

MURIE AUDUBON'S
PLAINS & PEAKS

February 2021 VOL. 55 ISSUE 1

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 12, MAS Program

7 pm via Zoom

February 13, Gray Reef Dam

2 pm, Gray Reef Dam

SPECIAL FEATURES

Kid's Corner pg 2

Common Raven

Christmas Bird Count pg 4

Numbers and Species Observed

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FIELD NOTES



Hello Murie Friends~

Wow, the weather lately!?! I was taught that "thunder only happens when it is raining" but the end of January sure proved that wrong. The short days and long nights have limited the amount of time I can see birds, but that hasn't stopped me from visiting the trumpeter swan near Bessemer bridge.

As we know, February is a time for romance. But I often celebrate it as a time for friendship too. I recently participated in a lecture about the evolutionary advantage of friendship. Many species can be observed giving gifts and helping others who aren't even related to them. These apparent friendships need to develop over time with a shared history.

The lecture got me thinking. How have I been developing my friendships during COVID? And, the answer tends to be with birds. Despite not being able to see my friends as frequently as I'd like, checking in about the cool birds we've seen lately has kept us in touch. Now, perhaps I'll gift them some bird feeders or whatnot.

Speaking of friends, the last time the MAS board met, we were working, albeit very slowly, on some projects to serve more people in our community. We're looking at publishing more information about our education grant, developing some potential badges for boy and girl scout troops, and working on a habitat improvement project at the piggery.

I hope you connect with some great friends and see some great birds this month!

Jenny Edwards
MAS President

KID'S CORNER



The common raven (*Corvus corax*), also known as the northern raven, is a large all-black [passerine](#) bird. Found across the Northern Hemisphere, it is the most widely distributed of all [corvids](#). There are at least eight [subspecies](#) with little variation in appearance, although recent research has demonstrated significant genetic differences among populations from various regions. It is one of the two largest corvids, alongside the thick-billed raven, and is possibly the heaviest passerine bird; at maturity, the common raven averages 63 centimetres (25 inches) in length and 1.2 kilograms (2.6 pounds) in mass. Common ravens can live up to 21 years in the wild, a lifespan surpassed among passerines by only a few [Australasian](#) species such as the [satin bowerbird](#) and probably the [lyrebirds](#). Young birds may travel in flocks but later mate for life, with each mated pair defending a territory.

Taken From: https://kids.kiddle.co/Common_raven



MURIE AUDUBON CBC BY THE NUMBERS

So --- the idea of a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is to conduct a census of our feathered friends within a predetermined 15 mile radius circle. This year, 12,491 individual birds, representing 61 species (plus 2 count week species) were counted

on December 19, 2020. How does this compare to previous years' counts? The lowest number of birds counted occurred in 1956 when 1,658 birds were found. The highest number of birds counted was just three years ago when 16,721 (lots of waterfowl that year) were tallied. By-the-way, we recorded the most species (74) in 2012 and the least (28) in 1949. Generally, I think that we can say that practice and the number of participants certainly helps in conducting a CBC. I don't have data that shows the number of participants in this CBC over the years, but I'm guessing that in the first years there weren't near as many counters as we enjoy now.

Let's go back to some numbers and talk weather. Cold overnight temperatures in town leading up to the count day left the river partly frozen with lots of chunks of ice in the open parts, making navigating hard for the ducks and geese. Snowfall, while welcome, complicated travel for drivers as well as folks walking their respective areas. But, worst of all, winds from 20 to 50 mph made it downright miserable for the participants as well as the birds we were hunting. Temperatures ranged from 30 to 35 degrees, but again, the wind really made it difficult.

No records were set for large numbers of individual species. We did tie the record for most Bufflehead ducks with 16. No gulls were found--most likely they left with the cold weather and icy waters. Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch numbers were a little stronger than in recent counts, but no one was able to find any Waxwings.

Last, but not least, I want to discuss the participants in this year's count. A total of 52 people helped make this year a success. Of the 55 participants, 20 people stayed home and counted birds at their feeders. Six people did double duty in the field, as well as counting their feeders in their yards. 374 miles were driven, 27 walked, and another 11 miles travelled looking for owls. Time wise, 32.5 hours were logged watching feeders, 43.5 hours driving, 31 hours walking, and 2 hours owling. The age range of our participants this year was from 91 (Bart Rea) to 5 (Ani Snoberger). Ani is specializing in raptors!

Despite the Covid 19 pandemic, we had a very good turnout of repeat participants as well as a number of new folks that joined us for the day. Thank you to everyone for your help. Even though the main objective was to count birds, we hope that you also enjoyed your time, and perhaps created some new memories, even if it was just the fact that you endured the wind!

Below is the complete list of birds.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Cackling Goose	11
Canada Goose	1857

Gadwall	28
American Wigeon	1
Mallard	664
American Green-winged Teal	20
Ring-necked Duck	3
Lesser Scaup	2
Bufflehead	16
Common Goldeneye	194
Barrow's Goldeneye	1
Hooded Merganser	3
Common Merganser	25
Gray Partridge	20
Wild Turkey	179
Pied-billed Grebe	1
Great Blue Heron	1
Golden Eagle MATURE	14
Golden Eagle IMMATURE	5
Golden Eagle UNKNOWN	1
Northern Harrier	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2
Cooper's Hawk	1
Bald Eagle MATURE	9
Bald Eagle IMMATURE	8
Red-tailed Hawk	5
Rough-legged Hawk	2
Wilson's Snipe	2
Rock Pigeon	509
Eurasian Collared-Dove	968
Great Horned Owl	3
Belted Kingfisher	1
Downy Woodpecker	10
Hairy Woodpecker	8
Northern Flicker (Red Shafted)	64
Northern Flicker (Yellow Shafted)	2
Northern Flicker (Unknown)	1
Northern Shrike	2
Merlin	2
Prairie Falcon	1
Pinyon Jay	33
Steller's Jay	21
Blue Jay	35
Black-billed Magpie	172
Clark's Nutcracker	4
American Crow	171
Common Raven	33
Horned Lark	63
Black-capped Chickadee	54

Mountain Chickadee	68
Red-breasted Nuthatch	17
White-breasted Nuthatch	7
Pygmy Nuthatch	3
Townsend's Solitaire	33
American Robin	275
European Starling	2290
Yellow-rumped Warbler	cw
American Tree Sparrow	7
Junco - Dark-eyed	29
Junco - SLATE COLORED	49
Junco - OREGON FORM	1
Junco - PINK-SIDED FORM	2
Harris' Sparrow	cw
Song Sparrow	10
Red-winged Blackbird	1
Gray-crowed Rosy Finch	36
House Finch	219
Pine Siskin	29
American Goldfinch	69
Evening Grosbeak	29
House Sparrow	4082
Number of Species	63
Total Individuals	12491

MAS FIELD TRIP GRAY REEF

Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. We will have a field trip to Gray Reef to see what the wintering ducks are, and then look at Alcova Dam and see what we can see around the lake. Due to the poor light in the morning at Gray Reef, let's meet at the first turnout at Gray Reef at 2:00 PM. This is the turnout closest to Wyoming 220. I will go along toward the Gray Reef Dam if you are a little late. Also, call me at 262-0055 with any questions, or to see where I am if you don't find me.

Stacey Scott

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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