

MURIE AUDUBON'S
PLAINS & PEAKS

February 2020 VOL. 54 ISSUE 2

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14 -17 Backyard Bird Count
Your Own Backyard

February 14 MAS Program- Backyard Bird Count
7pm at Izaak Walton Clubhouse, 4205 Fort Caspar
Road

SPECIAL FEATURES

Kid's Corner pg 2
Characteristics & Habitat

Crossword Puzzle pg 6
Wyoming Bird Families

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FIELD NOTES



Hello Everyone!

I recently traveled with some other Murie folks to Riverton to catch sight of the White-winged Crossbills. I must admit, I was totally on the fence about going on this road trip, mostly because I needed a Saturday to get caught up. But, boy, am I so glad I went.

Not only did we see the crossbills and many other species, but I was also impressed by Bob Hargis' hospitality. He and his wife gave us tours of great birding spots in Riverton and invited us to their home. My goodness, what a set-up they have! Feeders, homemade suet, dripping birdbaths, attracted so many birds! It was truly a respite for birds and humans.

This road trip made me think about our community. Not only, what type of community features are we offering birds at "The Piggery", but what types of community features are we offering our members? Are there opportunities for members to hang out and drink, visit, have a bite to eat, gather together, meet other birders, etc.? I think the answer is yes, but I wonder how we're communicating all these events to "bring the birds to the yard."

I challenge you all to think about how to build a community for both birds in their habitats and humans in our Murie organization.

Sincerely,
Jenny Edwards
President

KIDS CORNER



Is there a connection between bird characteristics and their habitat?

Shorebirds can be found in open shoreline habitats and typically have long legs and long, thin beaks. This spring migration will bring multiple shorebird species to Wyoming's aquatic ecosystems. The American avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) is one example. Compare it to the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), a songbird commonly found in Wyoming, and the specialized characteristics of the avocet become clear. The long, slender, curved beak, or bill, is very useful to probe for food in the sand, mud, gravel, and water. This is very different from the short beak of the robin, which is better suited for foraging in the forest or woodlands for things like insects and berries. Also, while the robin has short legs used to more or less hop around, the avocet uses its long legs to wade in the water and around the shoreline. You can look for the American Avocet and the American Robin in their habitats this spring and observe the differences in the ways they use their legs and beaks.

By Kelly Keenan

MURIE AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

February 15 - Great Backyard Bird Count field trip! We will meet at 6 am at Crossroads Park (N Poplar) to depart for The Brinton Museum in Big Horn. Carpooling will be available. The carpool will be back to Casper by 3 pm.

March 14 - Habitat Hero Workshop! Come learn about how to attract more birds to your yard by creating bird habitat with native plants! Cost is \$15. Meet at the Izaak Walton Club House (4205 For Caspar Rd) by 8:15 am. Register at <https://rockies.audubon.org/events/habitat-hero-workshop>.

April 11 - Waterfowl trip to Goldeneye! Join Murie Audubon leaders on a trip to Goldeneye Reservoir. Meet at 9 am at Game & Fish (3030 Energy Ln). We hope to see waterfowl diversity! Carpooling will be available.

May 9 - Goshen Hole! Spring migrants will be passing through, and we hope to see some of these treasures in the infamous Goshen Hole near Torrington! We will meet at the southeast end of the Menard's Parking Lot at 6:30 AM.

May 23 - Little Red Creek! This special field trip will go back into the unique habitat that is Little Red Creek. Murie leaders hope to find Virginia's Warbler and Black-throated Gray Warbler, among others. Meet at 7 am at Game & fish (3030 Energy Ln). Carpooling will be available.

June 13 - Owling in Dirty Shirt! This evening event hopes to find multiple species of owl on the west end of Casper Mountain. Meet at 8 pm at the entrance of Coal Mountain Road.

*Field trips are subject to change. The newsletter will announce these changes when possible.

By Zach Hutchinson

BATES HOLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

With 15 people in the field and 4 additional feeder watchers, the Bates Hole Christmas Bird Count was on January 1, 2020. This year was 30 to 40 degrees warmer than last year, but we did have a mild breeze rather than the normal dead calm. South of us the wind and snow made for very bad travel conditions, so the Highway Department closed Wyoming 220 at the intersection with Wyoming 487 until late afternoon. That closed part of the circle to owling, but we were able to use local roads to access the western part of the circle in the afternoon. Wyoming 220 was dry with only a mild breeze before you got to Alcova, so I don't know why they closed the highway; a real inconvenience to the residents from Alcova north to Wyoming 487.

The wet year was very apparent. The lands of the Two-bar, Garrett and Miles Land and Livestock ranches had a strong yellow color from all the grass above the snow (3 to 6 inches deep though out the circle). I don't ever remember seeing this much grass on the count in any prior year. The additional

vegetation might explain the good numbers of Rosy Finches, Tree Sparrows and Juncos. We suspect that the mouse numbers are down because the Owls and Rough-legged Hawks were down from prior years. The only rabbit that I saw was a half eaten one that a Goshawk flew off with. I didn't see any rabbit tracks in the snow, and the Golden Eagles were mostly found along the creeks, irrigated meadows and highways. The Sage-grouse numbers are down a little from recent years, but still a decent number compared to the years prior to 2000. The 53 species is a good number for Bates Hole, and the 2402 individual birds is also higher than average.

The only really unusual bird was a Black Duck seen by Ellis and Lewis Hein, Tony Martin, Stacey and Benaiah Scott. This bird has not been re-found, so it is hard to say that this duck is not a Mallard/Black Duck hybrid.

This list is in the order of the birds on Audubon's compiler form. ebird uses a different listing order, and the bird books use various other list orders. We really ought to standardize the order of birds, and not change it every time someone does a new DNA test.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Canada Goose | 250 | Gadwall | 2 |
| Black Duck | 1 | Mallard | 201 |
| Pintail | 1 | Common Goldeneye | 90 |
| Common Merganser | 2 | Ring-necked Pheasant | 1 |
| Gray Partridge | 12 | Greater Sage-grouse | 126 |
| Wild Turkey | 126 | Great Blue Heron | 1 |
| Golden Eagle | 21 | Northern Harrier | 2 |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | 1 | Northern Goshawk | 2 |
| Bald Eagle | 17 | Red-tailed Hawk | 2 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 4 | Wilson's Snipe | 6 |
| Rock Pigeon | 30 | Eurasian Collared Dove | 38 |
| Great Horned Owl | 4 | Belted Kingfisher | 2 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 1 | Flicker (Red-shafted) | 11 |
| Prairie Falcon | 1 | Northern Shrike | 1 |
| Pinyon Jay | 3 | Blue Jay | 1 |
| Black-billed Magpie | 232 | Clark's Nutcracker | 4 |
| American Crow | 7 | Common Raven | 29 |
| Horned Lark | 7 | Black-capped Chickadee | 3 |
| Mountain Chickadee | 1 | Dipper | 4 |
| Townsend's Solitaire | 6 | American Robin | 20 |
| European Starling | 102 | Cedar Waxwing | 1 |
| Tree Sparrow | 184 | Dark-eyed Junco | 119 |
| Harris's Sparrow | 1 | Song Sparrow | 10 |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 81 | Common Grackle | 1 |
| Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch | 450 | House Finch | 41 |
| Pine Siskin | 29 | American Goldfinch | 24 |
| House Sparrow | 87 | | |

By Stacey Scott

MURIE AUDUBON PROGRAM PRESENTS



THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Murie Audubon presents "The Great Backyard Bird Count". This unique citizen science event occurs every February. Everyone is encouraged to count birds for as little as 15 minutes a day, for four days in your own backyard to help expand our understanding of birds.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](https://www.cornell.edu/ornithology) and the [National Audubon Society](https://www.audubon.org) learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, more than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded. The 23rd annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 17, 2020. Please visit the official website at birdcount.org for more information and be sure to check out the latest [educational and promotional resources](#). Please join us on Friday, February 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Izaak Walton Clubhouse located at 4205 Fort Caspar Road for this educational program.

Wyoming Bird Families - Part I

M B J E Z M G A C C A P B H E E E H E K
J Y F F A X I I R L H O Y A Z A N I A A
J D F A W D N M C D M H D E D D Y R D H
L S P Z L C I E I B E I V I O I D U I F
N K E R L C D R Y D U I I R M L E N Z A
N E Z I Q I O C T R A H D F U A A D I L
D N D V N J I N G I T E R A D H D I R A
E A D I G L U M I R P A C I E T I N E U
E F D G L Q B F E D Z I L R I I I I B D
E A R I N D L C X H A A C J F G N D M I
E A D I K X M J U M N E V C G E A A E D
I A D I N E A D I I V A G G A A L E O A
E C D I T G E A D I I R A C L A C T E E
D O U F R R I R C H A R A D R I I D A E
P R N B H E A L C O L U M B I D A E D X
J V H H B C T H L E A D I L U C U C I Q
P I J Z Q R B C T I A P O D I D A E T K
C D H R S C Y B I A D L A R I D A E A Q
K A C O M D H D O N C A P A S Z P D N I
M E F G K C A E Z V U B E S S I H U A C

ACCIPITRIDAE AEGITHALIDAE ALAUDIDAE ALCEDINIDAE ANATIDAE
APODIDAE ARDEIDAE BOMBYCILLIDAE CALCARIIDAE CAPRIMULGIDAE
CARDINALIDAE CATHARTIDAE CERTHIIDAE CHARADRIIDAE CINCLIDAE
COLUMBIDAE CORVIDAE CUCULIDAE EMBERIZIDAE FALCONIDAE
FRINGILLIDAE GAVIIDAE GRUIDAE HIRUNDINIDAE ICTERIDAE
LANIIDAE LARIDAE MIMIDAE

MAS VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Murie Audubon Society is to instill a passion for nature in present and future generations through awareness, enjoyment, understanding, appreciation, conservation, and advocacy.

MAS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Murie Audubon Society is to promote the conservation of birds and other wildlife through education and enhancement of natural habitats, understanding, appreciation, conservation, and advocacy.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF MURIE NEWSLETTER RECIPIENTS

Those who have not paid in one year or more should see "Exp:" and a date of expiration on your mailing label, on the same line as your name. You will only receive one more issue after the expiration date. If you feel this is in error, please contact Harry Martin 307-258-1255 to update details.

Please be patient if you have renewed your membership. It could take up to 60 days for the renewal to be updated in our database. A good reason to renew before your expiration date.

ABOUT MURIE AUDUBON

Please See: <https://murieaudubon.org/about/>

E-Mail: murie@murieaudubon.org

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\$10 One Year \$20 Two Years \$30 Three Years or electronic payment on our website

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