

MURIE AUDUBON'S

# PLAINS & PEAKS

DECEMBER 2023 & JANUARY 2024 | VOL. 57 ISSUE 8

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



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Murie Audubon's 76th  
Annual Christmas Bird  
Count**

Dec 16th

**January General Meeting**

Jan 11th

A Rush to Get Ahead -The race to understand the ecology of North American bats

## SPECIAL FEATURES

**Winter Field Trips and Bird Counts**

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**About Murie's Board Members**

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## FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

It's the most wonderful time of the year, the Christmas Bird Count! This is one of my favorite festivities of the season. I hope you'll consider joining us. We welcome all levels of birders, and all levels of activity.

We need people counting the feeders at their homes, driving around specific areas to count, or hiking into our more remote areas to get a count. So many ways to make your contribution to this important data set.

Following the count, we will have a potluck dinner to celebrate and compile our data.

We are so looking forward to seeing you there!

**Jenny Edwards**

## JANUARY BIRD CHALLENGE

See if you can find these 10 species of birds in Natrona County during the month of January. This month's challenge is around winter song birds, in different forms.

- Juncos- Slate
- Juncos- Oregon
- Juncos- Pink-sided
- Song Sparrow
- House Finch
- Cedar Waxwing
- American Robin
- Townsend's Solitaire
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Mountain Chickadee
- Black-capped Chickadee

## KIDS CORNER

*What's in a Name?*



The American Ornithological Society (AOS) recently announced that it will rename all bird species honoring people. As a result, as many as 80 birds in North America that were named after a person may receive a new common.



Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), an example of a bird up for renaming. Photo Jeff Maw, eBird

## KIDS CORNER Continued

The AOS states that the new names will be descriptive of how the bird looks or behaves. Birds such as the Cooper's Hawk and the Steller's Jay are just two examples of birds up for renaming. What would you propose as a new, descriptive name for these birds?

Moreover, some sources report that Latin names (scientific names) of species may also be up for renaming at some point if their names honor people. Unlike common names, scientific names are usually descriptive of the species and less commonly named after a person.

<https://www.science.org/content/article/why-are-we-naming-birds-after-people-behind-plan-scrap-many-bird-names>

**Kelly Keenan**



Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*), an example of a bird up for renaming. Photo Brad Imhoff eBird

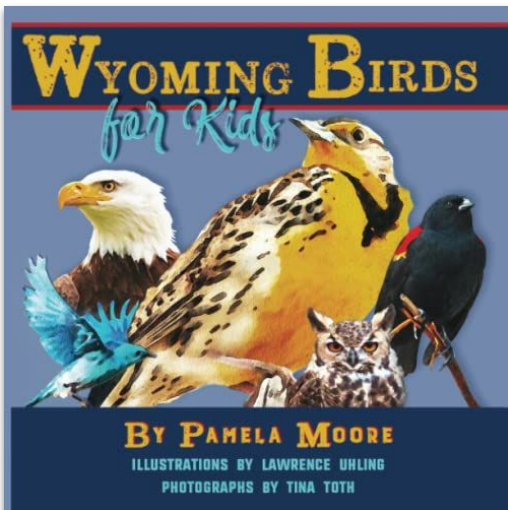
## BOOK CLUB

**Wyoming Birds for Kids Pamela Moore, Lawrence Uhling (Illustrator), Tina Toth (Photographer)**

**\*\*\*\* 4.5 Stars Recommended**

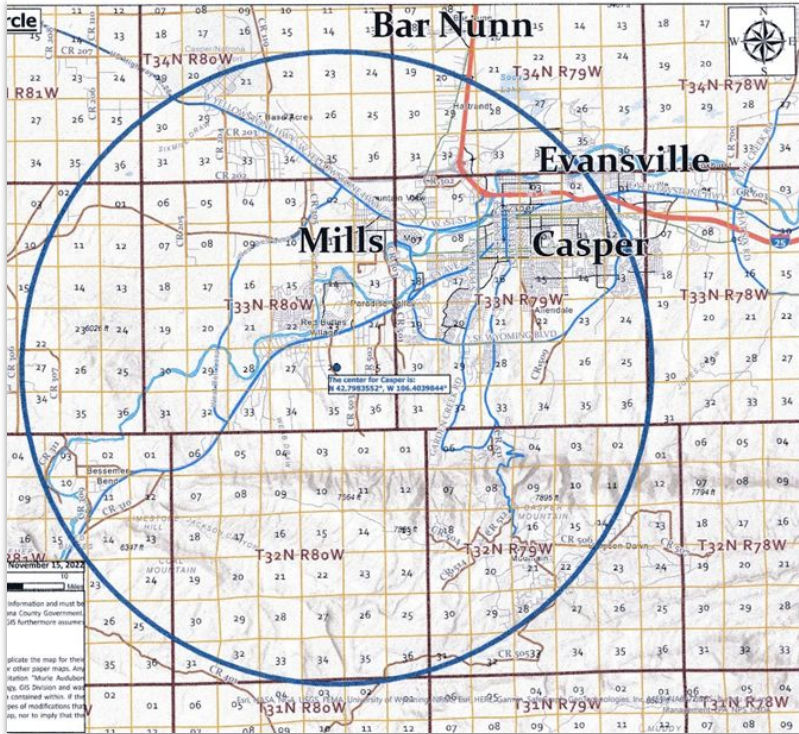
Need a gift for a young nature lover in your life? This book, written by some of our friends around the state, contains scientific information, rhymes, habitat information, and fun facts about birds in our area. Put this in a basket with a bird feeder and some seed to encourage our young community members to join our hobby!

**Jenny Edwards**



# MURIE AUDUBON'S 76TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

## SATURDAY DECEMBER 16, 2023



Murie Audubon will conduct the 76<sup>th</sup> annual Casper Christmas Bird Count on December 16, 2023. Last year 68 people (46 observers in the field and 22 feeder watchers) helped to find and count 14,981 birds representing 63 species inside a 15-mile diameter circle encompassing most of the Casper area. We can use lots of help for this project – 177 square miles is a lot of ground to cover. The Center of the circle is near the vicinity of the junction of Coates Rd and Prairie Rd. Generally the boundaries are: the east boundary is Wyoming Blvd, the west boundary is Speas Fish Hatchery, the north boundary is just beyond exit 191 on I-25 north, and the south boundary is the south edge of Casper Mountain including parts of Circle Drive.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate; we need lots of eyes and ears, and we need people to help record data, and to help drive. And we need feeder watchers to report what they have at their feeders, so if you live within the boundaries of the circle, have a bird feeder, and would like to participate, please contact us.

On the day of the count, participants are asked to meet at the SonRise Room of the First United Methodist Church, 302 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Casper at 7 AM for instructions, maps, carpooling and area assignments. At 5 PM, we will meet again at SonRise Room for a potluck dinner, and tabulation of the day's data. Please contact Stacey Scott at 262-0055 or Bruce Walgren at 234-7455 ([bruce\\_walgren@bresnan.net](mailto:bruce_walgren@bresnan.net)) for more information.

### MAP TO SONRISE ROOM- MEETING LOCATION FOR THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



**MURIE AUDUBON PRESENTS**  
***A Rush to Get Ahead -The race to understand the ecology  
of North American bats***



Dr. Riley Bernard will be our guest speaker for our January program. She is an applied wildlife ecologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology and Physiology at the University of Wyoming-Casper. Her research focuses on the ecology and behavior of small mammals on topics such as foraging, competition, invasive species interactions, the effects of disease on community structure, species susceptibility and survival. She is the Faculty Mentor at the Bernard Research Lab where her students are researching such topics as bat population and composition, roosting and movement behavior, habitat and roost selection (including road bridges), ectoparasites and diseases. She also uses tools from Decision Science to ensure the questions she seeks to answer provide the best information for wildlife and natural resource managers to make tractable and robust decisions.



Public and Audubon members are invited to come to the Murie Audubon free talk on January 11, 2024 at 7 p.m., at the Izaak Walton Clubhouse, at 4205 Fort Caspar Road.

***.Bruce Walgren***

**\*All photos from Bernard Research Lab**

## NOV 11th FIELD TRIP REVIEW

The November field trip was on Casper Mountain. The snow was only an inch or so, so it didn't make walking hard. We walked to Tom and Michelle Wernsmann's feeder which is one of the best on the Mountain. There was a Hairy Woodpecker on the feeder, but flew away before everyone got a good view. We had excellent views of Mountain Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Steller's Jays. On the way into the feeder, we had a dozen birds that flew like Rosy Finches but didn't give us any kind of view. Based on the few calls I heard, I think they were Rosy Finches, but with the wind in my hearing aids I didn't hear them well enough. We only added some Turkeys to the birds at the feeder, but we saw what is normal for November on the Mountain. The seven of us on the field trip had a very pleasant hike.

**Stacey Scott**

### REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

*The Board of Directors has decided that once a year the Treasurer ought to explain Murie's Receipts and Disbursements. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30 the next year. The donations were unusually large this year. In 2023, the Great Plains Astronomical Community donated \$1,047 and the Wyo. State Parks Annual Conference donated \$750, with the other \$2,270 from individuals. The 2022 amount is more normal. The National Audubon Society gives us \$1,214 as our share of donations made to National every year. We rent the quonset hut at the Piggery for storage, and receive \$900 every year. In 2007, Murie put \$50,000 in the Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation gives us 4% of the balance of the money each year.*

*Under Disbursements, the newsletter is the cost of printing and mailing it, and Administration covers the website, corporate tax, insurance, meeting expenses, PayPal (the cost of donating or paying dues online), the Post Office Box, storage and The Christmas Bird Count. In 2022, the \$880 cost for the Piggery Fence materials is included under Administration. In FY 2023, we had the fund raiser for EKW plants that netted \$1,250 plus \$165 in additional donations that are listed under Restricted Funds. Under Education we received \$46 for Audubon Adventures and bought binoculars and donated to NCHS for a Teton Science School Trip and the Casper Mountain Science Program. Under Restricted, the donations for the EKW plants fell in both years, with 2023 also including \$53 spent on sunflower seeds.*

*If anyone has any questions, contact Stacey Scott and I will be able to look at the detailed records to answer any questions.*

<i>Receipts and Disbursements</i>	<i>FY 2022</i>	<i>FY 2023</i>
<i>Donations</i>	<i>\$ 822</i>	<i>\$4,067</i>
<i>NAS Dues Share</i>	<i>1,214</i>	<i>1,214</i>
<i>Murie Membership</i>	<i>840</i>	<i>981</i>
<i>Rental of Quonset Hut</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>900</i>
<i>Community Foundation</i>	<i>2,588</i>	<i>2,615</i>
<i>Newsletter</i>	<i>(502)</i>	<i>(434)</i>
<i>Administration</i>	<i>(2,955)</i>	<i>(1,860)</i>
<i>Fund Raising</i>	<i>(150)</i>	<i>1,400</i>
<i>Audubon Adventures</i>		<i>46</i>
<i>Education</i>		<i>(4,672)</i>
<i>Restricted: Seeds/Other</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Net Receipts/(Disbursements)</i>	<i>\$2,848</i>	<i>\$4,280</i>

## ABOUT MURIE'S BOARD MEMBERS-



### NOVEMBER'S ALL ABOUT... LAURIE

**Name:** Laurie Rigg

**Favorite Bird:** golden and bald eagles or the western meadowlark.

**Career:** As a business technology and marketing consultant for over 15 years, I enjoy helping creatives (such as artists and musicians), professionals and small/medium businesses to thrive in the digital age. Also, with over 11 years' notary public experience, I am a certified loan signing agent and mobile notary for all of Wyoming (and Montana through reciprocity) and a remote online notary worldwide. Prior to relocating to beautiful Wyoming I was a trusts and estates, mobile, and general notary in Los Angeles County, California. Continuing education and staying on top of new technologies are priorities for me.

**Hobbies/Interests:** anything outdoors, especially involving birds, plants or hiking (especially with my dog). I'm looking forward to mastering cross-country skiing this winter and participating in the Christmas bird count. I also enjoy live music and dancing.

**Favorite Murie work:** the field trips and learning new skills as the webmaster.

**Contact:** [laurie@puplesageconsulting.net](mailto:laurie@puplesageconsulting.net)

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS and Christmas Counts

**Saturday, Dec. 16 - 76th Casper CBC.** The first Casper Christmas Bird Count was the second day of the Blizzard of 49. We have increased the number of people and the number of birds seen on this long running count. We especially need people who live within the count circle to count their feeders. We need to know where the feeders are so they don't also get counted by the group counting that area.

**Sunday, Jan 1 - Bates Hole CBC.** This is one of the only truly rural counts in the country, and a great way to start the New Year. When the wind is blowing in Casper, and it is just miserable to be outside, come to Bates Hole where it is calm and beautiful. We will meet at Charlie Scott's house at 7:30 AM. Call Charlie Scott at 473-2512 or Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for more details.

**Saturday, January 14 - Field Trip to Gray Reef and Alcova -** We will meet at 9:00 AM at the Game and Fish Parking Lot. This is a good way to add water birds to our year's list. If we are lucky, we could find Trumpeter Swans. We should be back about noon. Call Stacey Scott at 262-0055 for more details.

**Stacey Scott**

### 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**



## 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.

## OPEN POSITIONS

We have a couple of Murie Audubon Society Chapter open volunteer positions for your consideration.

- Membership Chair – This position requires some knowledge of working with spreadsheets and working with other Board Members to update our membership database, recruit new members, and other duties related to membership.
- Webmaster/IT Manager – This position requires knowledge of WordPress and cPanel, updating and managing our website.

Experience desired, but not necessary. We can train you if you are interested and have a computer with Internet access. If interested, please send an email to [murie@murieaudubon.org](mailto:murie@murieaudubon.org)

These are volunteer positions only.

**Harry**

## 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

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