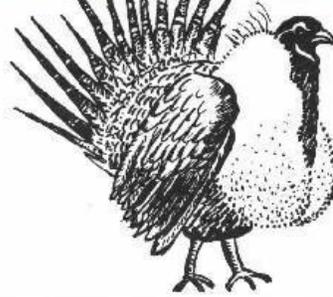


Murie Audubon Society



MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER HISTORY

On Saturday, August 28, 2004 Murie's 50th Anniversary was celebrated at the Isaac Walton Club House in Casper, Wyoming

In February, 1954, a group of 29 people with a passion for birds, wildlife, and conservation got together and decided to form a Wyoming chapter of the National Audubon Society. Some of them had already been participating in Christmas Bird Counts for National Audubon. (The first Casper CBC took place in January, 1949.) Thus, the Wyoming Audubon Society came into being.

Charter Members:

Mary Arnold	Travis Look
Alice Bennett	Mrs. Dean C. Morgan
F. Howard Brady	Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Pummill
L. R. Burkhart	Mrs. Louis C. Rognstad
Mrs. Pearl Burns	Dr. and Mrs. Oliver K. Scott
Mary Dille	Helen Sherard
Mrs. L. R. Earnshaw	Mildred O. Snyder
Mrs. William Earnshaw	Maury M. Travis
E. Sue Gloriod	Mrs. Myra B. Waltman
Mrs. Edith Hegwer	Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Warkley
Victor Jacquot	Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Yant
Elmer E. Johnson	Howard Yant
R. B. Lange	

As time went by, the group began to refer to themselves as the Casper chapter of the Wyoming Audubon Society; and eventually, they officially changed the name to the Murie Audubon Society.

SODA LAKE AKA Yant's Puddle - in 1957, Amoco Oil Company built a pipeline to discharge refinery wastewater north of Casper to what is now known as Soda Lake using the expertise of Amoco engineer Joe Yant. To the surprise of many, this body of water developed into excellent waterfowl and shorebird habitat.

BECOMING MURIE AUDUBON - excerpted from "WYOMING AUDUBON SOCIETY - Proposal to Amend Name to Murie Audubon Society" written by Bart Rea, April 24, 1970

The history of conservation in America contains certain names which stand out in popular knowledge and affection. Included in this list are Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Ernest Thompson Seton, Aldo Leopold, and the Murie family: Olaus, Margaret, and Adolph. Why are these names so familiar? There have been many other noted naturalists, prolific writers, accomplished

nature artists and photographers, and leaders of conservation organizations. The Muries are all of these, but more importantly, they are philosophers; it is this that puts them in a special class.

Olaus, the elder, and Adolph, the younger brother, were born and raised in Moorhead, Minnesota, a community of Norwegian immigrants across the Red River from Fargo, North Dakota. Their careers have paralleled and complimented each other ever since, even to the extent of marrying sisters, Olaus to Margaret and Adolph to her younger sister, Louise.

Margaret's book, *Two in the Far North*, is the fascinating story of their courtship and early married life in the hinterland of Alaska. Since her husband's death, Margaret has continued his work in the capacity of "Wilderness Consultant" to the Wilderness Society and by publication of *Wapiti Wilderness*, a book about their experiences in the Teton Park area.

Olaus began his work with expeditions to Hudson Bay and Labrador to collect specimens for the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Following action as an aerial observer with the Balloon Service of the Army Air Corps during World I, Olaus joined the US Biological Survey, now the Fish and Wildlife Service. For the next twenty-five years he was engaged in ecological studies throughout western North American and other parts of the world. The culmination of these studies was his book, *The Elk of North America*. It was in 1927, while conducting the elk study in Yellowstone Park and Jackson Hole, that Olaus and Margaret moved their family to Wyoming.

One of the founders of the Wilderness Society in 1935, Olaus resigned from government service in 1945 to become director of the Society. He led the Wilderness Society as director, president, and council chairman until his death in 1963.

Beyond their unwavering devotion to the cause of preservation of wilderness areas, beyond their leadership in the development, application and popularization of the new science of ecology, the Muries have achieved a special niche in the list of great conservationists by their efforts to open the eyes of their fellow men to the beauties of nature and to open their minds to an understanding of the critical interrelationships of Man and his environment on this earth.

Their philosophy can perhaps be summarized by the quotation over the fireplace at the ranch at Moose:

"The wonder of the world,
The beauty and power, the shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades;
These I saw.
Look ye also while life lasts."

This remarkable family, which has done so much for conservation, has honored us by adopting Wyoming as their home. We, who are trying to do a little for conservation, can acknowledge that honor by adopting their name for our society. It seems highly appropriate that during this "Earth Week" we amend our name to "The Murie Audubon Society."

THE EAGLE KILLINGS - excerpted from Brief Chronology by Phoebe Holzinger
-- from *Plains and Peaks*, August 1971

May 1, 1971 - Bruce Wampler and Gordon Krause made a grisly find of 7 dead eagles, both golden and bald, in Jackson Canyon southwest of Casper, and reported it to Bob Turner, Rocky Mountain Regional Representative of National Audubon, and Murie Audubon Society members.

May 2 - A search party of Audubon members guided by Krause and Wampler found 6 more dead eagles. Charles Callison, Executive Vice-President of National Audubon, requested an investigation by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

May 5 - Eagle carcasses mailed in dry ice to Patuxent, Maryland, for laboratory analysis.

May 9 - John Turner, Teton Co. legislator, reported 25 eagles piled in a ditch near Rawlins - all shot.

May 20 - Thallium indicated as cause of Jackson Canyon eagle deaths. Thallium is 4 times as toxic as arsenic, 1 gram can kill a 155-lb. man. It has not been used in the federal predator control program since 1967 because it is so dangerous to handle and is non-selective.

May 23 - Gov. Hathaway asked Board of Agriculture to remove thallium sulfate from Wyoming list of registered pesticides. 15 dead eagles found beneath power lines near Worland - electrocuted. State of Wyoming doing an independent analysis of eagle bodies.

May 27 - Two eagles found near Rock Springs showed presence of thallium: 1 found near Hanna and 1 near Rawlins. Of 3 eagles found near Cheyenne, 2 had been shot.

May 28 - Charles Lawrence, Chief of Enforcement for the US Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, has talked with 6 ranchers who bought thallium. Four had used the poison - 3 from Natrona Co. and 1 from Converse Co. It had been shipped to them by freight. American Smelting and Refining Co. is the only firm licensed to sell it in Wyoming.

May 29 - Three thallium-baited traps were found within 11 miles of Jackson Canyon - antelope carcasses baited with an extraordinary amount of thallium, according to Lawrence.

June 2 - State Board of Agriculture removed thallium sulfate from the list of registered pesticides for 6 months pending further study.

June 3 - Mrs. John Dobos, testifying before the Senate Agricultural Appropriations subcommittee, presented a statement from Murie Audubon recommending that only species-specific predator control be allowed. Environmental Protection Agency prohibited the use of thallium sulfate for predator control. This means that the poison will not be shipped in interstate commerce.

June 18 - Four persons charged with a total of 114 game violations stemming from the thallium poisoning of eagles. Charges include hunting without a license, hunting out of season, abandoning a game animal, and using a game animal (antelope) as bait. Charged were: Van Irvine, Lee Irvine, Carlie Wells, Michael Ryan, and a fifth man living in Pennsylvania. Natrona County Attorney John Burk said that carcasses of 7 antelope found on the Diamond Ring ranch were loaded with enough thallium sulfate to kill every animal in the state.

July 13 - Van Irvine pleaded nolo contendere (no contest) to the 29 charges filed against him and was fined the minimum amount on all charges - \$675 plus \$4 court costs. At his request, charges were dropped against the four other men in the case.

July 17 - Bruce Von Ferrell, president of the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association, asked for a joint effort of cattlemen, sheepmen, sportsmen, and ecologists "to protect themselves against these predators that are destroying the whole industry as well as the vulnerable game population predators.:

July 18 - Dr. Oliver Scott, president of Murie Audubon, commented that the \$679 fine paid by Van Irvine seems very light when compared with the \$6800 fines paid a short time ago for the kidnapping of 4 moose in northwestern Wyo. The statement noted that Irvine is a prominent local whose holdings drew a federal wool subsidy of almost \$100,000 last year. We were horrified by the fact that following the conviction, County Attorney John Burk rushed to the press to congratulate Irvine by stating that it is "difficult not to respect and admire him for insisting on taking sole responsibility." This statement was made in spite of the fact that Van Irvine actually took no responsibility and admitted nothing. He pleaded nolo contendere to the game violation charges that had been made against him and he was fined the minimum amount on all 29 charges, Scott said.

July 21 - Three dead eagles found near Casper; total now more than 50.

August 3 - Helicopter pilot James O. Vogan told Senator Gale McGee and the Agricultural and Environmental subcommittee of the deliberate slaughter of 569 eagles on Wyoming ranches. Vogan said the eagles were shot between September 1970 and early April 1971. The bulk of the eagles were shot on Herman Werner's Bolton Ranch near Rawlins. Also killed were 222 coyotes, 6 elk, 5 bobcats, 1 bear and several deer and antelope. Charles Lawrence testified that there were no permits issued for the taking of eagles in Wyoming during the period covered by Vogan's testimony.

August 4 - Vogan, today in testimony, estimated that nearly 800 eagles had been killed from the air during the past year. He testified that he knew of two checks totaling \$15,000 paid to his employer, Doyle Vaughn, by Casper rancher Herman Werner. Eagles brought \$25 a head, while coyotes were \$50 each.

August 5 - Decomposed bodies of about 60 eagles were found in a mass grave on the Bolton Ranch.

Material in this summary was taken from newspaper accounts. Coverage has not been only by Wyoming and Colorado papers, but by papers in New York, Florida, Alaska, California, Oklahoma, in the *National Observer*, in *Colorado* magazine, on national television and other news media.

THE PIGGERY - In 1972, Murie acquired 4.6 acres along the North Platte River just off of CY Avenue as a bird sanctuary.

GRIZZLY SYMPOSIUMS - In 1984 and 1985, under the leadership of Walt Mersch, Murie hosted seminars on the ecology and conservation of Grizzly Bears with an impressive array of speakers, including Tim Clark and John and Frank Craighead.

BIRD HOSPITAL - For over 30 years, Lois and Frank Layton (with the help of volunteers) have operated Murie's Bird Hospital and Rehabilitation Center, taking in injured birds, caring for them, then releasing them back into the wild; if they can't be released, the birds are used as education birds or placed in another education facility or zoo.

For their many years of dedication to wildlife conservation, Lois and Frank have been inducted into the Wildlife Heritage Foundation's Wyoming Outdoor Hall of Fame.

"Conservation through Education" - Early on, our organization decided that community outreach was one of our most important activities; and there have been many volunteer hours spent working with

elementary school classes, scout groups, etc. and giving presentations to many diverse audiences on various conservation topics. Another aspect of our education outreach has been sponsoring *Audubon Adventures*, a newsletter of conservation-oriented topics designed for 4th through 6th grades. Also included in our education endeavors are presentations on birds using birds from the Bird Hospital that cannot be released back into the wild.