

MURIE AUDUBON'S
PLAINS & PEAKS

November 2020 VOL. 54 ISSUE 6

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UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13 MAS Program

7pm via Zoom

November 14 Mountain Field Trip

9 AM, Morad Park

SPECIAL FEATURES

Kid's Corner pg 2

Raptors: Birds Of Prey

Gynandromorphism pg 6

What Is Gynandromorphism?

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FIELD NOTES



Fall Greetings, Everyone!

I actually took some time to go birding this weekend. I visited Grand Teton National Park and the birds were pretty standard, however, I did get to see bear #399 and her four cubs! I pulled off the road, grabbed my trusty hiking pack, dug around for my binoculars, and... they were gone! Left behind at my house. I was so mad at myself but still got a good view of the bears without them. So what goes into your birding bag? Here are a few standby items in mine.

1. Maven Binoculars- Love these! They are small and powerful. They provide a clear view even in low light. And they're locally purchased.
2. iPhone- with eBird, Merlin Bird ID, Seek, and iNaturalist Apps and has the added benefit of a camera. I always learn so much more using these

features. Plus, I can start documenting and building a journal of my cool finds.

3. Chapstick- its Wyoming.

4. Bandana- its Wyoming, and usually cold/hot.

5. Sticky notes and pencils- this has saved my bacon more than once. I always seem to want to take notes of some sort of object.

Murie is excited to continue some projects that we've begun last year. We're hoping that everyone gets involved, becomes a member, participates in field trips, zoom meetings, and bird counts. We have lots to be thankful for including our membership and future projects.

We hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and look forward to seeing you in the holiday season!

Jenny Edwards
MAS President

KID'S CORNER



Hawks, eagles, falcons, ospreys, owls, harriers: These are the raptors, also known as birds of prey. "Prey" refers to the fact that these birds are hunters. But what sets them apart from other birds that eat living animals for food, like an American Robin tugging an earthworm from the soil? One difference is the type and size of the prey. Birds of prey eat lizards, snakes, fish, mice, rabbits, and skunks, and even other birds.

Another difference is found in their other name. "Raptor" comes to us from the Latin word that means "to seize and carry away." That's what birds of prey do: They use powerful feet to catch and carry animals away. Raptors fascinate people because of their skill and strength. When you take a closer look, these birds are wonders of nature and play an important role in Earth's ecosystems.

Source: <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids#week6>

MURIE AUDUBON FIELD TRIP

Field Trip Saturday, 9:00 AM, Nov. 14

My preference for a field trip is to do some birding on the Mountain, but I don't know what the weather will allow. Tentatively, we will meet at Morad Park and plan to go up the Mountain. If the weather is not good for the Mountain, we will practice identifying gulls at the JTL ponds. If we study gulls, we should meet closer to the JTL ponds. Since I cannot guess what the weather will bring, people should call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 to find out where we are going.



MURIE AUDUBON PROGRAM PRESENTS



THE PLATTE RIVER INITIATIVE

The Platte River, and the ecological and social communities that depend on it, are facing ever-increasing demands for water, while certainty over when and how much water the Platte will provide is decreasing. To face this challenge, the National Audubon Society and partners are rolling-out the Platte River Initiative to support a balancing of multiple needs through a collaborative ecosystem approach to water management.

Many of us are familiar with the role that the Platte River plays in the Sandhill Crane migration during the spring and fall. Many other species depend upon the Platte, and the areas near it, for places to live. Agricultural and recreational demands also factor into the management of the river and water in it.

Melissa Mosier is the new Platte River Program Manager for National Audubon. Melissa will work to organize and expand conservation efforts throughout the Platte River watershed in Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming. Much of her work will center around engaging and strengthening existing partnerships with other conservation organizations and agencies working within the Platte River Basin, as well as seeking out new ones. Melissa is excited about the opportunity to work with so many others who are knowledgeable about, and committed to improving, the ecological sustainability of the Platte River watershed.

Melissa Mosier worked in the Water Planning division at the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources for the past 7 years, and for the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, and the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance before that. She has a Master's degree from UNL in Natural Resource Sciences with a minor in Water Planning and Management, and a specialization in Human Dimensions.

Please join us via Zoom on Friday, November 13, at 7 PM when Melissa will present a program about the Platte River and the challenges to manage it.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IN THE COVID-19 ERA

The objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to count as many of the birds in a 15 mile diameter as possible. It is impressive how many birds we can find with 30 or more people looking in this small area. The first Casper Count was January 2, 1949, just before the start of the Blizzard of '49. While these counts are really fun for the participants, they produce sound scientific data on the status of birds through the years.

The National Audubon Society does not want us to announce the date of our CBC until after November 15, so we are not locked into a date that might change due to Covid-19 rules. Audubon also does not want us carpooling except for family groups. The meeting at the end of the day to compile the results will have to be a Zoom meeting. At the time I am writing this, Casper is seeing unchecked community spread of Covid-19. I suspect that these small changes are appropriate for this year.

We tentatively plan on the Casper count to be on Saturday December 19, and the Bates Hole count to be Friday January 1, 2021. We will know more about what we can do in Bates Hole when we know who will attend. The largest change will be the planning before the count. You will have to contact Bruce or Stacey before Dec. 19 to be assigned an area on the Casper Count. Newcomers and new birders are very welcome, but people will not be able to show up the morning of the count and be assigned an area then. We can still spend the whole day or at least part of a day having fun and adding to our birding knowledge.

For the Casper Count call Bruce Walgren (234-7455) or Stacey Scott (262-0055)
For the Bates Hole Count call Charlie Scott (234-2512) or Stacey Scott



HALF-MALE, HALF-FEMALE SONGBIRD



Rose-breasted Grosbeak gynandromorph. Photo credit: Annie Lindsay

Biologists recently made a "once-in-a-lifetime" discovery of a bird that's male on the right side and female on the left.

Researchers captured the bird, a rose-breasted grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History's Powdermill Nature Reserve, an environmental research center in Rector, Pennsylvania.

Plumage colors usually signal if a grosbeak is male or female, but this bird has both sexes' signature shades. Scientists who captured the bird saw male coloration — pink wing "pits," a red breast splash and black wing feathers — on the right side of its body. But the bird's left wing was browner and had yellow "pits," a color combination found in females, museum representatives said in a statement.

This condition, in which an animal possesses male and female traits divided down the middle of its body, is called bilateral gynandromorphism. In birds, gynandromorphy is thought to stem from an error during egg formation. Unfertilized eggs typically contain one sex chromosome: a Z or a W (male birds are ZZ, while females are ZW). But very rarely, an egg develops with two nuclei, one containing a Z chromosome and the other a W chromosome. If this egg is fertilized, it unites with sperm that carry the Z chromosome to produce an embryo with some cells that are ZZ, producing male traits, and some that are ZW, producing female traits, Natural History Magazine reported.

Researchers have identified gynandromorphy in many animals, including crustaceans, spiders, birds, butterflies and bees; but gynandromorphs are rare, so very few individual animals express the trait. The ARC has collected and banded birds since 1961, and its dataset holds more than 800,000 records. In that time, scientists have documented only five examples of bilateral gynandromorphs.

Taken from: <https://www.livescience.com/half-male-half-female-bird.html>

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

This is just a friendly reminder that per our newest bylaws, every membership expires September 30, 2020, and every year thereafter. Unless you have paid for years in advance, your membership expires September 30, every year until our bylaws change. 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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