



MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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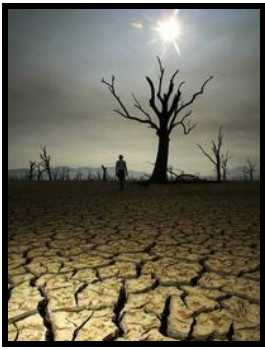


CALENDAR

- November 9: Energy Futures: Global Changes the Challenge Wyoming - Alternative Energy, Transmission, Conservation, and Demand Management, 7 PM at Casper College in the Wheeler Auditorium.
- November 10: Monthly Program - Climate Change in Wyoming and its Ecological Consequences: Past, Present, and Future Presented by Dr. Stephen Jackson, Professor of Botany, University of Wyoming, 7 PM at the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission Building.
- November 14: Banquet Committee Mtg. – 6 PM – ACGC
- November 14: Board Meeting – 7 PM – ACGC
- November 16: Energy Futures: Global Changes the Challenge Wyoming - Ultimate Brew for the Future, 7 PM at Casper College in the Wheeler Auditorium.
- November 27: Newsletter article deadline for Dec./Jan.
- December 16: Casper Christmas Bird Count
- January 1, 2007: Bates Hole Christmas Bird Count
- Feb. 17 – Annual Banquet
- Feb. 16-19 – Great Backyard Bird Count

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CLIMATE CHANGE IN WYOMING AND ITS ECOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The ongoing drought and the epic fire season of 2006 highlight our vulnerability to climate change. Studies of climatic and ecological history spanning the past 25,000 years show that climate change is not new to Wyoming. The past thousand years have witnessed droughts far more severe and persistent than anything we've experienced in the past century. Climatic shifts of even greater magnitude are recorded in the more distant past. These events have variously mobilized dune fields, dried up lakes, altered wildfire regimes, and driven invasions and extinctions of native plant species in the region.

Since climate change is a natural part of the world we live in, should we relax in the face of potential future change, whether driven by natural or human causes? The natural resources we depend on for economic security, recreation, and enjoyment – water, forests, rangelands, fisheries, wildlife – are all susceptible to disruption by climate variation and change. We can't afford to ignore our vulnerability. We have to live with the ever-present threat of natural climate change, but careful planning can help minimize our risks. Human-caused climate change, driven by greenhouse-gas emissions, poses a very real threat to vital natural resources in the region. Fortunately, this is a source of climate change that is potentially within our power to control.

Dr. Stephen Jackson, Professor of Botany and Director of the Program in Ecology at the University of Wyoming will be our guest speaker at the November monthly membership meeting. Dr. Stephen Jackson studies the effects of environmental change on forests, woodlands, and wetlands. His current research is focused on how plant populations and communities have responded to past and ongoing climate change and variability. His most recent work has documented the dynamics of Great Lakes forests and Rocky Mountain woodlands over the past 6000 years. These systems have experienced repeated species invasions and extinctions, and population expansions and declines, in response to regional and continental changes in temperature and precipitation. These dynamics provide model systems for understanding how ecological systems will change in response to ongoing and future climate changes. Dr. Jackson is committed to exploring the management, policy, and forecasting implications of these long-term records.

Join us on Friday, November 10, 2006 at 7 pm at the Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Building at 2211 King Blvd. The program is free and open to the public.

Bruce Walgren-Program Chair



BRUCE'S BRANCH

I was recently reminded of how lucky we are to live in Wyoming. A friend had assisted a fellow birder from Great Britain find some target species while he was vacationing in Wyoming. The vacationer shared his birding diary with my friend and one of the most significant observations he wrote about was the wide open spaces and unpopulated areas that he found in Wyoming. Occasionally, we need to be reminded of how nice it is to be able to find wide open spaces where we can enjoy being essentially alone with the creatures and plants that live there.

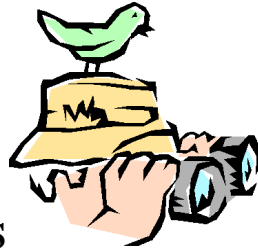
Recently the population of the United States surpassed 300 million people. With only 500 thousand people in Wyoming, it is indeed a good place to live. A brief perusal of a Wyoming road map revealed only 17 towns and cities in the state with populations of 5,000 or more. I recently checked the census records in a 2006 edition of a World Almanac and the numbers create an interesting picture of our nation. The coastal states are where most of the people are located, and I guess that's why whenever there is bad weather in those areas, the whole country sees it on the news. A blizzard, tornado or flood out here in the west just isn't newsworthy. That's OK with me, I enjoy the solitude. We must, however, keep in mind that if we want to keep our open spaces, that we have to impress upon our public leaders that open spaces are important to us and to keep it that way.

We certainly have had a pleasant fall season. The killing frosts and first snows seem to be coming later in the season than just a few years ago. The fall colors in town inspired me to try getting some pictures, but unfortunately I waited too late and a windy day blew most of the color off the trees.

A lot of the bird species have already moved through and a few winter species are arriving. Tree Sparrows and Rough-legged Hawks have been seen, and I suspect that winter waterfowl will be arriving soon.

As you make your plans for the holidays, don't forget the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts; Casper on December 16 and Bates Hole on January 1.

Until next month – Bruce Walgren



BIRD NOTES

Winter has had some "fits and starts" in Wyoming – we've had a couple mediocre snowstorms and freezing temps (most of our gardens have given up by now!!!) Bird sightings are also indicating the beginnings of seasonal change – Bob Hargis reported American Tree Sparrows at Ocean Lake and a Rough-legged Hawk in the St. Stephens area. Jean Adams in Sundance has had Harris's Sparrows at her feeder, and she also reported her first tree sparrow and a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. Flocks of Sandhill Cranes have also been seen around the state.

September Yard Birds – For the month of September, Wayne and I received 170 yard bird selections from 20 states and the Yukon with 81 different species reported. Fall warblers have been working their way south (10 species were reported), and White-crowned Sparrow sightings are now increasing. The most reported yard bird for September was Yellow-rumped Warbler, with White-crowned Sparrow coming in second. Third place was a tie between Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker (both of which were mostly reported in Montana). **Casper:** Jim Herold – Brewer's Blackbird, Chris Michelson – Yellow-rumped Warbler, Sandy/Miguel Leotta – Black-billed Magpie, Rose-Mary King – Wilson's Warbler, Gloria Lawrence – Clay-colored Sparrow, Jim Lawrence – Townsend's Warbler, Bruce Walgren – Clay-colored Sparrow, Donna Walgren – American Kestrel; **Cheyenne:** Barb Gorges – Swainson's Thrush; **Evanston:** Patti Gorman – House Finch (yellow morph); **Lovell:** Glen Olsen – Yellow Warbler; **Riverton:** Suzanne Hargis – Mountain Bluebird, Bob Hargis – American Redstart; **Sundance:** Jean Adams – Harris's Sparrow.

Thanks to all who helped with the Yard Bird Project in September!! Colder weather will no doubt bring some different birds into yard. Send your yard bird for October to Donna Walgren (ph. 234-7455), 4311 S. Center St., Casper, WY 82601, or email to Piranga@bresnan.net.

Donna Walgren

21ST ANNUAL BANQUET PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2007



Dr. Charles R. Preston, Chief Curator of the five museums of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and the Founding Curator-in-Charge of the Draper Museum of Natural History in Cody, WY will be our guest speaker for our annual banquet fund raiser. Dr. Preston's presentation, entitled "A View to a Kill", will explore the predatory life of the Golden

Eagle.

The Casper Petroleum Club will once again be the location of the banquet. The tickets are \$25 each (a table of 8 is \$175.00) and will be available at the November membership meeting and from any Board member.

Contact Rose-Mary at 577-0568 to help with planning or to donate raffle and/or silent auction items.

Bruce Walgren

BOLSA CHICO WETLANDS

"At the Bolsa Chica, who knows what ecstasy this birding trip may bring.

At the Bolsa Chica, where birds fly freely on the wing....."

I had the rare occasion to visit Bolsa Chica wetlands this past early fall (Autumn to some), or was that late summer, at which time I was attending a memorial service for my oldest brother. I've visited Bolsa Chica a number of times over the years, but always in the spring & never in the fall of the year. I'm so happy I took the time to do so this fall as it is slowly changing in form from the place I knew. The bridge across the water from the parking lot has been either rebuilt or had the zigzag taken out of it.

There is a definite uplift to the main path through the observation area, so now one is able to observe the birds looking at a downward angle. I guess you would call all this improvement. On my walk with my two granddaughters, Jennifer & Stacia, & my two great granddaughters, Charlotte & Emma, I saw a number of birds that I have seen in past springs, i.e., great blue heron, great & snowy egrets, least, Caspian, & elegant terns, gulls, brown pelican, willet, and Belding's savannah sparrow. As an aside, a stingray was pointed out to me. However, one new bird for the area stood out among the terns, it was the black skimmer (L 18", W 44"). I recognized it immediately as I have seen it a few times along the coast of Texas. It is certainly an unusual bird as no other bird has a lower jaw mandible longer than the upper mandible. In an inactive state, it looks much like other terns except



for that big bill. You might compare it with black, sooty, bridled, & white-winged terns, but once in action there should be no problem in recognizing it as it furrows the shallow waters with its long, lower mandible, some how sending food to the upper mandible area & down the hatch. At least I think that is the way it goes. Must be truly efficient. I did get to see it in action at close range - what a display. Remind me to do a study. I was carried away by this bird to the neglect of other birds, but I hadn't seen it in 7-8 years. To make it even more intriguing, I was so close to it at Bolsa Chica, that I didn't need binoculars & only used them to highlight the bird's furrowing. Less I mislead anyone,

this wasn't just a single bird as there were probably 6-7 black skimmers present. I just didn't stop to count them. I have never seen this bird at Bolsa Chica before, probably because it is only suppose to show up during the winter. Maybe these birds were "Early Birds".

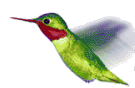
There were a few other surprises to make my birding day - common yellowthroat, eared grebes, marbled godwit & the least & western sandpipers. I don't remember seeing marbled godwit there in the spring. Usually the sandpipers are so far away that you need a scope to see them but these were so close at hand that I could use my binoculars to identify them. I was surprised not to sight any ducks.

Bolsa Chica wetlands aren't too far from the sea. Pacific Coast Highway borders it on the west. You drive into beach parking lots off it. There are maintenance building, life guard headquarters, restrooms, & places to change well in sight of Bolsa Chica. Then from these buildings a bit of sand 50-75 yards in width before it encounters the ocean. The ocean contains a number of oil platforms all within seeing distance. Out to sea on a clear day you can see Catalina Island. There are still active oil wells on land near the wetlands. A number of active wells within the wetlands have been capped as part of agreements in present days, but that is another story. To the north and east is the encroachment of civilization. I do believe it is a great haven for bird & marine life & a justifiable nature reserve.



As far as I can gather, Bolsa Chica Wetlands contain an approx. 600 acres. It has been struggling to exist since 1978, I believe. Hopefully it has put behind much of the struggle & can look forward to a very successful future. Newly restored wetlands were set to meet the sea for the first time in more than 100 years during the week of August 20, 2006 (I think Thursday of that week was the day it happened). Once the sea water fills the Bolsa Chica wetlands, it is expected that an upsurge of birds will occur. Birds will feed on larvae, plankton, marine worms, clams, mollusk, anchovies, crabs, & other invertebrates. Mentioned as a key component of the salt marsh is pickleweed because it grows higher on the tide line than other plants. Another often mentioned plant is cord grass. Light-footed Clapper rail is famous for weaving floating nests out of cord grass. Some mentioned fish in the restored wetlands are: topsmelt, giant kelp fish, sand bass, California halibut, perch, & long-jawed mud suckers.

It is great to see the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve existing. All in all, it should become a highly attractive birding area, if it hasn't already. It has gone through a long struggle to reach this point in time and is deserving of all the attention it has gathered.



The Hummer (aka Jim Herold)

PICNIC LEFT-OVERS?

After our get-together at EKW for Murie's second annual picnic, Gloria Lawrence found some items that had been left behind: one very nice tan basket, and two yellow salt and pepper shakers. They are now at my house – call me (234-7455) or email me (Timperley-Walgren_AT_bresnanDOTnet) and we will get the items back to you.

And thanks again to Gloria and Ann Hines for making that picnic happen!!!!

Donna Walgren

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

The Audubon Adventures packets are now in the classrooms!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Teachers all across the country have to teach to "standards". A plus for the kits this year is a CD with the standards which are met through using Audubon Adventures. The CD covers several states, Wyoming being one of the states. This will be a plus for encouraging teachers to use the program.

We now have thirty-three classes sponsored for the year.



A thanks to: Jacqueline Warburton and Mrs. Grace Jenkins for sponsoring more than one class; Muriel and Frank McNeely, Donna and Terry Cleveland, Bobbie Roberts, Bonnie Lombardo, Phyllis McDaniel, Whitney Bradley, Jan and Herb Waterman, Marilyn Robinder, Hallie and Don Harris and Betty Young for sponsoring one class. All of the above have been faithful sponsors for many years.

Education Chair - Ann Hines

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER PRESENTATION

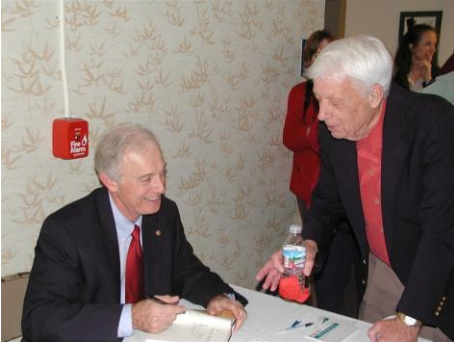
Tim Gallagher's presentation on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker sighting was given at Casper College's Durham Hall on September 26. Tim shared his long-time goal of documenting Ivory-billed sightings as well as the ultimate goal of actually seeing one of the birds himself with historical data and his own interviews of people who had seen the bird over the years since it was first listed as extinct. The pictures and accounts that Tim shared with the crowd were educational as well as entertaining. Approximately 250 people were in attendance, and while most of the people from the Casper area, there were people from Jackson Hole and Douglas, Wyoming as well as western Nebraska. A book signing after the presentation allowed the attendees to meet and visit with Dr. Gallagher. Refreshments were also available before and after the talk.

I would like to thank the sponsors of this event: The Casper College Biology Department, the Casper College Foundation, University of Wyoming/Casper College and

Murie Audubon Society. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Dale Von Riesen for originally suggesting that we contact Dr. Gallagher to come and speak to us – thanks Dale!

It was a fun evening and it was great to see so many people there.

Bruce Walgren



Dale Von Riesen has Dr. Gallagher sign a book.