

Nature Mapping Newsletter April 2015

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Coming soon, to a neighborhood near you? – Deb Patla

Boreal chorus frogs awake from their deep winter sleep to fill the air with their loud song from ponds and pools across Jackson Hole. The tiny male frogs (only 1" long) broadcast a loud trill, likened to running your fingers across a comb, in choruses from April to early June, mostly in late afternoon until late night. (photo right by D. Patla). They sing to attract females to breeding sites. The species is thought to be widespread, but there is little information about breeding sites on private lands in Teton County.

In addition to chorus frogs, Teton County is also home to these amphibian species: Western Toad, Columbia Spotted Frog, and Western Tiger Salamander. Only the chorus frog is loudly vocal, even though it is the tiniest in size. All these species lay eggs in wetlands, which hatch into larvae (tadpoles) that metamorphose into their



adult forms, usually by mid or late summer. After emerging from the wetlands, amphibians can do quite a bit of travelling and you may encounter them in a variety of places. American Bullfrogs, a non-native introduced species, inhabit Kelly Warm Springs. It is possible they have spread further, but we lack information about this.



Reptiles also reside in Jackson Hole, but the only widespread species is the Wandering Gartersnake (photo left by F. Clark). This snake is most often found not far from wet areas--yes, frogs are on the menu--but also small rodents, small fish, and insects. Be aware there is another gartersnake here, quite rare, the Valley Gartersnake. It can be distinguished by prominent red blotches on the sides. The gentle Rubber Boa and the Northern Sagebrush lizard are two other reptiles you may encounter, with luck. None of the local snake species are venomous; all are valued members of our community.

Last year we had only 12 verified observations of amphibians and reptiles. We can do better. So, when you hear chorus frogs, please try to determine where the calls are coming from, and map them the best you can. In fact, enter all encounters with amphibians in Nature Mapping. All your sightings are valuable! Click here to see more information presented at our recent training:

<http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Project%20Pages/Phib%20NM%20Training%20-%20DP-%202015.pdf>

Nature Mapper Contributions!

The following are several projects that have benefitted by your observations this past year and need your help this year.

Snake River Float Trips – Anya Tyson, Project Coordinator

In 2014, twenty observers enjoyed eleven Snake River Float trips generously donated by AJ DeRosa of Vintage Adventures. Nature Mappers recorded 68 bird, 4 mammal, and 1 amphibian species. The most common species was Spotted Sandpiper, then American Robin and Common Merganser. The most exciting sightings were Peregrine Falcon, Bullock's Oriole, and River Otter. What is most interesting besides the numbers, are the glimpses of natural history we gain by repeated floats on the same day of the week over four months.

Below is an excerpt from the full report on the website:

<http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Project%20Pages/2014SnakeRiverFloatSummary%281%29.pdf>

The Snake River: a home and a highway:

Like other highways, the Snake River is used more or less heavily during different times of years. Some bird species use this route in the spring, and then seem to prefer "back-road" travel to their destination in the fall, perhaps by using lakes or other waterways at that time. For example, large numbers of American White Pelicans (between 35-55) were observed on floats from mid-May to early June, whereas after June 8th only eight more were seen for the entire season with zero sightings after August. Also, we noticed Cliff, Bank, and Tree Swallows had apparently taken off for



their winter grounds by the end of August 2014. A few Barn Swallows lingered until mid September, or perhaps were simply flying through from breeding populations farther north. Most all of our migratory species were absent by the last float of the year on October 5th, 2014, with the exception of sightings of a solitary Mountain Bluebird, one Song Sparrow, two Yellow Warblers, and three Yellow-rumped Warblers who perhaps stuck around for the mild weather at the time.

A huge thanks to all of our participants who birded so diligently this summer and also to our wonderful, gracious volunteer-river guides: AJ DeRosa, Kevin Coughlan, and Adam “Dutch” Gottschling.

If you want to volunteer for this year, Contact: Anya Tyson, Snake River Float Trip Coordinator: anyamtyson@gmail.com, cell [719-231-2450](tel:719-231-2450). We need teams of 2-3 trained Nature Mappers with at least one person with good birding skills.

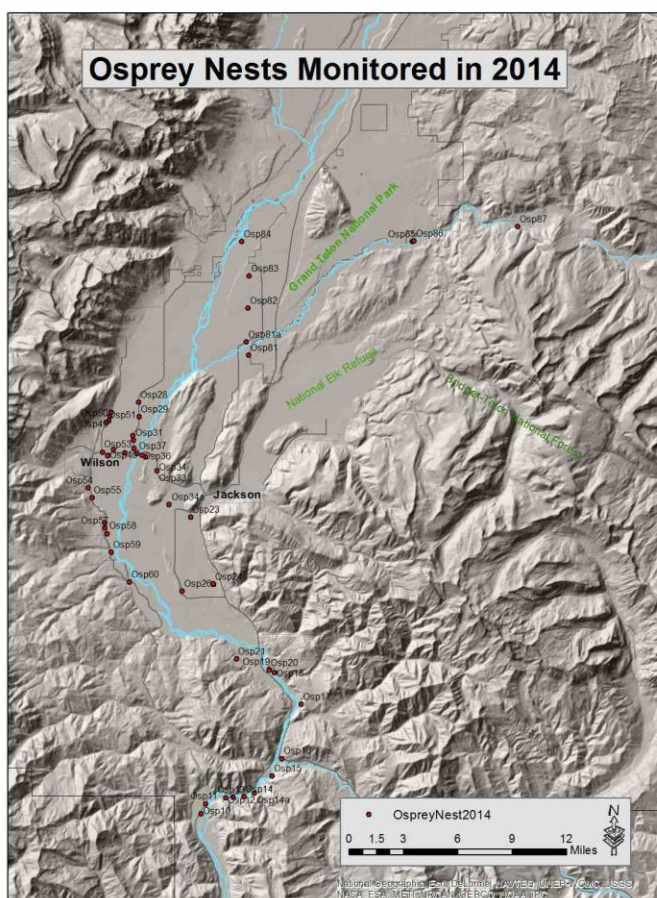
Osprey Project – Doug Ayers, Project Coordinator

In 2014, of the 54 osprey nests in the total inventory, 16 were damaged leaving 38 nests available for nesting. Osprey nested in 23 and produced 37 chicks. Canada Geese nested in 5.

All nests now have a standardized ID and UTM, so it is possible to track activity on an individual nest year to year. Not including 2011, 6 nests produced chicks 3 years running. I suspect a few more sites are regularly productive, which can be determined as the methodology continues to be standardized.

I would like to thank Diane Birdsall, Louise Lasley, Louise Haberfeld, Beverly Boynton, and Kathy McCurdey for their observations last year.

So far this year, Canada Geese have homesteaded 5 Osprey nests. There are likely more, as not all the nests have been checked yet. An Osprey was sighted carrying building materials the week of April 6—nesting season has begun!





With continued surveys, we may be able to determine which nests are favored by geese. Last year Lower Valley Energy erected a new platform near a nest taken over by geese by Skyline Drive south of Hwy 22. This year, on April 8, alerted by concerned citizens, LVE promptly put up a platform by Green Lane in Wilson. Many of us are anxiously watching to see if the displaced Osprey take to this new opportunity.

I would encourage all Nature Mappers to log Osprey observations. Take your time. For instance, in July, an observer can watch for 30 minutes and see 2 chicks, but a third chick may have been sleeping or just hiding.

If you would like to be an Osprey Project observer for this year, please contact Doug Ayers at nature1950@gmail.com or cell [703-304-7733](tel:703-304-7733).

March 2015 Data – Paul Hood

Total Observers: 41

Most Observations: Susan Marsh (88), Deb Patla (46); Dave Lucas (37) and Renee Melvile (28). We especially thank our most recently trained NM[M3] for being so active!

Observations March 2015

| | | | |
|----------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| Mammals: | 112 observations | 21 species | 824 individuals |
| Birds: | 315 observations | 63 species | 1066 individuals |
| Total: | 427 observations | 51 species | 1142 individuals |

Projects: Backyard – 21; Casual Observations -- 216

Notes: First of the year sightings (FOYs) are coming in: Singing Mountain Bluebirds, Western Meadowlarks, Song Sparrows, Red-wing Blackbirds, and Gray Catbirds were a pleasure to see and hear as are soaring Sandhill Cranes, rare Prairie and Peregrine Falcons, and swimming American Widgeons and a Northern Shoveler. Coming out of their holes: Least Chipmunks, Uinta Ground Squirrels, Yellow-bellied marmots. Much more coming! Thank you Nature Mappers.

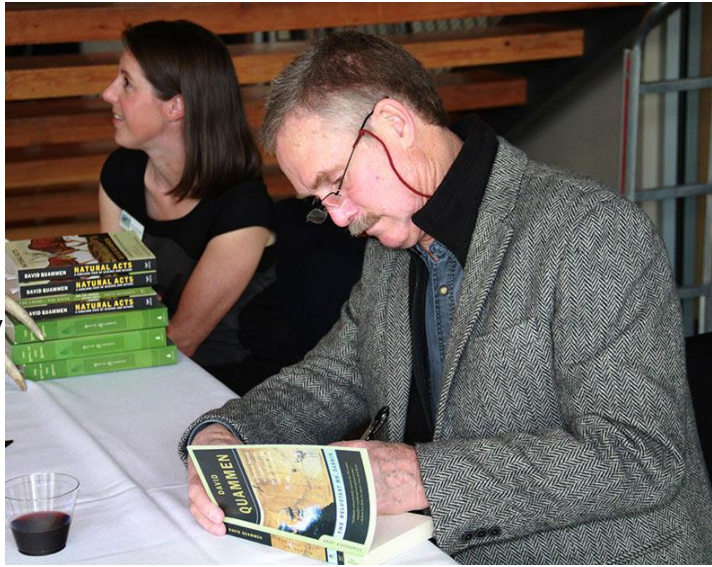
Support Nature Mapping

Nature Mapping Certification Training – Monday, April 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Auditorium A, Teton County Library, 125 Virginian Lane, Jackson: Become a Nature Mapper yourself or tell a friend! This two-hour interactive training will provide an overview of the Nature Mapping Program, its protocols for identification and data entry, and special opportunities. Bring a laptop or smart phone to practice entering data. (Veteran Nature Mappers may find this session a good review of new forms) Even if you can't make it this time, let us know you are interested in a future training session. **Contact:** Frances Clark: frances@jhwildlife.org or [781-259-9819](tel:781-259-9819). **Let us know by Sunday 26** if you are coming to assign passwords in advance.

Eat Out April 20-26 – Fine Dining Restaurants - Two for 1 plus \$2 ... Dining at the following restaurants will benefit the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation (including Nature Mapping!). At Rendezvous Bistro, Q Roadhouse & Brewing Co., Il Villaggio Osteria and Silver, guests are able to purchase one entree and get the second for \$2. At The Kitchen, Fine Dining offers a special \$12 dinner menu and at Bin22 guests are able to purchase one plate and receive the second for \$2 during lunch. With each effort, the additional \$2 (from the sale of the second plate) or \$1 per diner (at The Kitchen) is then donated to the week's featured organization: April 20-26 goes to Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation. Thank you Fine Dining!

Potluck 2015 a Success!

On March 24, over 140 nature mappers and other community members gathered for our Annual Potluck at the Center for the Arts. "A fun time was had by all, including good food, good company, and a thought-provoking keynote presentation by David Quammen." said Aly Courtemanch, Nature Mapping Scientific Committee co-chair/Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation board president. We appreciate the raffle donations from Henry Holdsworth at Wild by Nature Gallery, JH Mountain Resort, Turpin Meadow Ranch, Hotel Terra, and Fine Dining Restaurant Group. And most of all we thank all of you Nature Mappers for your contributions throughout the year!
(Photo of Daved Quamenn and Aly Courtemanch by A. Collett.)



More Volunteer Opportunities

Be sure to sign up for:

Snake River Floats – Sunday mornings, June – October – Contact: Anya Tyson, Project Coordinator: anymtyson@gmail.com or cell [719-231-2450](tel:719-231-2450).

Osprey Project – Assigned observation route during Osprey time of arrival, nest building, reproduction, and departure – Contact: Doug Ayers, Project Coordinator, at nature1950@gmail.com or cell [703-304-7733](tel:703-304-7733).

Bluebird Nest Box Project –1-2 hours per week primarily in April - May (over a 4-6 week period) and again for box cleaning and repair in the fall. Help monitor bluebird nest boxes along the National Elk Refuge fence and highway. Help us determine bluebird success for 2015 according to protocols set up by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Would you rather be working at the computer on your own time? We also need help entering this data to our database! This is part of a multi-year study. Contact: Renee Seidler, Project Coordinator, at [435-760-7267](tel:435-760-7267) or rseidler@wcs.org



Wildlife Expeditions Ride Along – Wednesdays in summer: half- or full-day. Teton Science Schools offers this special opportunity for Nature Mappers to join their tours led by their expert guides for free in exchange for mapping the wildlife seen by the group along the way. Contact: Jared Baecker at jared.baecker@tetonscience.org with cc: Frances frances@jhwildlife.org.

In Partnership with Teton Country Weed and Pest – Map

Invasives Jackson Hole: Jackson Hole is plagued by invasive exotic plant species which crowd out native plant species, alter wildlife habitat, and change natural processes such as fire regimes. TCWP trains Nature Mappers and other citizen scientists in early detection of the most threatening invaders both in the valley and in remote locations in the county to enable rapid response by professionals. Mapping at your own time. More info at: <http://www.tcweed.org/Map-Invasives-JH.php> **Training Dates (below):** Light food and drinks will be served. Contact: Amy Collett - [307-733-8419](tel:307-733-8419).

Monday May 4 - 5:30-7:30 p.m. Teton County Library, Orway Auditorium B

Thursday, May 2 - 5:30-7:30 p.m. Teton County Library, Orway Auditorium A

Tuesday, June 2 -1 2:00-2:00 p.m. Teton County Jackson Rec Center meeting room

Upcoming Programs

Tuesday, April 24, 6:00-8 p.m. – "The Yellowstone Raptor Initiative" with Katy Duffy - Teton County Library Ordway Auditorium B - The bird program of Yellowstone National Park monitors bald eagles, peregrine falcons and ospreys nesting within the park. The Yellowstone Raptor Initiative (YRI), a 5-year program started in 2011, inventories and monitors other raptor species including golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, prairie falcons and several owl species. The YRI also counts raptors during fall migration through Hayden Valley. This talk will be an overview of current raptor studies in Yellowstone. Katy Duffy has been involved in the Yellowstone Raptor Initiative since its inception. She is a recently retired resource education ranger who worked in Yellowstone NP and Grand Teton NP from 1982 – 2014. Katy is also a licensed bird bander who has conducted banding and other studies of raptors since 1979 and has belonged to the JH Bird and Nature Club since 1982. Co-sponsored by the JH Bird and Nature Club and Teton County Library.



Tuesday, April 28, 6- 8 p.m. -- "Cache Peak to Flat Creek: A Tour of Trailside Plant Life" - Teton County Library. Naturalist **Susan Marsh** will take us on a tour of Cache Creek, covering ecological relationships among six plant communities that can easily be seen from the trails. Emphasis will be on plant species both familiar and unusual among the 300+ species found in this area. Susan Marsh is author of several books and hiking guides, and a denizen of Cache Creek. Co-sponsored by Teton Plants - a chapter of Wyoming Native Plant Society and Teton County Library. www.tetonplants.org or sign up to be on our e-mailing list: tetonplants@gmail.com

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Nature Mapping is a program of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation and is sponsored by the Meg and Bert Raynes Fund and other generous contributors.

Donations can be mailed to:
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation
P.O. Box 8042
Jackson, WY 32002
or contact Cory Hatch cory@jhwildlife.org
Thank you!

JACKSON HOLE



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