

MURIE AUDUBON'S

PLAINS & PEAKS

APRIL 2023 | VOL. 57 ISSUE 3

<http://www.murieaudubon.org> | Facebook @ Murie Audubon Society



**Casper Mountain
Science Program**
Place Inspired Nature Education



UPCOMING EVENTS

Murie's General Program Apr 13th

Bird ID Classes Apr 18th

SPECIAL FEATURES

Membership Renewal pg 6

Bully Birds pg 7

FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello Friends!

Have you seen any spring birds, yet? I've been watching the colors start to change on the gold finches and house finches around the house.

The board will be hosting elections for several open positions soon. As always, we'd love to have your involvement. If you're willing to be even more involved, please contact me. Specifically, we're looking for someone to serve as a membership chairperson, and general chair people.

Murie will be working with Edness Kimball park officials to plant a native habitat garden. Feel free to donate your garden expertise during this special event! Have any other project ideas that Murie could take on this summer?

Jenny Edwards

KIDS CORNER

Native, Invasive, and Endemic species



A native species is one that naturally occurs in a given area. As an example, native plants grow naturally in many of the open areas surrounding Casper. The Big sagebrush is a plant native to Wyoming. It grows here naturally. No one planted it. The Greater sage-grouse, Cutthroat trout, and Pronghorn antelope are all examples of Wyoming native species.

APRIL BIRD CHALLENGE

These birds are fairly rare, but make their main debut in Natrona County in April (according to the last 10 years of data collected by eBird). This list is challenging. See if you can find them during the month of April.

- Wood Duck
- Sandhill Crane
- Wilson's Snipe
- Swainson's Hawk
- Burrowing Owl
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Marsh Wren
- Chipping Sparrow
- Vesper's Sparrow
- Yellow-headed blackbird

Good luck! Can't wait to see pictures and reports of your birds!

Data compiled from eBird.



A close-up of big sagebrush - photo credit BLM

KIDS CORNER Continued

It's likely you've heard the word "invasive" before. It is often used in connection with plants and animals. For example, the House Sparrow (scientific name *Passer domesticus*) is referred to as an invasive bird species not only in Wyoming but also for the majority of our planet! Other familiar common names of invasive species include the plant species Russian olives and cheatgrass, and the aquatic species zebra mussels. Currently, the zebra mussel is not found in WY but remains a threat to our waters as they have negatively affected numerous aquatic regions of the United States. All of the species are referred to as *invasive* mainly because they are not native and have the potential to outcompete native species for resources such as nutrients or sunlight and dominate native habitats.

Something interesting about all this is that interactions between native and invasive species can affect ecosystems. Let's consider a scenario where an invasive plant species outcompetes a native plant species for nutrients in the soil. As a result, the native plant species can become less abundant for certain bird species to feed on. In this way, the invasive plant has a direct effect on the native plant species and an indirect effect on the bird species that relies on the native plant for food. That bird species may in turn become less abundant. What happens to any predator that may rely on that bird species for nutrients? And so forth.

Some species are not only native, but endemic. The term *endemic* is used to describe a species that is native and unique to a certain geographical location. In other words, it can't be found anywhere else in the world. The Wyoming toad (scientific name *Anaxyrus baxteri*) and Porter's sagebrush (scientific name *Artemisia porteri*) are both endemic to specific regions of Wyoming. These two species can only be found here in Wyoming!

Kelly Keenan .

BOOK CLUB

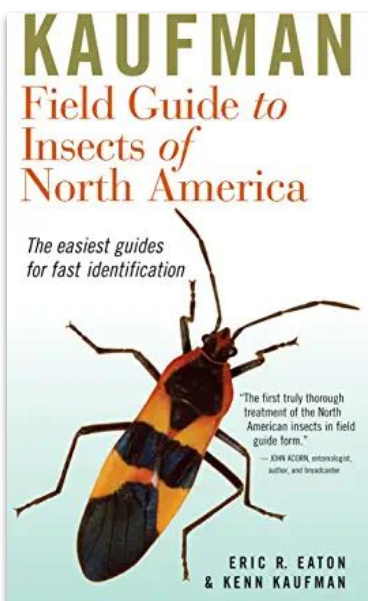
Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America **(Kaufman Field Guides)**

by Eric R. Eaton and Kenn Kaufman

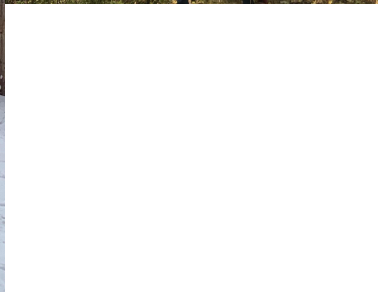
******* 5 Stars Recommended**

Last summer, I took an entomology course, and this was the recommended text. I really appreciated the layout, color, sketches, and basic information provided by this field guide. It was perfect for the beginning insect hunter. Since then, I've found myself referring back to this book multiple times. I even purchased a few copies for my classroom, because it is that easy to use! Great gift idea for budding naturalists!

Jenny Edwards



MURIE AUDUBON PRESENTS
Casper Mountain Science Program



The Casper Mountain Science Program will present an overview of the program on April 13th, 2023. Eric Reish, the program director of CMSP (and possibly some staff), will share an overview of the program and its history going back to the start in 2007. Included will be a summary of who the program reaches, the number of students it has served, and some of the impacts on our community and beyond. We will look over some sample curriculum and we will have a “hands-on” activity for those that choose to participate with us. We will share photos of our local students enjoying themselves while learning the Wyoming State Standards.

To take part, come to the Murie Audubon free talk on April 13, 2023, at 7 p.m., at the Izaak Walton Clubhouse, at 4205 Fort Caspar Road.

Eric Reish and Bruce Walgren

MURIE'S SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, April 15 - Meet at 9:00 AM at the Game and Fish Parking lot for a field trip to Goldeneye. There ought to be early waterfowl migrants such as Redheads and Canvasbacks, and hopefully some swans. We might stop at Road 123 in the 33 mile area if the roads are decent. The objective is to be back by noon. Call Stacey Scott for more details.

April - I have to count Sage-grouse leks several times in April, and can take a couple of people each time. I will leave Casper about 4:30 AM and get back around 8:00 AM if we don't do too much other birding on the way back. Call Stacey Scott to get on the list.

May - If anyone is interested in a trip to Goshen Hole in the first week of May, call Stacey Scott. It would be interesting to see what we could find in the various birding hotspots around Torrington.

May 13 - We will bird the Glendo area in conjunction with the State Parks. We will have more details in the May Newsletter, or call Stacey Scott for more details.

Wednesday, May 24 - Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking lot for the North Platte Shelter for a walk around EKW. This should be near the peak of the warbler migration, and you never know what we will see.

Thursday May 25 - Come help the Lincoln School bird in EKW. We will meet at 10:20 at EKW. Call Stacey Scott for more information.

Memorial Day, May 29 - Meet at 8:00 AM at the Game and Fish Parking Lot for our annual Little Red Creek field trip. If the weather cooperates (the two-track is not passable if it rains), this can be a really interesting trip. We should see White-throated Swifts, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Dusky and Gray Flycatchers, Rock Wrens, Black-throated Gray, Virginia's and Audubon's Warblers, Chats, both Towhees, Lazuli Buntings, Song Sparrows and we always hope for other special birds. Call Stacey Scott for details, especially if you would like to be informed if the weather causes us to change the date.

Stacey Scott 262-0055

BIRD IDENTIFICATION CLASSES

Stacey Scott and Luis Alza will teach a bird identification class for 5 weeks starting Tuesday, April 18. We will meet at the Werner Wildlife Museum at 7:00, and have a field trip the following Saturday if the weather permits. This is a really good way to learn the local birds. Each class will pretty much stand on its own, so you can join us some days and miss others. The emphasis will be on learning how to identify birds in the field, therefore the field trips will be a very important part of the class. Call Stacey Scott for more information.

Stacey Scott is also teaching 2 OLLI classes this spring, one in April and one in May. See the OLLI catalog for more information.

Bully Birds

What to do with Starlings and other bullies? I have noticed a flock of around 50 or more Starlings attacking my duck feeders and wild bird feeders. They arrived a couple weeks ago and they are quite hungry. Spring brings them in and they are on the hunt for anything they can eat. If left unchecked, they will clean out your feeders and your wallet. What to do?

My strategy is not to feed them. I take down all feeders when I'm not watching specific birds. I have peanut feeders for the Blue Jays and Mountain Chickadees. Thistle for the occasional finch, and my very expensive duck feed.

To keep the Starlings away, I take down the feeders when I'm not at home. When the ducks get done eating, I put that away too. I know when the Jays arrive and when they are done, I put their feeder away as well. For my suet feeder, it is only open from the bottom for the occasional bird that doesn't mind hanging upside down. I don't set out sunflower seeds unless I'm there to guard it against the bullies, and if it is out, it's closely guarded and only a small amount at a time.

So that's it. I'm very proactive with feeders as it's the only way I can slow down the food shrinkage. I'm currently working on a duck feeder that is activated by the weight of a duck, which is several pounds. When the duck approaches the feeder, it steps onto a platform that moves to pull on a string that opens a trap door granting access to the food. When the duck steps off the platform, the trap door closes off access to the Starlings that weigh much less. To stop the starlings on other feeders, I suspect that a wire cage of proper size could stop them as well, but that will take some experimentation on my part. Hope that helps and good birding to all.

Harry

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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

This is a friendly reminder that each September is our annual membership and renewal drive. All memberships expire on that date each and every year, so this is our big push to renew current members and to encourage visitors and guests to join.

We would love to have you as part of our education and conservation team.
Features and benefits:

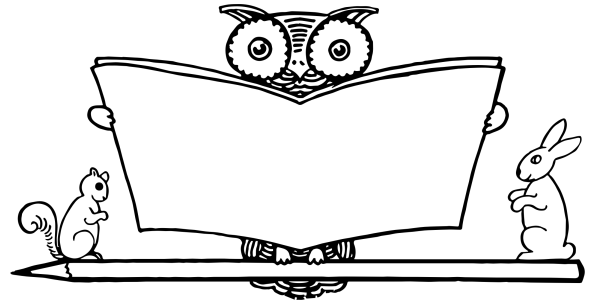
Monthly Newsletter
Education Programs
Guest speakers

Guided field trips
Community projects
Education Grants

You can be part of our citizen scientist efforts. You do not have to be a birder to join, enjoy, or take advantage of everything this site has to offer.

So, please, take a moment to sign up. The registration link is on our home page. We have on-line payment options for electronic payment, and of course, you can mail in payments using snail mail. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Harry
Murie Audubon Society
Membership Chair



RENEW OR BECOME A REGULAR MEMBER OF MURIE AUDUBON FOR ONLY \$10



Today's Date: _____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ (Not shared with anyone – honest!)

Email: _____ (Again, not shared with anyone)

Please check: I want the Plains & Peaks newsletter delivered to the above address.

I want to save a tree and postage. DO NOT SEND ME SNAIL MAIL! I will download a digital copy of the Plains & Peaks Newsletter from
<http://MurieAudubon.org> 😊

Please make checks payable to: Murie Audubon Society, PO Box 2112, Casper, WY 82602

Murie Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2112
Casper, WY 80602

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 165
CASPER, WY 82602

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

