

Nature Mapping Newsletter, August 2014



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Please remember Nature Mapping at this year's Old Bill's--Cory Hatch

Nature Mapping Jackson Hole citizen scientists, please take a bow! Since 2009, you've collected 29,947 wildlife observations. That's an immense amount of data in a short amount of time.

With so much high quality data, Nature Mapping has reached a critical mass. Research organizations and municipalities such as Craighead Beringia South, the University of Wyoming, Cornell University, Teton County and the Town of Jackson have started using our observations to learn more about the very species that make Jackson Hole a special place to live.

Each additional observation you record only makes Nature Mapping more robust, which means that researchers, wildlife managers and government officials can do a better job protecting the animals we love to watch. As Nature Mapping continues to thrive, it's our hope that volunteers will continue to provide the type of long term data that researchers often can't afford to collect for themselves.

So far, 2014 has seen big things from Nature Mapping: Last spring, we launched the new mobile website. As of August 7, we're just a handful of observations short of eclipsing the total number of observations recorded for all 12 months of 2013. On St. Patrick's Day, our annual Nature Mapping Potluck drew record crowds. We've formed partnerships with organizations such as Teton County Weed and Pest and the Teton Raptor Center. And, thanks to a grant from the Teton Conservation District, we're nearly finished with the second annual update of our Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Database.

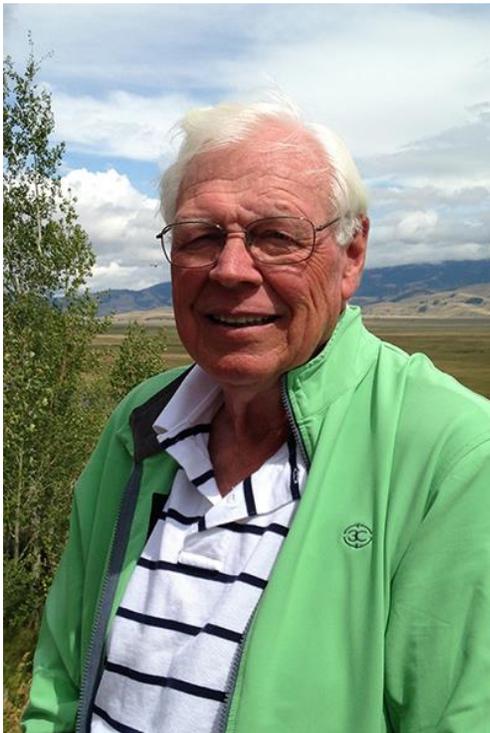
We owe all of these great accomplishments to the time and dedication of citizen scientists, our paid and volunteer Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation staff, and our strong partnership with the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund. But all of this progress also takes money. Your Old Bill's donations to the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation and the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund help keep Nature Mapping Jackson Hole a vital champion for Jackson Hole's Wildlife.

Thanks so much for your support!

All the best,

Cory Hatch, Executive Director, Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation

Volunteer Spotlight: Doug Ayers -- Frances Clark



Doug Ayers coordinates the Osprey Project of Nature Mapping. He is a mathematician who worked for 30 years as a marketer for IBM. He loves photography and volunteers for the Special Olympics and Help-Portrait. He lives with his wife, Nancy, in Melody Ranch.

How did you get involved in Nature Mapping? My wife Nancy and I saw an ad in the paper about citizen scientists. Chuck Schneebeck and Steve Kilpatrick were Bert's right-hand men in getting the idea started. They invited a bright young woman from the University of Washington to talk about Nature Mapping for Jackson Hole. We went to the meeting. Once the program was launched, we were some of the first to get trained by Steve Kilpatrick, then with Wyoming Game and Fish.

Why did you get involved? We were new to the valley and wanted to learn more about the wildlife, and I was interested in wildlife photography. I thought this project would help me know where the wildlife was.

How did you become the coordinator of the Osprey Project: I wanted to photograph osprey and had gone around looking for nests—particularly those where I could shoot from above down upon the chicks. I made a spread sheet of 39 nests and where I could view them from in respect to private property and safe vantage points.



Two years ago I showed the list to Susan Patla (non-game biologist for Wyoming Game and Fish). She then asked me to coordinate the program. Now I have a list of 54 platforms, each with a code number and precise GPS locations, along 8 routes. After recoding older data, we can then look year-to-year by

nest and develop an accurate history. I have developed a manual so that anyone can coordinate the project.

How is it rewarding to you? It has nothing to do with osprey *per se*. It is the nerd in me (I'm a mathematician) to have a standardized process to run the project with consistent data.

What is the value of the Osprey Project? Nature Mapping can share the location of the nests: Lower Valley Energy has only limited knowledge of where the nests are on their electric poles, and they are now putting some wires underground. We don't know if they will leave up the posts with nests. We will give the map to the Teton Raptor Center to assist it's DNA work on osprey; to Grand Teton National Park to complement its data; and to other non-profit organizations to help increase public awareness .

In the future, we may be able to determine the effect of Canada geese on osprey nesting success, if we need more nesting poles, and--in conjunction with the Teton Raptor Center's DNA work--how many of the same birds return each year.

What is the importance of Nature Mapping? Nature Mapping is important to help planners maintain the community. All the polls say that wildlife is a priority. I have sat on many task forces in my time without data. It's important to provide data to planners. And data could be used to help tourists see more wildlife. By knowing where animals are throughout the seasons, you can put yourself in a position to get lucky. It is a way to share the experience of wildlife here in Jackson Hole.

July 2014 Data -- Paul Hood

Total Observers: 35 Most Observations: Bernie McHugh (118) Susan Marsh (116)

Mammals:	128 observations	22 species	231 individuals
Birds:	142 observations	57 species	291 individuals
Amphibians:	2 observations	2 species	2 individuals
Snakes:	2 observations	1 species	2 individuals
Total:	274 observations	99 species	555 individuals

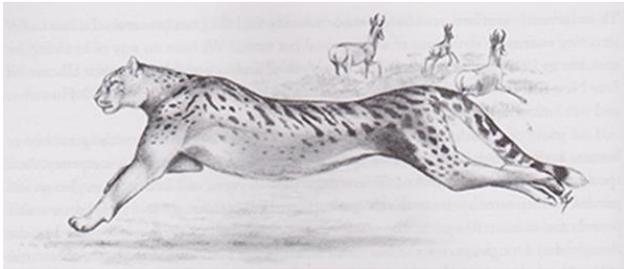
Projects: Backyard - 90, Casual Observations -166, Osprey Project - 17

Notes: In July, more observers mapped almost the same number of mammal species (22) compared to June (24). Moose still top out at 53 sightings! Amphibians and snakes have been added, including tiger salamander, boreal toad, and rubber boa. Focal species are still of importance: big brown bats, pika, and bighorn sheep. Unusual mammals include four short-tailed weasels (ermine) and a snowshoe hare. Unusual birds: American three-toed woodpecker and short-eared owl.

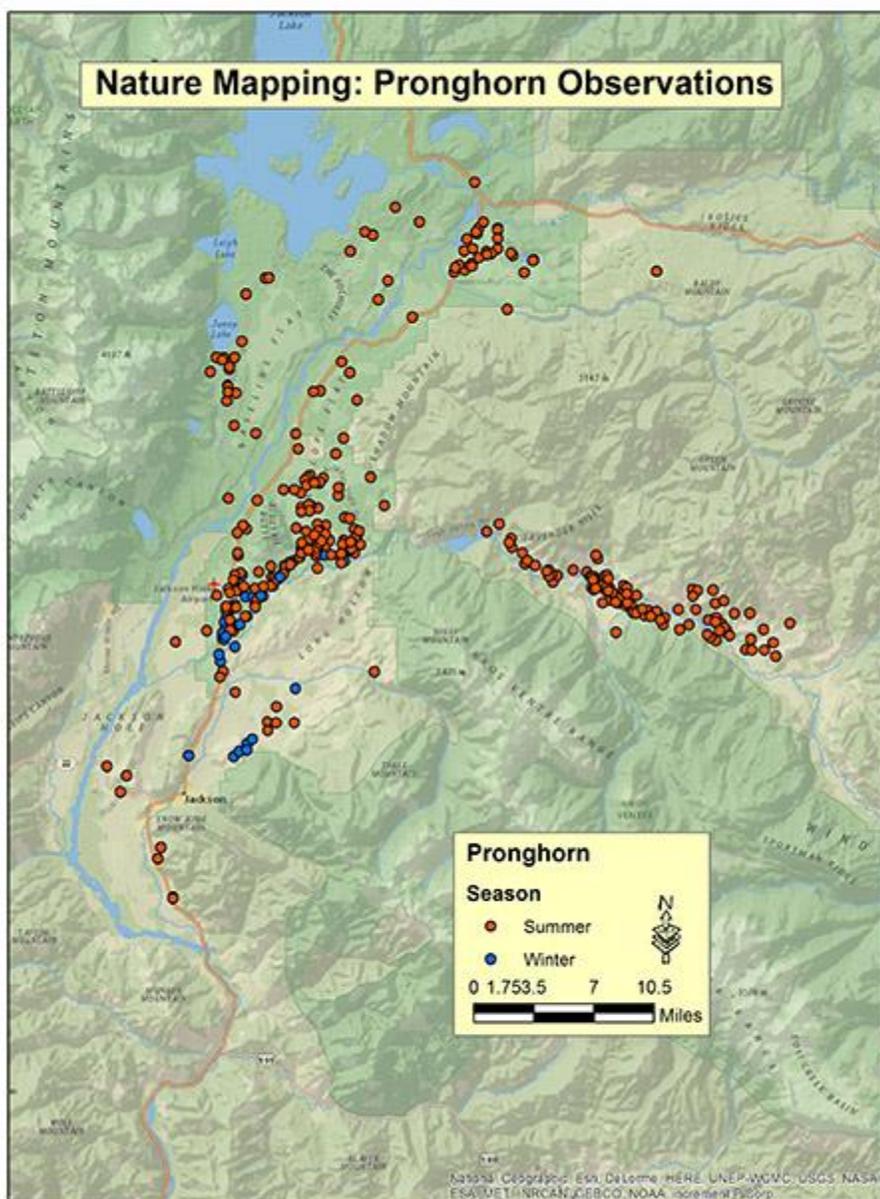
Clark's Nutcracker Observations: Taza Schaming would particularly appreciate sightings of juvenile Clark's Nutcrackers for her doctorate thesis. See our Focal Species webpage for info on ID and the project: <http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Clarks%20Nutcracker%20Info.pdf>

Map: Where the antelope (oops pronghorn) play in JH: Summer and Winter*--

Paul Hood, Frances Clark



Pronghorn are unique to this continent and in fact are not related to African antelope. Starting 1.8 million years ago, they evolved to outrun their prime predator: the American Cheetah. Pronghorn can run in bursts of speed of 44 mph, and at sustained distances at 16 mph, the fastest North American land animal. Their prominent eyes see equivalent to 8x binoculars. They favor sagebrush in winter and other shrubs and wildflowers in summer. With these adaptations, it is not surprising that they are found in sagebrush habitat. They will start the rut soon, providing a great observation opportunity for Nature Mappers.



In summer (red dots), pronghorn often browse around Blacktail Butte, Elk Ranch Flats, and the west side of the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park.

Each fall groups migrate east along the Gros Ventre River drainage and into the broad Upper Green River Valley. Pronghorn return again in late May. The many sightings by Nature Mappers along the Gros Ventre are mostly during migration time, but some animals remain in the expansive sections of the drainage throughout the summer.

Nature Mappers have provided some interesting summer data: A few pronghorn summer south of Jackson near the Melody Ranch and South Park areas, and some have been seen west of Jackson.

Our data from December to March (blue dots) confirm that occasionally a few individuals winter in Jackson Hole, mostly in the National Elk Refuge and south and east of Blacktail Butte, a risky decision as pronghorn cannot move easily in snow or paw for sagebrush to eat. Pronghorn are one of only a few mammals that can readily digest sagebrush, which contains toxic turpenoid oils. These unusual sightings, such as pronghorn lingering in Jackson Hole during the winter, are important to document.

* Summer: April – November; Winter: December-March

Cheetah illustration from *Extinct Animals: An Encyclopedia of Species that have Disappeared During Human History* by Ross Piper. Illustrations by Renata Cunha and Phil Miller



Volunteer Update:

Staff: Paul Hood, the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation's Nature Mapping GIS and data coordinator, will be leaving soon for graduate school at the University of Wyoming to study forest ecology. He will, however, continue to process data, produce maps, and answer technical questions remotely. Paul regularly goes above and beyond the call of duty to help Nature Mapping flourish. We wish him well in

Laramie, and we are glad he will continue with us! Frances Clark will help with trainings, volunteer contact (non-technical), and the e-news, along with the assistance of the Scientific Advisory Committee. Paul can be reached at: paul@jhwildlife.org and Frances at: frances@jhwildlife.org.

Opportunities: Snake River Floats - We have three Sundays remaining in September: 7,14,28. What could be better than an early Sunday morning float with expert oarsmen of A.J. DeRosa's Wooden Boat Tours while Nature Mapping? Birds, beaver, and an occasional moose are typical observations. We usually work in pairs: one observing (birding skills required!) and one recording the data. Please contact Anya Tyson: anyamtyson@gmail.com, 719-231-2450

Calendar:

50th Anniversary Wilderness Speaker Series Sponsored by Bridger-Teton National Forest

This 3-part series will focus on three Wilderness Areas located on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Each presentation will feature local specialists who will highlight an important aspect of wilderness stewardship. Presentations will cover the story of each wilderness' designation and then delve into one theme that makes each area note-worthy, both locally and nationally. Please join come and discover new and fascinating stories about these special areas designated as forever wild.

- **Teton Wilderness: Aug. 26, 6 pm, Teton County Library** - Wilderness & Wildfire: Andy Norman, Tom Matza, John Paul Schubert
- **Gros Ventre Wilderness: Sept. 2, 6 pm, Teton County Library** - Wild Rocks: A tour of the Gros Ventre Wilderness and its unique geology- Linda & Mike Merigliano, Susan Marsh (sponsored by Geologists of JH)
- **Bridger Wilderness: Sept. 9, 7 pm, Snow King Resort-Teton Room** - Air and Water Quality in Wilderness: Ted Porwoll, Andrea Davis.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 6 p.m. -- "Changing paradigms of aspen ecology and management" --

Kevin Krasnow, research and graduate faculty with the Teton Science Schools, will discuss how the fundamental assumptions concerning aspen are changing and consequently the implications for managing aspen communities in the coming century. Teton County Library - Sponsored by the Teton Chapter -- Wyoming Native Plant Society: <http://tetonplants.wordpress.com/>

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.

Donate through Old Bill's!



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