



Wyoming State Office
National Audubon Society

Audubon Wyoming News

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FALL 2007

Audubon Wyoming Conservation Updates

The Laramie Plains Lakes are one of southeast Wyoming's best-kept secrets. Laramie and the area surrounding the town is situated in a high plains basin ecosystem, what many people call the Laramie Basin. Within the Basin are shallow depressions that support wetland complexes or "potholes". Throughout the area, some of these potholes or wetland complexes, are large, permanent water holes (i.e. lakes and ponds) and some small smaller, semi-permanent potholes, but both provide critical breeding, nesting and resting habitat for literally thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Many of these pothole complexes are encompassed within a series of wildlife refuges including Bamforth, Hutton and Mortenson Lake National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). These areas are all owned and managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) whose headquarters are located in Walden, Colorado.

Hutton and Bamforth NWRs have been part of the refuge system since 1932, when J. Clark Salyer was charged with identifying areas to protect for migratory birds. Mortenson Lake NWR was established quite recently, in 1993, in order to protect the Wyoming toad's last known population. In addition, based on the critical



habitat the area provides to our birds and other wildlife, a large area of the Laramie Basin (which also includes the three wildlife refuges) was nominated and accepted as an Important Bird Area in Wyoming. In order to continue to manage and conserve the local Wyoming refuges, the USFWS released a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the three refuges, which are all within 15 miles of Laramie. This plan, when approved in 2007, will guide management of the refuges for the next 15 years. The Laramie Audubon Society Chapter (LAS) and Audubon Wyoming (the state office) both commented on the draft plan in support of Alternative B. Overall, Alternative B of the plan would maintain and enhance the diversity and habitat of native wildlife on each refuge. Specifically, the alternative would increase USFWS partnerships

activities with other outside organizations like Audubon, increase attention to invasive weed infestation, as well as conduct the inventory/research needed to make management decisions at Bamforth NWR. Finally, Alternative B would try and increase management engagement and oversight for the three Laramie Plains refuges through an additional staff member. Both the chapter and state office believes a manager whose duties were specific to the Laramie Refuges is essential to accomplish the goals listed under this Alternative B as well as discourage violations within the refuge. The Laramie Plains Lakes are vital to breeding and migratory birds as well as enjoyed by wildlife enthusiasts in the area. LAS and Audubon Wyoming have been conducting migration surveys within Hutton NWR and hope that other partnerships activities will increase once the plan is approved. In addition, the USFWS will now be focusing on writing the comprehensive management plan for Pathfinder National Wildlife Refuge west of Casper. Audubon will be keeping a close eye on the management plan for the area. If you are interested in helping out with surveys at the Hutton or Pathfinder refuges, or would just like some more information please contact: Alison Lyon-Holloran at aholloran@audubon.

AUDUBON WYOMING PARTNERS WITH RURAL LIVING ORGANIZATIONS

Topics of interest to many diverse groups including women in agriculture, people new to small acreages, alternative farm and ranch producers, and American Indian owner/managers were represented at the Living and Working on the Land: The Building Blocks of Success conference Aug. 27-29 in Riverton. Though the four groups were highlighted, everyone was welcome, said Cole Ehmke, agricultural entrepreneurship specialist with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES), and organizer of the conference at the Riverton Holiday Inn and Convention Center. Sessions at the conference included water-wise landscaping, managing animals on small acreages, leaving a legacy for

future generations, improving personal relationships, programs that manage risk, land management issues in Indian country, on-farm recreation, and establishing proper windbreaks. If you missed this conference but are interested in learning more, you can go to the Barnyards and Backyards: Rural Living in Wyoming website, or subscribe to the magazine of the same name at barnyardsandbackyards.com. Audubon Wyoming has been involved with this group for several years with the goal of helping landowners manage their acreages. Our role at this conference was to provide children's activities so that the parents could attend sessions. Earlier this year, Community Naturalist Jacelyn Downey presented at a



smaller workshop in Gillette. She gave a presentation on creating bluebird trails and wildlife habitat. These Small Acreage Hands-On Workshops are held throughout the state and to find one near you, go to audubonwyoming.org or to the Barnyards and Backyards website.

AUDUBON WYOMING

The state office of the National Audubon Society is the liaison for local chapters and volunteers, and is the primary contact for education, conservation, and outreach in the state of Wyoming.

www.audubonwyoming.org

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STATE OFFICE UPDATE

The Audubon Wyoming state office has moved! The state office is going through some growing pains (not a bad thing!) and so we went looking for a new office. We found our new office space at 358 N 5th Street in Laramie. Feel Free to come on in and visit us sometime!



MONITORING AVIAN PRODUCTIVITY AND SURVIVORSHIP WRAP-UP

As the fall warblers and sparrows start to appear around Wyoming, let us take a look back on the summer Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Bird Banding program. It was quite a successful summer at both the Lindzey and the Garden Creek MAPS stations, and Audubon Wyoming thanks all of you who made us a part of your busy summer schedules.



This was the eighth year of operations at the Lindzey MAPS station west of Laramie. The Laramie River riparian habitat dominates this MAPS station, and the diversity of birds banded reflected this. Unique birds banded this year included Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a diversity of woodpeckers. The most abundant species included House Wren, Yellow Warbler, and American Goldfinch.

In August, the ACGC MAPS station wrapped up banding season number six. The ACGC banding location is nestled between Casper Mountain and the city of Casper. Nets are placed within the Garden Creek riparian corridor, and this year 30 species of birds were processed at the ACGC site. Highlights included American Redstart, Lazuli Bunting, and Indigo Bunting.



This summer the most abundant species handled appeared to be Black-headed Grosbeaks, Gray Catbirds, House Wrens, and Yellow Warblers.

Next June, Dusty and Jacelyn Downey will start a bird banding station at Keyhole State Park in Northeast Wyoming. Rio Tinto Energy America is sponsoring the start up costs of the station, and park superintendent Ron Seifert has

given Audubon Wyoming permission to use Keyhole State Park as a staging ground for this project. The State Park is a great place for the stations because it is central to the cities of Sundance, Newcastle, Moorcroft, Hulett, and Gillette, and it hosts many bird species not found anywhere else in the state.

MAPS banding is administered by the Institute of Bird Populations. The data gathered from the nearly 500 stations is compiled to give scientists a glimpse as to what is going on with breeding birds on a local, regional, and national scale. MAPS is a huge commitment of time and money, and like all of the activities at Audubon Wyoming, it is partners and volunteers like you that make things happen.

For information on the MAPS bird banding, or other citizen science opportunities, please contact Audubon Wyoming's Conservation Coordinator Alison Holloran at 307-745-4848 or aholloran@audubon.org or www.audubonwyoming.org.



GOODBYE TO KIM AND NOELLE

Audubon Wyoming regrets to inform you that both Southeast Community Naturalist Kim Check and Office Manager Noelle Matthews resigned in September 2007. We wish them all the best professionally and personally.

CHAPTER CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information about a chapter near you, please contact the leaders listed below.

Murie Audubon Society

Casper
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Murieaudubon.org

Red Desert Audubon Society

Lander
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Audubon Society

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Bighorn Audubon Society

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Charles Gibson (307) 672-5233

Cheyenne High Plains

Audubon Society

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Laramie Audubon Society

Vicky Sue Henry, President
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Meadowlark Audubon

Society

Big Horn Basin
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Powder River Audubon

Society

Gillette
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Kids' Corner



Did you know...

There are only three animals with blue tongues: the black bear, the Chow Chow dog and the blue-tongued lizard.



At 188 decibels, the whistle of the blue whale is the loudest sound made by any animal.



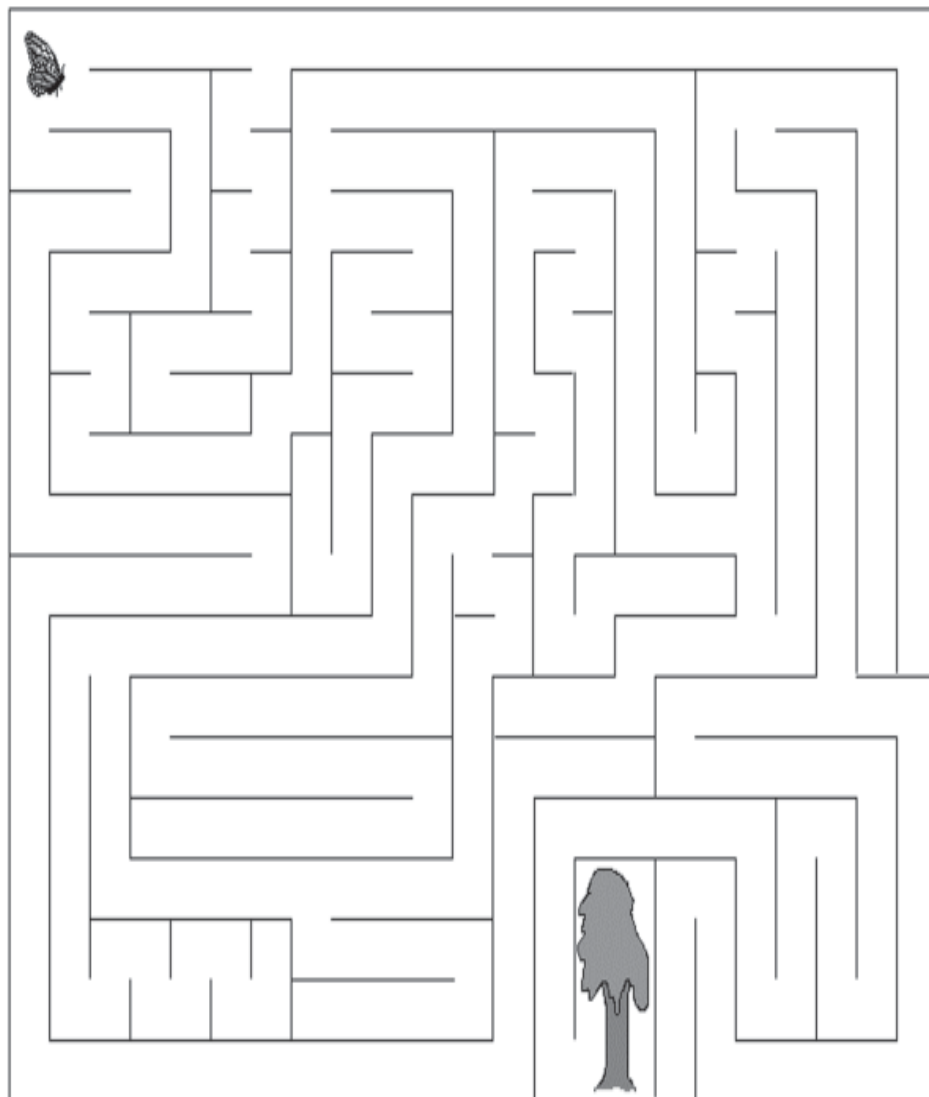
An earthworm's entire body is covered with chemoreceptors (taste receptors).



Marmots hibernate. Hibernation is a process which lowers their heart rate down to five beats per minute, and breathing down to 1-3 breaths per minute, which uses stored fat supplies as slowly as possible.



MIGRATION MAZE



Help the Monarch fly south for the winter

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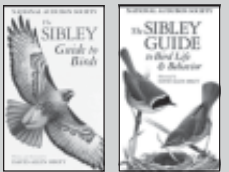
Word Scramble

- rbbait Answer: _____
- erba Answer: _____
- gleea Answer: _____
- mrigtae Answer: _____

Can you identify this Wyoming animal?
Look in a field guide and see if you can find it.
Hint: It is an amphibian.

358 North 5th Street
Laramie, WY 82072

Help support Wyoming's wildlife and wild lands by purchasing your copy of *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (\$42.50) and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior* (\$32.50) from Audubon Wyoming! Other titles also available. Stop by 101 Garden Creek Road to browse our selection!



AUDUBON WYOMING HAS A NEW WEBSITE!!!

The new site highlights our science, education and policy efforts, in addition to a new way to contribute to these endeavors through an online donation page. Check it out at:

www.audubonwyoming.org

 Printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink.

Make a Difference for Wyoming's Wildlife & Wildlands!!

JOIN/DONATE

Membership — \$20.00

All donations received in the Audubon Wyoming office are tax-deductible and used to benefit Wyoming's birds, wildlife and their habitats.

Complete & return to: **Audubon Wyoming**
358 North 5th Street
Laramie, WY 82072

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

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Payment (Please do not send cash):

- Check (make payable to Audubon Wyoming)
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Card # _____

Card expiration date (MM/YYYY) _____ / _____

Signature _____

VOLUNTEER

Do you enjoy watching wildlife? Love spending time in the outdoors? Then we invite you to volunteer with Audubon Wyoming! You don't have to be a bird expert...you just have to be willing to learn and want to have fun! Contact the following for volunteer opportunities.



Volunteers are the heart of Audubon Wyoming programs. We would not succeed without the assistance you provide so please join us in making a difference today!