. Tree Swallows, which can feed on bayberry berries during winter, have broadened their distribution from 11 states in 2001 to 20 states in 2006. Adjusted numbers were up by 134 percent compared with last year.

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

## AVIAN FLU

**Has H5N1 Been Found in North America?** - The highly pathogenic form of H5N1 avian influenza virus has not been found in wild birds in North America. In 2005, a low pathogenic form of H5N1, which is not thought to pose a danger to poultry or humans, was found in wild ducks in Canada. There is a remote chance that infected wild birds from Asia could bring the highly pathogenic form of the virus with them during spring or fall migration to North America. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey (USGS), Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and public health agencies are working together to test thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds for the virus in Alaska, and field sampling is being integrated with surveillance programs throughout the United States and Canada.

**What You Can Do?** - People who feed birds are not at high risk of contracting avian influenza from birds in their yards or at their feeders. However, anyone who comes into direct contact with birds and their droppings should follow sanitary practices, and since birds can transmit other diseases to humans (e.g. salmonellosis), people who feed birds should routinely clean their feeders and bird baths. ([http://www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/SafeFeeding.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeFeeding.html) and [http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats\\_new/fact\\_sheet/fact\\_birdfeeder.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats_new/fact_sheet/fact_birdfeeder.html)).