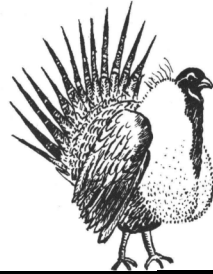


PLAINS & PEAKS



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MURIE AUDUBON

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UMBRELLA SPECIES PROJECT



We are once again tapping into the resources and knowledge of the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Wyoming for the October program. Jason Carlisle is a Ph.D. student in the Program in Ecology at the University of Wyoming and he will share his work on the umbrella species project.

Wildlife managers, tasked with conserving a growing number of imperiled species, and given only a fixed or declining amount of resources to do so, often turn to an approach known as proxy conservation. Under this approach, one carefully selected species (or group of species) acts as a surrogate for other species of conservation interest, guiding management actions that incidentally benefit the whole suite of species of conservation interest.

An umbrella species is one form of surrogate, and the umbrella concept traces its beginnings back

CALENDAR

October 12—General Meeting—7:00 PM—Oil & Gas Conservation Building—2011 King Blvd.

October 22—Deadline for November articles

November 9 Program will be Dwaine Wagoner "Moths of Wyoming"

December 15 will be the Christmas Bird Count

Feb. 9, 2013—MAS Annual Banquet
Every Thursday—Brown bag lunch with the birds at Audubon Center at Garden Creek—12 Noon

SAVE PAPER — READ YOUR NEWSLETTER AT MURIE'S WEBSITE, CONTACT ROSE-MARY KING—rking7453@bresnan.net

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to the mid-1980s and questions of protected area design. In essence, by protecting the area required to maintain a viable population of the umbrella species (typically the species requiring the most area), managers expect to conserve viable populations of other target species of interest.

Wildlife managers and policy makers have implemented the Greater Sage-Grouse as an umbrella species, and Core Areas of sage grouse breeding habitat have been designated as quasi-protected areas here in Wyoming, where managers hope to conserve grouse and other wildlife species of conservation need.

The plan is to determine if Wyoming's sage grouse Core Areas have biological support as an umbrella for conserving non-game target species (including avian, small mammal, and reptile species of greatest conservation need), and at what spatial scale the Core Area umbrella is valid.

Please join us on Friday, October 12, 2012 at 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. for this interesting program. As always, the program is free and open to the public!

Program Chairman—Bruce Walgren

ALONG THE PATHWAY WITH HARRY

I'll make this short and sweet.

I'm calling for volunteers. Murie Audubon Society is looking for folks to conduct field trips and other birding activities. We are not looking to put you on the board. We just need birding enthusiasts willing to take Murie Audubon members and visitors on birding field trips. You can do as little or as much as you like. The important thing is to have fun and be informative.

Some of the field trips are easily done from the warmth and comfort of your vehicle. Others are done walking on well established trails in local parks. Some can be done in your own backyard. Some of our members have very nice feed-



ers in their yards and maybe they'd like to share some of their sightings.

I'm calling for volunteers because some of our veterans are not always available due to schedules, illness, or other reasons beyond their control. I would like to see some younger MAS members step up and help out. We need you and your birding interests to help even younger birders learn the tricks of the birding trade.

Please, won't you help?

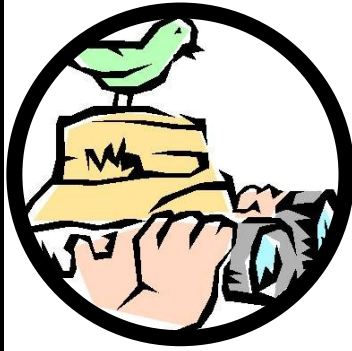
If interested, please call me and let me know how you can help. I can be reached at 307-258-1255. You can call or leave me a text message.

Thanks, Harry Martin
President Murie Audubon Society Chapter

BIRD NOTES

Fires and smoke continue to be part of everyday life, but the good news is that the Casper Mountain fire is contained, though the same can't be said for many of the other fires around the West. Ecologists and habitat managers continue to study the impacts of these events. Waterfowl, shorebirds, Sandhill cranes, and raptors are on the move. Warbler migration here in Wyoming seems to be coming to a close, but sparrow movements are increasing. Interesting species reported around Wyoming include: Broad-winged Hawk at Ten Sleep, Great Gray Owl in the Grand Targhee area, Lesser Goldfinch and Franklin's Gull in the Cheyenne area, and around Casper - Nashville Warbler, Canada Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, White-winged Dove, Townsend's Warbler, and Swamp Sparrow.

For the month of August, Wayne and I received 182 reports for the Yard Bird Project. 92 species were tallied from 70 locations in 14 states



plus the Yukon Territory. As is usual for this time of year, several species of warblers were reported (8 species), making their way southward. Not many sparrows were tallied, but those numbers will increase on the September Report. Common Nighthawks were being seen in good numbers as they gathered for migration - and they were the most reported species. In 2nd place was American Goldfinch - typically seen at feeders at this time of year. 3rd place was a tie between Evening Grosbeak and Red-breasted Nuthatch. No. 4 was another tie between Western Tanager and Yellow Warbler.

Wyoming Yard Bird Report

Casper: Jeff Morton - Yellow Warbler, Chris Michelson - Mountain Chickadee, Barb Yonts - Northern Flicker, Bob Yonts - Rufous Hummingbird, Garden Creek Audubon Center - Steller's Jay, Rose-Mary King - Orange-crowned Warbler, Joanne Odasz - Wilson's Warbler, Ed Reish - Common Grackle, Casper College Greenhouse - Turkey Vulture, Sandy and Miguel Leotta - American Goldfinch; **Lander:** Andrea Orabona - Barn Swallow; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki - Green-tailed Towhee, Michael Kenney - Vesper Sparrow; **Douglas:** Billie Snell - Baltimore Oriole; **Edness Kimball Wilkins SP:** Chris Michelson - Canada Warbler, Donna Walgren - Red-headed Woodpecker; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis - Common Nighthawk, Bob Hargis - Green-tailed Towhee; **North Casper:** Bruce Walgren - Townsend's Warbler.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in August!!! Fall Migration Season is picking up; let us know what you all are seeing. Email at Piranga@bresnan.net or phone 234-7455. (By the way, if anyone would like a copy of the complete August Yard Bird Project list - and you are not on the Project email list, let me know.)

Donna Walgren

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

This year's edition of Audubon Adventures is: "Sharing Our Earth".

The topics are: Share our Shores, Caring For Our Planet—Be a Friend to Birds, The World of the Forest, Grasslands: A Prairies Tale.

Each teacher receives thirty copies of each topic, plus an Educator's Guide for each topic AND an instructional guide for the teacher with additional information.

I will be placing the order of seventy to be sent to teachers and the Audubon Naturalists in the state.

Thanks to Chris Michelson, Beecher Strube and Dwaine Wagoner, eight of these have been sponsored.

Education Chair—Ann Hines

FIELD TRIPS

The October field trip will be on **October 27th**. We will meet at the Audubon Center and leave about 7:00 am. We will visit Healy Reservoir, Lake DeSmet and the Story area, if time allows. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. If the weather is bad, then the trip will be canceled.

Chris Michelson (234-8726)

There will be a field trip to Speas Fish Hatchery on **November 10th**. The actual tour of the new facilities will be at 10:30 AM. We are free to look around before the tour begins, so we will meet at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek at 9:30 AM.

Ann Hines (266-3160)



ADVENTURES OF AUDUBON EMMA

(by Emma Narotzky (on Thursday, June 14, 2012))

Heart racing, I get out of the car. I am by myself with what little defenses I have - a pair of binoculars strapped around my neck, a small yellow device in my hand that will guide me through the wilderness, and a notebook and camera in my backpack with which to record whatever wonders or horrors I might encounter. Giving one last glance to the car and the building next to it (my last ties to civilization), I walk into the forest of the unknown.

After crossing the rickety bridge over the perilous and deadly creek, I climb up a rocky slope and come out of the trees into a vast prairie. Here the sun is hot, the plants are dry, and the area seems desolate and uninhabited. I follow the directions of my small yellow guide, stumbling through brambles and poisonous thorns, until I come across the first red flag fluttering on its wire post. Cautiously, I look around, then I crouch on the ground next to the point. Pulling out my notebook, I write the date, time, and my coordinates. Then I wait.

There are chitters, chatters, and warbles from the trees below me to my east. I pick out as many as I can, but many of my avian targets remain elusive. I scrawl hurried notes into my book, copying down names and describing calls and sketching the plants pricking my ankles.

Suddenly, I hear a call from behind me. I eagerly turn my head - behind me is more prairie and hills, a place where I have a chance of seeing the creatures I'm meant to be finding. I can't visually locate the source of the call, but I know already the identity of the caller. I write "Meadowlark (west of creek)" in my notebook.

Before my pencil finishes the final parenthesis, however, I hear a call off to my left. Looking over, I see the meadowlark sitting atop a pole. It's the same creature, I am certain, so I turn my attention back to the disordered chatter

from the forest. As soon as my eyes leave the spot, however, a meadowlark call sounds from my right. They are trying to disorient me! I look and there is nothing but a bush waving in the breeze, and a small bird on a distant fencepost. I turn to my spy notebook and write "x2", but then I happen to glance over at the pole to my left. It is empty. Could the same bird have flown that far without my noticing? They are swift, but even their kind cannot move through the air silently, and I am trained in espionage. I know their ways. How could it have a chance of fooling me? It calls out in response to my thought. Alright, I think. This means business.

I point my binoculars - my strongest weapon - at the spot where I'd seen the little buggler before. But there is no winged animal to be seen on the fencepost. I glance around. This bird is uncanny. Finally, I look up and behind me, and there the son of a bird sits on the branch of a shrub. I glare at it and cross out my "x2".

As I stand up to move to the next point along my dangerous and terrible route, I notice movement in an area of dense vegetation below me. I pause, frozen, and slowly reach for my binoculars. After all, I could be facing a dangerous creature of the wild, and I'd need to be able to see it in detail. However, there is no need for my precautions. The movement had been caused by a pair of young and harmless, if large, herbivores.

I extract my camera from the pack and take numerous photographs of the animals staring in my direction. Brown eyes wide, ears up and alert, they are surprised but not alarmed by the biped they have stumbled across on their daily grazing excursion. One has the beginnings of fuzz-covered antlers sprouting from its head - when he is older those will be deadly weapons, but for now they are only evidence of his youth. The more the pair stare at me, however, with their unblinking eyes and unwavering stance, the less certain I become of their harmlessness. I replace the items I had taken from my pack and look to my navigation device for directions to the

next pair of coordinates.

"Point not found", the GPS informs me. This message is punctuated by an insolent meadowlark call, coming from a telephone pole at the top of the hill behind me.

(Note added by Donna Walgren—Emma Narotzky is a graduate of Kelly Walsh High School, now in her second year at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. This summer Emma spent part of her break helping set up an avian point count survey at the Audubon Center at Garden Creek. In addition, she also worked on vegetation - identifying, collecting, and mounting. She wrote this essay after one of her days in the field. For those of us who worked in the field - there may be more than a touch of relevance?)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT CHANGES

Audubon Science has exciting news to share about the Christmas Bird Count program.

After nearly two years of internal discussions, budget modeling, head-scratching, and intense decision-making, two major changes will come to the Christmas Bird Count program effective with the upcoming 113th Count in December, 2012.

First, the CBC is now a free program. For the first time since 1955, Audubon will waive the \$5.00 participant fee and replace it with a voluntary donation and sponsorship model.

Second, to minimize the loss of income, our annual summary of CBC results, *American Birds*, will no longer be printed and mailed to every participant. Instead, Audubon will move to an online delivery of the CBC summary results with expanded features.

To help Audubon make these important decisions regarding the Christmas Bird Count program, we invited people involved with the count to participate in an online survey earlier this year. The results of the online survey were very enlightening and are summarized in the up-

coming 112th CBC summary issue of *American Birds* that will be released in October—the last one to appear in print. The 130 pages of written comments underscored how passionately people feel about the CBC. Some people understand the fee and don't mind paying it, but the main thrust of written comments was that the fee is a major obstacle to the program, and the strong message was that more people would be involved, more counts would be included in the CBC database, and more accurate effort data would be collected if the fee was dropped.

Also highly informative were comments regarding *American Birds*. While a few folks commented that they enjoyed the information it contains and enjoy reading at least parts of it each year, the primary sentiment expressed was that recipients do not value *American Birds* in its current format, that they do not read most of it. Many survey respondents felt that an interactive, online version of the magazine would better suit their needs—especially if the participation fee was dropped.

With the online delivery of *American Birds* via a new interactive web presence—including photos, summaries, and features—content can now be presented online as they are completed. While the integrity of the CBC is crucial to maintain for its bird trend data, it has become equally important for the ability to engage people in other citizen science projects. Toward that end Audubon will be expanding its Citizen Science projects, and the CBC will, of course, continue to be the cornerstone program.

Audubon's Communications and media staff will be also including these messages in outreach materials going out about the CBC this year. These changes give us all a new opportunity to talk about the tradition and value of participating in the CBC and the importance of the data to the body of bird conservation knowledge.

Questions: Geoff LeBaron, CBC Director, CBC staff at cbcadmin@audubon.org. Gary Langham, VP, Chief Scientist