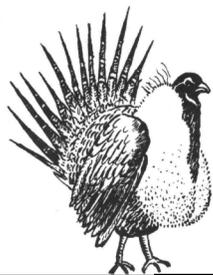


PLAINS & PEAKS



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MURIE AUDUBON

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PLATTE RIVER REVIVAL

Members of the Platte River Revival Advisory Committee including Brian Connelly, Jolene Martinez, and Colin Tierney will present and answer questions about the Platte River Revival and how it will improve habitat along the river at our April 11 meeting.

The Platte River Revival, simply stated, is a North Platte River restoration project for the 13.5 miles of river (and its banks) that traverse Casper. Its mission is to foster a healthy and sustainable river system that is a catalyst for economic development and improved quality of life. This legacy project, with multi-generational impact, is a project that is, at the same time, an economic development project, a conservation project, and a quality of life project.

The project began in 2007 with a volunteer day in conjunction with National Public Lands Day where citizens performed hands on restoration work, like removing Russian olives, planting native species trees,



CALENDAR

- April 11—General Meeting—7PM
- April 12—Hat Six Sage Grouse Lek—pg. 3
- April 17—General Bird ID—pg. 3
- April 21—Deadline for May newsletter articles
- April 24—Water Bird class—pg. 3
- May 3—Piggery cleanup—9AM—contact Bruce Walgren—pg. 7
- May 8—Birds of EKW—pg. 3
- May 9—General Meeting—7PM
- May 17—Cheyenne High Plains Big Day
- May 18—MAS Big Day—5:00AM—meet at Dori Lou's Place Restaurant—contact Bart Rea or Andrea Trembath—contact info pg. 7
- May 29—Raptors Class
- June 5—Casper Mtn. Bird Class

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and removing debris from the river and banks. A master plan was completed in 2012 and is guiding the second phase of the Revival, which will be in-river construction at seven sites, vegetation restoration along the banks in selected areas, and the annual volunteer day. Construction will begin in October 2014 and be completed in November 2014 for two of the seven sites.

Please join us on Friday, April 11 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!

Submitted by Jolene Martinez.

BRUCE WALGREN—PROGRAM CHAIR

HOUSE FINCH EYE DISEASE IN CASPER



Last month's article on feeder cleaning and disinfection mentioned salmonellosis, but I didn't talk about House Finch Eye Disease (mycoplasmal conjunctivitis), because there hasn't been much occurrence lately. However, a couple weeks ago, I received word of a House Finch with the disease found in downtown Casper. This is a very contagious condition, quickly passed from one bird to another. The major symptoms are red, swollen, runny or crusty eyes; the bird can quickly become vision impaired or totally blind. Some birds recover, but many die from starvation, exposure, and preda-

tion. House Finches are the usual victims, but the disease has been found in American Goldfinches, Purple Finches, and House Sparrows. Occurrence in these other species seems to show up only after contact with House Finches. The disease is more prevalent in sites using tube feeders than platform feeders.

Please monitor and clean all feeders frequently with a 10% bleach solution, rinse well, and allow feeders to dry completely before re-hanging. Also, space feeders to discourage crowding. In the long run, it is better not to feed at all, if you are not able to monitor and keep the feeders clean. It is a very upsetting feeling to see sick and blind (and dead) birds around your yard and feeders.

DONNA WALGREN

SPARROWS VS. WARBLERS

Here in Wyoming, warblers are still pretty scarce – but, chances of seeing sparrows are much better, (that's native sparrows we are talking about, not house sparrows – which aren't true sparrows). This reminded me of an article that Kenn Kaufman wrote a year ago in *Bird-Watcher's Digest*. He said something about waiting for winter to end, looking for signs of spring, while “warblers seem like rumors at best.” Then he notes, “just when I'm starting to get the bleak suspicion that winter will be permanent, I am saved by sparrows.” However, he does admit that “dedicated birders may have issues with sparrows, because these birds often can be hard to see and hard to identify. All the sparrows seem to have chosen their field marks from the same limited palette of streaks and spots.”

Since it is true that we won't be seeing many warblers for a while yet, perhaps we should take the opportunity to improve our birding skills by working on sparrow identification. Perhaps we should think of it as a challenge,

honing identification abilities by practicing on sparrows.

Warblers will really be numerous in May; by then our birding skills will be ready for all kinds of challenges. At this time, as Mr. Kaufman noted, “even if the sparrows are in their snappy best plumage, birders may push past them to look for warblers. Sad to say, for birders pursuing spring migration, not all birds are created equal.”

DONNA WALGREN

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

All *Audubon Adventures* teachers have been notified of their sponsor for the school year 2013-2014. Hopefully, sponsors will receive thank you notes. Thirty teachers have indicated that they wish to continue with the program again next year. I am in the process of contacting the teachers for the second time rather than wait until the fall to contact all of them. I will make another attempt before school is dismissed for the year.

We are off to a good start for 2014 sponsors for Audubon Adventures. We Welcome and thank Rebekah Simon-Peter as a new sponsor—sponsoring one class.

ANN HINES—EDUCATION CHAIR

FIELD TRIP



Saturday April 12. Meet at 5:30 AM at the east side Safeway Parking lot for a trip to the Hat 6 Sage-Grouse Lek. The road to the Lek is an all weather road, so we can go even if it is muddy. This Lek is much reduced from what it was even 5 years ago, but there were still a dozen birds last year. The Sage-Grouse strutting is the most im-

pressive of any of the North American birds, and really worth getting up early to see. Call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for more information.

STACEY SCOTT—FIELD TRIP CHAIR

WHAT IS EBIRD?

eBird is a real-time, online bird checklist program. It has revolutionized the way the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. It was launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. Watch for the May *Plains and Peaks* newsletter to learn much more about eBird and for a workshop presented by Ted Floyd from the American Birding Association.

BRUCE WALGREN—PROGRAM CHAIR

BIRDING CLASSES

Murie Audubon volunteers will again be offering birding classes this spring to be held at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Regional office in Casper (3030 Energy Lane) in the Pronghorn Room. All classes start at 7:00PM and meeting times and places for the field trips will be announced at each class.

The first class will meet Thursday **April 17th** to talk about General bird ID, use of field guides and binoculars. The remaining schedule is as follows: **Thursday, April 24th – Waterfowl, Thursday, May 8th – birds of Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park, Thursday, May 29th – Raptors, and Thursday, June 5th – Casper Mountain birds.** The charge for each class is \$5.00/per person. There will be field trips on **Saturdays** following each class. Contact Ann Hines at 266-3160 for more information.

Submitted by Ann Hines & Bruce Walgren.

MURIE BOARD NOMINATIONS



We are taking nominations of people to serve on Murie Audubon's Board of Directors. If you know someone who would like to serve on the Board, please contact Donna Walgren or any board member (contact info on the last page of this newsletter). We also are looking for someone to serve as Secretary.

The slate will be in the May newsletter and the election will be held at the May General meeting—May 9.

DONNA WALGREN

BIO BLITZ 2014 SAVE THE DATE

Audubon Rockies 2014 Bioblitz will take place on June 20-22 at the Red Canyon Ranch near beautiful Lander, WY. Details to come soon!

BIRDING FESTIVALS

May 14-18: Spring Into Yellowstone Birding and Wildlife Festival: Cody, WY. Join the Meadowlark Audubon Society, in connection with the Cody Chamber of Commerce, for an exciting festival in picturesque northwest Wyoming. The festival will feature a trade show held at the world renowned Buffalo Bill Center of the West, guided field trips and interactive seminars led by some of the biggest names in birding and nature photography, as well as some of the top regional biologists.

More info at <http://www.springintoyellowstone.com/>. Or Tia

Brown, Events Coordinator, Cody Chamber of Commerce, (307) 587-2777, events@codychamber.org.

May 15-19: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival: Salt Lake City, UT. Attend the 16th annual Festival and enjoy a variety of activities and field trips for all ages and skill levels. Come listen to keynote speaker Tom Boucher, the Nature Conservancy's Conservation Geographer and expert birder. Register early, since many field trips fill very quickly. Please come and join this fun and educational event. Contact email (tour@co.davis.ut.us) or call: (801) 451-3286 for more information.

June 6-8: Wings Under the Big Sky Bird Festival: Bozeman, MT. Montana Audubon's 2014 Bird Festival is coming to the spectacular Gallatin Valley! With Sacajawea Audubon, our partner, we are planning diverse field trips, a fun Friday evening kick-off event, dynamic speakers, and more activities to engage bird enthusiasts. The festival will be headquartered at Bozeman's Best Western GranTree Inn. For more information email the festival coordinator Cathie Erickson (cerickson@mtaudubon.org).

September 26-28: Cheyenne High Plains Audubon's 40th Anniversary: Cheyenne, WY (Laramie County Community College). Meet Audubon Rockies regional staff, unite around the Central Flyway and see what you can do for the birds, and recognize our history of achievement as we launch into an exciting and challenging future.

- **Brian Rutledge**, Executive Director, **Audubon Rockies**, VP of the Central Flyway, *Saturday lunch keynote speaker*
- **John Fitzpatrick**, Lois Agassiz Fuertes Director, **Cornell Lab of Ornithology**, *Saturday evening banquet speaker*
- **Ted Floyd**, Birding magazine Editor, **American Birding Association**; Author, **Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America**, *Early Saturday morning field trip leader to the Wyoming Hereford Ranch IBA*

- **Also attending:** Audubon Rockies policy and education staff, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Wyoming Game and Fish Department Non-Game Program, and UW Biodiversity Institute.
- **Kids activities:** There will be kids activities ran by Audubon Rockies during the speakers. **Friday, Sept. 26:** Afternoon **field trip** to the Lions Park IBA and evening **social**. **Sunday, Sept. 28:** morning workshops on **chapter leadership** and **the Strategic Plan**.

For more information: Contact Barb Gorges (bgorges4@msn.com) or Dusty Downey (ddowney@audubon.org), or Cheyenne High Plains website at <http://home.lonetree.com/audubon/>.



BIRD NOTES

As we make our way into April, hoping Spring is on its way, Wyoming weather seems to be ever more unpredictable, (even more than usual!!!). But bird activity is picking up a bit. People are starting to report bluebird sightings; flocks of robins are moving around; a Spotted Towhee was seen in Saratoga; and waterfowl reports are increasing. Celene Kirkendall reported a Sharp-shinned Hawk in North Casper; Zach Hutchinson found Tundra Swans at Goldeneye Reservoir, and he also had a Turkey Vulture west of Casper, Susan Patla from Jackson noted a Golden Eagle and a Peregrine

Falcon returning to the nest cliffs. Also, Rich Weaver saw 18 Bald Eagles plus a few Goldeneyes at Goldeneye. We are finally getting more reports of Pine Siskins – Ann Hines had some in Casper, and Jean Adams had 50+ up in Sundance!

Yard Birds for February

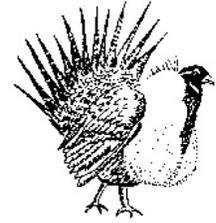
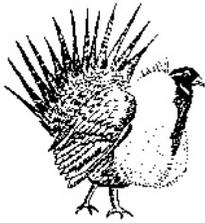
For the month of February, I received 24 reports from 13 locations in 6 states plus the Yukon. Our most reported species was Pine Siskin, so there does seem to be more of these little guys around. Here is the list of what we have:

Casper, WY: Ann Hines – Pine Siskin, Joanne Odasz – Downy Woodpecker, Frank Odasz – Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon), Bart Rea – Pine Siskin, Casper College Greenhouse – American Robin, Bruce Walgren – Black-capped Chickadee, Barb Yonts – House Finch, Bob Yonts – Dark-eyed Junco, Chris Michelson – Pine Siskin, Donna Walgren – Blue Jay; **Glenrock, WY:** Cam Trembath – Canada Goose; **Buffalo, WY:** Deane Bjerke – Cooper's Hawk; **Gillette, WY:** Verna Hays – Sharp-shinned Hawk; **Evansville, WY:** Bruce Walgren – Mountain Bluebird; **Pacific Creek, WY:** Helen Bishop – Steller's Jay, Dave Bishop – Black-billed Magpie; **Gold Canyon, AZ:** Andrea Trembath – Gambel's Quail, Magnus Trembath – Gilded Flicker; **Olathe, KS:** Nick Varvel – Great-tailed Grackle; **Arnold, MO:** Jim Jackson – Northern Flicker (yel-sh.); **Bellevue, NE:** Clem Klaphake – Fox Sparrow; **Scottsbluff, NE:** Lonnie Frimann – American Woodcock; **Myrtle Beach, SC:** Richard Rosche – Yellow-breasted Chat; **Whitehorse, YT:** Bruce Bennett – Common Redpoll.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in February!!! Let us know what you are seeing (or NOT seeing for that matter); email to Piranga@bresnan.net or phone 234-7455.

Donna Walgren

HELP SUPPORT MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY BY BECOMING A "FRIEND OF MURIE AUDUBON"



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) \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

E-Mail Address _____

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

(Use your printer to print just this page, fill out, and send to the above address.)