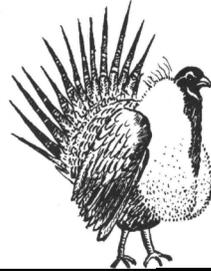


PLAINS & PEAKS



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MURIE AUDUBON

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VOLCANOES AND LIFE: AGENTS OF DESTRUCTION AND CREATION



Our November program will be presented by Karl Osvald, geologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Casper.

We may think of volcanic eruptions as infrequent, sometimes deadly, events, but volcanoes have played a major role in shaping the Earth and maintaining the conditions for life that lives on and in it from this planet's very beginning. They are agents of both destruction and creation.

Karl will speak about the influences of volcanism on our planet; the surface, temperature, weather, as well as global climate. He will also speak of the responses to these influences in the evolution of animals and plants, ecosystems, and biological diversity. We are part of nature, but even now we can't defy the de-

CALENDAR

- Nov. 8—General Meeting
- Nov. 9—Field Trip—Pg. 3
- Dec. 14—CBC—Casper—Contact Stacy Scott—262-0055 or Chris Michelson—234-8726 for details of pre-count meeting & gathering place on the morning of the count. Post count gathering and potluck will be at King's Corner—1st & Beech—5:30PM
- Jan. 1, 2014—Bates Hole CBC—contact Stacy Scott—262-0055 for info.
- Feb. 8—Annual MAS Banquet & Fundraiser—Pg. 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ALONG THE PATHWAY WITH HARRY, MURIE'S ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER
- FIELD TRIP, AUDUBON ADVENTURES, THANK YOU!!!!
- BIRD NOTES, THOSE HAZARDOUS FLYING BIRDS
- FRIEND OF MURIE FORM

PAGE

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

structive forces or long term influence of volcanoes.

Please join us on Friday, November 8, 2013 at 7 PM at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. for this program. As always, the program is free and open to the public!

Program Chair—Bruce Walgren

ALONG THE PATHWAY WITH HARRY



Sorry folks, I missed the last newsletter. Army National Guard duty prevented myself from having Internet access to keep in touch with Rose-Mary and Plains & Peaks.

So, I'm back in Casper trying to get ready for winter. I must say, I prefer the weather in Casper to the 90+ heat and humidity in Iowa. While there, it felt like I was drier taking a shower than while walking around outside. At least the shower had cool water to make up for the constant heat.

Anyway, I'm back and already thinking of the coming winter and CBC. Lately, we've had an early wet snow which has brought down many trees and tree branches. I hope no one suffered injuries and damage to home or property. While driving around for my job, I noticed many tree limbs that crushed cars and roof tops. At my own house, we lost only one tree and it was a Russian Olive. All our other trees fared much better, especially our Aspens. They did get pulled down, and

I nearly cried when I saw them laying bent over to the ground, but after the snow melted, they sprung right back up!

I often wonder why trees don't get bigger and taller like the Giant Sequoias in California. The Giant Sequoias have trunks as big around as a small house. Huge mammoth trunks that have to be seen to be believed. Here at Bates Creek, you can see many trees that have endured many torturous seasons. The trees are twisted and look quite mangled from high winds and rough weather. They all seem to be the same height and look badly beaten.

Back to birding. I'm sure that birds will find our trees attractive for next spring and I'm glad the storm didn't hit while our feathered friends were nesting. I'll be planting more Aspens and conifers around my house as it really attracts the birds for back yard birding. Today, I saw a Gold Eagle drop down to the highway to help itself to a free road kill meal. I hope other drivers gave the bird wide berth because it was in the road. Anyway, it was my first eagle siting for this time of year on the side of the road.

Good Birding to all.

MAS President—Harry Martin

MURIE'S ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER - FEB. 8, 2013

The face behind the lava suit? Kenneth Warren Sims—better known as the "Lava Chaser"—just returned from DangerLab! There's only one place to really study a volcano and that's, inside a volcano.



Ken recently flew to New Zealand, heading for Antarctica, but got turned around in Christchurch due to government shut down. He needed to be there early to be able to land on safe sea ice; his project is now deferred by a year.

But, he states, that he looks forward to functioning as guest speaker for the Murie Audubon Banquet, February 08, 2014. The following day, Ken boards a plane for Sydney, Australia, where he will be keynote speaker at a geology conference. A geology professor at the University of Wyoming, Sims has been studying volcanoes for more than 20 years.

An article by Ed Yong, which appeared in the July/August 2013 issue of *Mental Floss Magazine* (Left Brain/Right Brain section), addressed Sims' experience on Nyirangongo, an active volcano on the eastern flank of Democratic Republic of Congo. In June 2010, Sims and his team climbed to the top of the 11,380 foot-high rim and rappelled into the volcanos 4,000 foot wide outer crater. They set up camp in the upper crater, descending periodically to collect samples of rock and gas. The risks are huge - every move must be meticulously planned.

It took the team 3 days to collect what they needed - Sims, however, had one final task. Back in Wyoming, he planned to build a time-line from his samples and he required "a zero-age sample": a piece of lava from the lava lake. Rappelling down, Sims hit crater bottom just as the lake suddenly shot lava over its walls. Ken suited up as he waited for the flow to subside. When he made it to the top of the inner ridge, he broke off a chunk of fresh lava - almost too hot to handle. He proceeded to the edge to peer into the lake itself. His thought, "It was like looking into the eye of God".

The evening will provide a closer look at Sims' experiences "chasing lava". Tickets will be available at the November general meeting for \$27.50 each or \$200.00 for a table of eight. You'll want to assure a "hot seat" for the annual Fundraiser. Dinner will feature a Traditional Tur-

key dinner.

Banquet Chair - Karen Anfang (472-0278)

FIELD TRIP

November 9 field trip. Meet at Morad Park at 9:00AM to go to the Gray Reef and Alcova area looking for migrant waterfowl. Dress for the weather.

Chris Michelson—234-8726

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Our ever faithful sponsors for *Audubon Adventure* are ONCE AGAIN showing their appreciation for this program. We have 73 classes enrolled this year. Fifty-four of those classes have been sponsored. What an unbelievable group of people. Your sponsorship is truly appreciated.

Those who have sponsored one class are: Beecher Strube, Mr. & Mrs. Frank McNeely, Mr. & Mrs. Jack MacRae, Ann and Wilmer Hines, Mrs. Inga Kutchins.

Those who have sponsored two or more classes are: Bob Yonts, Mr. & Mrs. Mike Mammon, Mr. Frank Odasz, Dr. & Mrs. Robert Narotzky, Mr. Jim Brown, Mrs. Mary Hein, Mr. & Mrs. Miguel Leotta, Ms. Barbara Bentzin, and Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Parson. All of these people have sponsored classes for many years. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

Education Chair - Ann Hines

THANK YOU!!!!

Avery special THANK YOU to the Murie Chapter members who came to the clean-up at EKW on October 19th.

Ann Hines

BIRD NOTES



It's the third week of October - it is cooler, spitting snow once in awhile, but not really winter yet. Here in Casper we have had enough serious frost to jump over most of the "season" of fall leaf colors. But Fall Migration Season is evident - good numbers of White-crowned Sparrows have been reported, flocks of Sandhill Cranes are being seen around Wyoming and western Nebraska, and a flock of Snow Buntings were seen at Keyhole State Park in northeast Wyoming. Large numbers of American White Pelicans were reported moving through eastern Nebraska. A Pacific Loon was seen at Lake Hattie west of Laramie, and 3 Mississippi Kites were seen in Cheyenne along with a Great Crested Flycatcher.

For the month of September, Wayne and I received 186 reports for the Yard Bird Project. 97 species were tallied from 76 locations in 20 states plus Yukon Territory. As is typical for this time of year, good numbers of warblers (8 species), sparrows (7 species), woodpeckers (7 species), raptors (8 species), and hummingbirds (7 species) were observed.

The most reported species in September was Wilson's Warbler. #2 was not quite so common, though definitely not unusual for this time of year - Sandhill Crane. Third place was a 5-way tie between White-crowned Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Clark's Nutcracker, Belted Kingfisher, and California Quail.

Wyoming Yard Birds

Casper: Ed Reish - Blue Jay, Gloria Lawrence - Lesser Yellowlegs, Jim Lawrence - Orange-

crowned Warbler, Karen Brown - Wilson's Warbler, Jim Brown - Wilson's Warbler, Chris Michelson - Black-and-white Warbler, Jan Whitney - American White Pelican, Donna Walgren - Blue Jay, Casper College Greenhouse - Brewer's Blackbird, Joanne Odasz - Downy Woodpecker, Frank Odasz - Western Wood-Pewee, Bruce Walgren - Cassin's Vireo; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges - Great Crested Flycatcher; **Douglas:** Billie Snell - White-breasted Nuthatch; **Dubois:** Anna Moscicki - Belted Kingfisher, Michael Kenney - Wilson's Warbler; **Edness Kimball Wilkins SP:** Chris Michelson - Yellow-throated Vireo; **Afton:** Louise Manwaring - Broad-tailed Hummingbird; **Sundance:** Jean Adams - Cedar Waxwing; **Buffalo:** Deane Bjerke - Wild Turkey; **Grand Teton NP:** Tammy Brown - Belted Kingfisher; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis - Cooper's Hawk, Bob Hargis - Lincoln's Sparrow; **Thermopolis:** Magnus Trembath - Spotted Towhee, Andrea Trembath - Killdeer, Cam Trembath - Golden Eagle; **Yellowstone NP:** Anna Moscicki - White-faced Ibis.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in September!!! We'll see how bird movements continue as Fall changes into Winter. Let us know what you have been seeing; email to Pi-ranga@bresnan.net or phone 234-7455. Donna Walgren

THOSE HAZARDOUS FLYING BIRDS

When a US Airways jet leaving Reagan National for New York struck birds as it took off, it had to return to Washington. A JetBlue flight departing from Westchester County Airport was rerouted after colliding with birds. Ditto for another JetBlue flight leaving Kennedy Airport.

Planes hit birds all the time. That doesn't typically mean captains have to glide crippled jets onto a river as Capt. Chesley Sullenberger III famously did in January 2009. But a number of collisions have led to crashes, with some deaths. The

Federal Aviation Administration says more than 9,000 birds are struck annually, a figure that's increasing every year, with the total probably twice as large when unreported hits are included.

Over the past 23 years, bird strikes have forced an average of one plane a day to land prematurely, according to the F.A.A.

Since US Airways Flight 1549 went down in the Hudson River after its engines were disabled by geese, the Agriculture Department has been working to reduce the number of geese near airports nationwide. The agency says that every year approximately 25,000 Canada geese have been cornered into cages, carted off and slaughtered. Local governments have also enhanced land management in and around airports to reduce the presence of certain species.

Still, the number of Canada geese sucked into jet engines nationwide in 2012 was the same as it was in 2009. In spite of government action, many experts agree the skies are no safer from bird strikes now than they were when Capt. Sullenberger's plane went into the water after a bird strike.

One reason: the sheer scale of the bird population. It's illusory to think we can sufficiently regulate the environment and kill our way out of this problem.

While we should always practice smart land-use and wildlife management, even the former national coordinator of the Agriculture Department's Airport Wildlife Hazards Program, Richard Dolbeer, recently concluded, "management actions at and in the immediate vicinity of airports do little to mitigate the risk of off-airport strikes during departure and approach." He said new technologies like avian radar should be more vigorously pursued.

The basic technology has been around for decades and has been partially tested at many airports including Kennedy. And yet not one civilian airport in the United States has installed a fully integrated network that would allow air traffic controllers to respond in real time.

Akin to weather radar, such units cost about \$2.5 million for a large airport like J.F.K. The industry in the United States is estimated to lose \$700 million each year because of bird strikes.

Skeptics like Edwin Herricks, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, who has helped coordinate the F.A.A.'s testing of avian radar across the United States, say it's not ready for use. As in the early years of wind shear gauges, he found systems can generate false positive as well as false negative results because of limitations in distinguishing target information.

Advocates of avian radar, like Siete Hamminga, head of the Dutch radar manufacturer Robin Radar, disagree. He explains that his system can identify "avian airspeed, flight path, wing-beat frequency and pattern to create a species fingerprint that can trigger alerts when birds are six miles away." His system is currently being tested at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, targeting geese.

In Israel, the issue is a particularly urgent matter because the country sits in the middle of major intercontinental avian migratory routes that twice a year bring 500 million birds passing overhead.

Avian radar combined with the study of migratory and weather patterns has helped reduce Israeli Air Force bird strikes by 76 percent over the past 30 years.

Prof. Yossi Leshem, a senior researcher in Tel Aviv University's zoological department, who spearheaded the effort to mitigate strikes, says avian radar can track very small birds 12 miles away and larger birds like geese 60 miles out.

Once significant risk is determined, air traffic controllers could then temporarily delay takeoffs or redirect planes under 3,500 feet — the space in which virtually all bird strikes happen.

Had avian radar been fully in place at La Guardia Airport when Captain Sullenberger took off, Professor Leshem contends that his plane

would probably not have collided with the large migratory geese flying at 3,000 feet.

Avian radar effectiveness was substantiated in a 2011 Department of Defense study that found systems could simultaneously track extensive information about more than 100 targets from around six miles away and up to 3,000 feet. Detection is 50 times greater than human observers, and data are seamlessly communicable with other airports to enhance awareness of avian movements.

So without avian radar, how are pilots warned about birds? With general warnings from control towers that essentially say, be careful out there, we see some birds.

This is flying with eyes wide shut. We can develop protocols for ironing out system imperfections as we go so as to better protect passengers and reduce the slaughter of wildlife both on the ground and in the air. But we shouldn't wait for the next catastrophic event before beginning to install integrated avian radar systems.

The annual cost of being an individual or family 'Friend' will be a donation of \$10 or more. Benefits include: Free monthly programs, free field trips, subscription to the monthly *Plains and Peaks* newsletter (also, available at www.murieaudubon.org). Your name is not shared with other organizations. All of your funds are used locally. Check all that apply.

- \$10 One year
- Audubon Adventures (\$45.65 each classroom)
- Other (Designate) \$ _____
- WyoBirds Listserve (An amount of your choosing) \$ _____

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Make checks payable to Murie Audubon Society and mail to: Murie Audubon Society, PO Box 2112, Casper, WY 82602. ATTN: Treasurer.

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