

MURIE AUDUBON'S
PLAINS & PEAKS

March 2021 VOL. 55 ISSUE 2

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18, MAS Program

7 pm via Zoom

March 20, Gray Reef Dam

2 pm, Gray Reef Dam

SPECIAL FEATURES

Kid's Corner pg 2

Starling

The Birds and The Bees pg 6

Numbers and Species Observed

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FIELD NOTES



Welcome to March!

Hi everyone! It happens every year, this time of year. I start looking forward to spring. Now is a great time to check your nesting boxes, make repairs, and get ready for migration.

Murie has been abundantly blessed this year. The Whitney Bradley Trust donated nearly \$10,000.00 to Murie and the Jim Harrold Memorial has also donated to our mission. We are so thankful and excited to be good stewards of these gifts.

The board has been making progress, albeit slow progress (thanks, CoVID) on building a bird blind at Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park. Park officials want a "natural" structure that blends in with riparian habitat. If you have any ideas, we'd love to hear them!

In addition, our education grant is being updated and published on our website. If you, or if you know someone who has a great conservation or educational project, have them apply for our grant.

We're also looking forward to creating some field trips in the coming months. Field trips allow us to social distance, get out of the house, and hang out together. If you have any great field trip locations (local or even out of town), let Stacey know.

Hope everyone is doing well this spring season! Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Jenny Edwards
MAS President

KID'S CORNER



The Starlings are a family of small to medium-sized birds, the Sturnidae. This family are passerine songbirds, whose best-known species is *Sternus vulgaris*, the common starling. Although there are approximately 200 million starlings in North America, they are all descendants of 60 birds released in 1890 (and 40 more in 1891) in Central Park, New York, by Eugene Schieffelin. He was a member of the Acclimation Society of North America, which tried to introduce to North America every bird species mentioned in the works of William Shakespeare.

Taken From: <https://kids.kiddle.co/Starling>

MARCH PROGRAM SANDHILL CRANES



Murie Audubon joins Werner Wildlife Museum Wildlife Study Series Zoom meeting for March 18, 2021

On March 18, at 7:00 p.m., naturalist Mike Bardgett will present Sandhill Cranes, a discussion of the natural history of the Sandhill Crane, with particular emphasis on Nebraska's Platte River Valley, where half a million cranes come to feed, rest, and roost each spring.

Bardgett obtained a B.S. from UW in wildlife management and conservation. He is a Choctaw tribal member, Audubon Society member, and a former Marine. Following his retirement from the BLM, Wyoming State Parks, and Natrona County School District, Bardgett continues to offer his services as a naturalist to Werner Wildlife Museum, Bureau of Land Management, and the state park system.

Wildlife Study Series programs are held at the Werner on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. and are free and open to the public. Due to social distancing precautions, spring programs will appear via Zoom.

To Join Zoom Meeting click on this link

<https://caspercollege.zoom.us/j/94885598948?pwd=MWRhTXNRSkN6RXpCenI2WHNtZW5zQT09>

For more information: 307-235-2108. Museum is open Monday through Friday, 10:a.m. to 4:00 p.m

A Note About Programs:

This whole season of programs has been challenging, to say the least. Finding speakers during pre-Covid times was hard enough. Finding someone that can present a program via Zoom can be more complicated. Many of you may know India Hayford from the Werner Wildlife Museum at Casper College (the Museum). India is an old friend of ours, and in her capacity at the Museum, she is in charge of lining up programs for the Museum's monthly Wildlife Study Series of programs. When I found out that Charlotte Snoberger (one of the Museum's previous speakers) was unavailable for Murie's March program, I looked at some of the other planned programs at the Museum. Mike Bardgett's Sandhill Crane program looked like something that Murie members would definitely enjoy. So instead of having Mike present the program twice, once for the Museum and once for Murie, why not just have Murie members participate in the Museum's Zoom presentation. India was good with the idea, so that is what we are doing. The program will be on a different night than Murie members are accustomed to, but it's not like we have to travel to see the show. Also, since India did not have a program for May, and I did, I suggested that we share again on May 20. Our Speaker will be Andrea Orabona, and she will speak about the Burrowing Owl tracking program that started last year in Wyoming. I hope that you all will try to join us for these programs.

MURIE AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 18, 2020

Murie Audubon Board of Directors meeting minutes for November 13, 2020, held via ZOOM.

Called to order at 6:05 pm by Jenny Edwards.

In attendance: Harry Martin, Kim Grant, Jenny Edwards, Luis Alza, Kelly Keenan, Stacey Scott.

Minutes of the Nov 13, 2020 Zoom meeting: Stacey moved to accept minutes, Harry seconded; unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: Stacey reported the dues share from Audubon came in recently. We talked about memorials; they should go to the Community Foundation. Those monies from the current memorial, Jim Herold, are being held. Should we spend the interest? Not much money has been spent since COVID hit last Spring. The Bradley Trust money is listed under donations. Has a thank you been sent for the Bradley Trust money? Where/who would we send it to? Luis suggested saying thank you on our website. Harry will post something. The Board and membership need to have a discussion about where to use this money. The current balance in the Murie bank account is approximately \$42K. There should be a discussion on what community projects we could put this money towards.

Old Business: CBC-any changes needed other than cutting out the wind? This past count went well, even with the COVID restrictions. It was harder to compile the data due to electronic reporting. Seems to go better meeting in person.

Annual Report: Stacey mentioned trying to complete it earlier, even though that goes against the trend (for Murie reporting). Is there a way for the Board to have a session to complete it in the future? The report is due every January and notification should go out in October that filing is open.

Education Grant: Kelly has the grant posted on the Casper College website, and they were happy to help. Murie BOD should do more brainstorming on advertising. Have CC instructors advertise to classes? High School teacher to advertise? We can let them know that Teton Science school is an option for requesting monies. Should we advertise on WY NPR? Do we even want to go statewide? We should start with listing it on our Facebook page and possibly starting an Instagram and Twitter account to aid advertising. Jenny mentioned that a blurb on Murie Education Grant is going out in the NCSD newsletter which goes to all the staff.

Kelly asked how the grant is being submitted, is there an online option? Just mail? Kelly said she would be willing to accept the proposals. We checked form and there is no online submission, nor was there a contact for submissions. Kelly said she would update grant and Harry will set up online submission form. Harry does monitor the murie@murieaudubon.org email address. Jenny asked if it could just be a Google Form showing our logo/letterhead.

Charlotte Snowberger is now at Casper College, from Game and Fish, and she would be a resource for where to look for grants.

Bird Blind: Stacey stated he has stalled with it and will have more info at the next Audubon meeting. Harry found a blind at Sportsman's Warehouse that was nice but only for 1-2 people. Jenny suggested contacting the Pathways School (construction class) to help build a blind as part of their class, once we have more info on what EKW will allow.

Piggery project: Currently spinning wheels right now. Where are we? Stacey said we need to coordinate with city and G&F first. Bart and Zach should have more information and know the contacts for the city. We also need to know if they both still want to be involved in this project or if it needs to be turned over to someone else. Stacey suggested the Bradley Trust monies may be used for the Piggery project but we will need an open discussion with membership. Stacey will put an article in the newsletter and contact Jenny.

New Business: Field trips-Stacey said Murie should be offering some regular field trips this Spring, maybe even weekly trips in April, May, June. Stacey can offer some but not all, we need more volunteers. We should advertise that we will teach about birds and birdwatching. Some longer, more serious trips, are also needed, i.e. Goshen, Riverton Cemetery. Open to any and all ideas, membership needs to be engaged. It would be great to have a list of trips in the April newsletter with dates of trips. Hopefully COVID will be less of an issue going forward.

Luis asked if people who attend these trips need equipment. So far it has not been an issue but if we have larger groups and more newbies it may start to be an issue. Could Murie purchase some equipment to have on hand for loaners?

Adjourn at 6:57pm motioned by Stacey and seconded by Kelly; unanimous approval. Submitted by
Kimberley Grant Secretary

THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

I've always wanted to try my hand at beekeeping. There is something mysterious and magical about bees and how they make honey.

Last spring, I decided to start an apiary and learn more about them. I ordered a package of bees in the form of a NUC. It includes a queen, worker bees, frames with honey and brood in various stages of development. A mini hive that you transfer into the larger hive. Perfect for beginners.

I wasn't sure if they would survive the winter or not, but I now see that when the temperature rises above 40F, they come out to do cleansing flights. So far, so good. This tells me they stored up enough honey to survive our long winter.

Now what? Well, I have a lot to learn to continue this new hobby. As I read more and more about bees, I am discovering that one of the best things you can do to help bees, besides planting more flowers and avoid cutting dandelions in the grass, is to plant more trees! It turns out that bees love trees. They can collect more pollen from blooming trees than they can get from flowers. Bees will fly for miles to get an early start on pollen, and trees can bloom a little sooner than flowers.

Trees are also great because they absorb CO2, make more oxygen, slow climate change, and provide homes for both birds and bees. I plant new trees every spring. I'm attracting more birds and providing more food for the bees. It's a win-win for all of us. By the way, local raw honey tastes great.

Happy birding and beekeeping to all.

Harry Martin

FIELD TRIP TO GRAY REEF AND ALCOVA

Saturday, March 20, 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. Hopefully, the weather will be nicer than it was in February. 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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