

MURIE AUDUBON'S
PLAINS & PEAKS

MARCH 2024 | VOL. 58 ISSUE 2

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Let's Talk Turkey!



UPCOMING EVENTS

March General Meeting Mar 14
Let's Talk Turkey!

April General Meeting Apr 11
What's the Buzz?

Bird ID Class Apr 16

SPECIAL FEATURES

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Grey Reef and Alcova

FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello!

I'm so happy to announce Murie's top priorities for this year. The board decided that we want to continue outreach into different avenues.. We'd like to reach a different audience than we typically lean towards. Our newer board members are working on a mindful birding project, May 18th and June 15. We're also interested in offering book clubs, classes, booths, etc. as those opportunities arise. Another priority we've identified is completing our garden project at EKW. We hope that these projects will lead to an increase in membership through awareness.

To that end, this spring is going to be busy for us. We are offering tons of field trips, a bird count study, bird walks, bird classes, and our monthly programs. We're so looking forward to seeing you and your friends at these events!

Jenny Edwards

MARCH BIRD CHALLENGE

March's challenge is to find those birds that let us know spring is coming and get us through our dismal weather and spring snow storms.

- Killdeer
- California Gull
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Osprey
- Tree Swallow
- Mountain Bluebird
- Western Meadowlark
- Grackle

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

KIDS CORNER



Easter Eggs

Eggs, usually chicken eggs, are commonly used in abundance around Easter time each year. Maybe you've decorated eggs for Easter by drawing on them, dyeing them, or putting stickers on them. These approaches often involve hard-boiling the eggs before decorating them, which is great if you plan to eat the eggs after your celebration. If you don't usually eat the eggs afterwards, Cascarones, or confetti eggs, can be an option. When making confetti eggs for the first you may find it is a bit more work up front compared to boiling, but can be a good solution to not wasting eggs.

KIDS CORNER Continued

Starting early is key. For several days or weeks before Easter, or whenever you are planning to celebrate, begin saving the eggshells of any eggs you use for cooking. You must carefully make a hole at one end of the egg to allow the yolk and white to pour out. Then rinse out the egg and let it dry. Once you have a dozen or so eggshells collected you can decorate them as desired, fill with confetti, then glue on a piece of material over the hole to seal in the contents. You likely have plenty of scrap paper around to turn into confetti and pieces of paper streamers work well to cover the hole.



Photo Kelly Keenan, Feb 2024

There's a variety of videos available online to show you how to make confetti eggs at home. Alternatively, you can purchase ready-made confetti eggs in most grocery stores at a reasonable cost. Either way, confetti eggs can add something different to your occasion.

Kelly Keenan



BOOK CLUB

Social Media Recommendations

This month's Book Club is a bit different. I have been getting great joy and knowledge from the birding instagram world. I thought I would share who I follow.

- ❑ Crow or No- Corvid Research- this woman posts a photo of a black bird, and helps followers determine if its a crow. She also shares her research in the tropics.
- ❑ Flocking Around- our own Zach Hutchinson's bird nerd page with great photos and content.
- ❑ Birding with Rick- great education and silly bird videos. He helps with tricky identification and how to find the joy in birding.
- ❑ Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Cornell Lab Bird Cams- pretty self explanatory.
- ❑ American Birding Association- bird identification around the U.S. and great tips and photos.
- ❑ Birding by Ear- great identification tips and yard tips to attract birds.

MURIE AUDUBON PRESENTS “Let’s Talk Turkey”



Last month, I presented a history (including Wild Turkeys) of a few select species of birds that are found in Natrona County, Wyoming. Brandon Werner, a Wildlife Biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in Casper will present our program to bring us up to date about Wild Turkeys in Wyoming. Brandon will also tell us about efforts to trap and relocate turkeys here in Casper to more appropriate habitat.

The history of wild turkeys in Wyoming dates back to 1935 when the Wyoming Game and Fish Department traded sage grouse with New Mexico for 15 Merriam’s turkeys, nine hens, and six toms. The birds were released on a ranch on Cottonwood Creek in Platte County in the spring of 1935, and were reported to lure some of the ranch’s domestic turkeys with them into the Laramie Mountains. By 1947, the wild turkey population was estimated to number over 1,000.

Other reintroduction attempts across the state weren’t very successful, until birds were sowed into the fertile habitat of the Black Hills in 1951-52. Thirty-three Platte County turkeys, along with 15 more New Mexico transplants, found new roosts near Redwater Creek in the northwest Black Hills. They probably combined forces with some transplants that strayed over from South Dakota releases, and the introduction served as the foundation for Wyoming’s most recognized turkey hunt area. In 1955, hunters began harvesting the wild turkeys.

The first report of Wild Turkeys on the Casper Christmas Bird Count was in 1988, when 25 birds were tallied. Turkeys were reported periodically in subsequent years until 1999, when they began to be reported each year. In 2006, 194 turkeys were counted, and each year since then they have been plentiful (288 this year). Turkeys have done well enough that they are very common within the city limits of Casper. So common, in fact, that in August 2023 it became illegal to feed turkeys in Casper to try to manage the turkey population, and mitigate the negative effects caused by its growth. It will be interesting to see how the turkey population may respond to the ordinance against feeding them.

To learn more about Wild Turkeys, come to the Murie Audubon free talk on March 8, 2024 at 7 p.m., at the Izaak Walton Clubhouse, at 4205 Fort Caspar Road.

Bruce Walgren

February 10th FIELD TRIP REVIEW

We finally had the field trip to Gray Reef (it was -30 the first attempt, and I had the flu the second attempt, so January's field trip was cancelled). The warm weather was reflected in the birds we saw. The first stop was just upstream from Government Bridge where we found Pintails, but no Swans. The birds at Gray Reef were very skittish, like they had been shot at a lot this year. Also, there wasn't an ice shelf, so they mostly moved to the other side of the lake where they were really too far for a good view even in the scope. There were lots of Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneyes, a few Ring-necked Ducks, Mallards,, Gadwalls and some Coots. At Alcova Dam I saw a few Pied-billed Grebes, which promptly disappeared and could not be refound. We got an excellent view of one male Common Merganser and a few Gadwall. We then drove to the Marina to see what was in the Russian Olives. Alcova Lake itself was about 90% ice free, which really surprised me for mid February. In the Russian Olives, we found Mountain Chickadees, Robins, Townsend's Solitaires, Starlings, and Juncos.

Stacey Scott

Bird ID Class

This April and May Luis Alza and Stacey Scott will lead a Bird Identification Class. Starting April 16, we will meet at the Werner Wildlife Museum every Tuesday at 6:30 PM for 5 weeks. Weather permitting, there will be a field trip every Saturday. Luis gives the specifics about each bird, and Stacey uses his 75 years of birding to add details about where and when the bird can be found. Learning the birds is not something you can go to a class and do. It takes continuous learning, and lots of practice in the field. This class is for everyone from beginners to much more advanced birders.

Where you really learn how to identify birds is in the field, and our field trips are designed to let you learn the local birds. After the class is over we will have regular trips where you can continue to practice what you have learned.



Photo right, Luis Alza. White-breasted Nuthatch, April 2023, Casper.

ABOUT MURIE'S BOARD MEMBERS-



FEBRUARY'S ALL ABOUT... JENNY

Name: Kristie Brown

Favorite Bird: Raptors

Career: Account Executive for Insurance Broker Managing Energy and transportation clientele.

Hobbies/Interests: fly fishing, hiking, golf, birding, working my two hunting dogs. My lifetime passion is falconry, I have been practicing this sport since age 15.

Favorite Murie work: Field trips and monthly programs. Bingo was fun, should make that a tradition.

Contact: kristie.brown@bresnan.net

UPCOMINGFIELD TRIPS

If you have questions, please call Stacey Scott at 307-262-0055, I will also post field trip changes under "Events" on the website, murieaudubon.org. Also, I am also looking for more ideas for field trips.

Saturday, March 16 - Meet at 9:00 at the West End of Reshaw Park for a walk along the river. We should see Hooded Mergansers, Mallards, Goldeneye and maybe a few more birds. If there is any interest, we will then go to EKW for a walk there. I'm planning on being back by noon.

Saturday, April 13 - Meet at 9:00 at the Game and Fish Parking Lot for a trip to Goldeneye and the area around the 33 Mile Rd. There should be early ducks on Goldeneye, and we should be able to find Sandhill Cranes on the hay fields. We should be back by noon.

April and early May - I am **monitoring several Sage-grouse leks** to count the strutting birds, and would like company. I cannot plan very many days in advance because I need dry, passable roads. Some of the leks are near Bates Creek Reservoir, and we won't get back from those trips until nearer noon. The ones on the Two-Bar Ranch winter pastures are much closer, and I will get back from those about 8:00 AM. Anyone interested ought to call me at 307-262-0055.

May - Every Tuesday in May we will meet at 8:00 AM at the Platte River shelter at EKW for a walk around the park. This should cover the migration and the transition to the nesting birds.

Saturday, May 11 - Walk around EKW

I would love to go birding in Goshen Hole, anyone interested should call me and we will set a time to go see some interesting migrants.

Saturday, May 18 - Cheyenne Big Day

Saturday, May 18 - Mindfulness Birding at EKW

Memorial Day, Monday, May 27 - Little Red Creek

June 3 & 4 - Survey birds on Garden Creek then a similar survey on Mathison Creek

Saturday, June 15 - Wild flowers with Joanne Theobald at Rotary Park

Saturday, June 22 - Mindfulness Birding at EKW

Saturday, July 13 - I need suggestions on a good place to go birding

Thursday, Aug 8 - Picnic at EKW

Monday, Labor Day, Sept 2 - Birding at EKW before the crowds.

Saturday, Sept. 14 - Goldeneye

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

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.

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

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