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Newsletter, March 2014](#)



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[Introduction - Cory Hatch, Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation Executive Director](#)

Wow! What a month! Three events in March—Moose Day, the Nature Mapping Potluck, and Talon Nights--drew hundreds of people to learn about and celebrate the science of Jackson Hole's spectacular wildlife. It's all a testament to the sense of community that Meg and Bert Raynes have inspired in those of us who care about the natural world.

It's this community that gives Nature Mapping it's strength. We are more than just individuals looking for wildlife. We are, collectively, a vast repository of knowledge and experience working toward a common goal.

As we head into summer, the Nature Mapping Science Advisory Committee and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation will work to provide even more educational opportunities to Nature Mapping volunteers. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to ask for assistance or advice. We, the Nature Mapping community, are here to help.

[Moose Day Summary - Aly Courtemanch, Paul Hood, Frances Clark](#)

Seventy-one Nature Mappers surveyed for moose through snow and wind the morning of March 1, our sixth annual Moose Day! They observed a total of 74 moose in 61 areas throughout the valley. Dozens of citizen science volunteers and biologists from Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and Teton Science Schools searched by car, skis, snowmobiles (Gros Ventre drainage) and on foot using detailed maps and protocols. Together they donated a total of 240 volunteer hours.

The going was rugged:

- *“Well we tried! B--- headed out from our home at the Kelly Campus at 700AM only to be turned back by near zero visibility and the snow plow driver who advised that our road was closed.” DW*
- *“Was just out looking for moose, I can't see much of anything - even got disoriented in my own neighborhood in the back cul-de-sacs.” MW*
- *“We only lasted 10' skiing and gave up because of blowing snow, poor visibility....Our entries are in--we saw 6 moose, more than we have ever counted on moose day!” BB*



(photo credit Kathy McCurdy)

Weather and snow conditions affect results year to year. The report notes that the snow water equivalent was 142% of the 30 year average. Higher snow water equivalents may limit dispersal, restricting moose to the valley floor. Variation in visibility also has a direct effect on the number of moose observed.

The important thing to remember is that data from Moose Day is an indicator of moose population trends over time vs. year-to-year comparisons.

Thank you Nature Mappers for adding yet another year of information so that we can learn more about Moose population trends and what may affect them.

Full report and map:

http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Moose_Day_2014_1.pdf

Northern Flying Squirrels - Susan Marsh

The Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund provided a grant to the Wyoming Game and Fish Nongame Program to document the distribution and habitat attributes of northern flying squirrels in Teton County.



Northern flying squirrels serve as excellent indicators of function and health of older aged forests. In Teton County, little is known about distribution or habitat use. The research results will be used to improve our understanding of the status of the species in the Jackson area, as well as, provide much needed information on habitat use and requirements in this changing ecosystem. Data from Jackson will complement data being collected elsewhere in Wyoming by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The Bridger-Teton National Forest and others can use this research to help manage local forests to help preserve biodiversity.

The study will commence this summer. In the meanwhile, Nature Mappers have been busy documenting a few flying squirrels of their own.

Between March 2009 and March 2014 Nature Mappers have recorded 57 sightings of northern flying squirrels. Observations were made near or within older conifer forests in

every month of the year except July (perhaps because they are raising young?). Typically flying squirrels are seen at night on bird-feeders. And occasionally in an odder spot:

- *“It got into the house through the pet door, I think. We managed to escort it out after much excitement in the living room.”*
- *“The squirrel was in the home of B. Smith. He opened the door and the beast walked out.”*

So, keep an eye out for flying squirrels in the dark - we may help the research that will be going on this summer.

For full article and

map: [http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Flying%20Squirrel%20blurb%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.naturemappingjh.org/content/doc/Flying%20Squirrel%20blurb%20(1).pdf)

February Data Summary* - Paul Hood

- Mammals: 225 observations of 15 species totaling 132 individuals.
- Birds: 132 Observations of 43 species totaling 225 individuals.
- Total: 357 observations of 58 species totaling 357 individuals.

Besides moose and mule deer, notable numbers included Clark's Nutcrackers, Pine Siskins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Pine Grosbeaks; unusual observations: Brown creeper, Wilson's Snipe, Great Horned Owl (5), mountain lion, and porcupine. *data as of March 1, not all observations have been verified .

Out of 35 observers, Chi and Renee Melville, new Nature Mappers, were the top observers with 67 submissions--all on the west side of the Tetons! Thank you all.

Mapping Opportunities:

First of the Year Sightings (FOYs): Now is the time to record species appearing for the first time in 2014. Collecting a record of when and where migrants return will be very useful in helping us understand changes from year to year. Also when do the ground squirrels emerge? Where are you hearing chorus frogs? These are just a few species to look for. Link here to the full list of FOYs from 2013 to prompt your observations. Paul Insert link

Focal Species: The NM Advisory Committee is encouraging you to look for some unusual species that are of particular interest to research biologists around the valley. These scientists may use our findings to aid their work. Look to the left hand column of our webpage for more information under Focal Species over the next month or two.

Birds:

- Clark's Nutcracker - Taza Schaming, PhD candidate Cornell University
- Common Loon - see program below
- Great Gray Owl - Bryan Bedrosian, Beringia South

Mammals:

- Pika -Embere Hall

- Northern flying squirrels - WGFD (see article)

Have fun Nature Mapping this spring!

[Volunteer Appreciation - Potluck](#)

Well over 180 people gathered for our Sixth Annual Nature Mapping Potluck at the Center for the Arts, March 17. We were treated to home-cooked food, enticing auction items, and a fascinating program by Dr. Mark Elbroch of Panthera. Unprecedented footage of cougars courting (it's the female that does the caterwauling!), kittens frolicking by their dens, and males visiting their families entranced the audience. (photo credit: Susan Marsh)

The success of the event was due to many hands:

- The Potluck Subcommittee led by Aly Courtemanch, Natalie Fath, and Lindsay Jones also included Renee Seidler, Jared Baecker, and Cory Hatch; Members of the NM Advisory Committee and the JHWF Board; and Chris Collett, Frances Clark, Forest Dramis, Steve Koob, Sue Morriss, Deb Patla, Anya Tyson.
- We appreciate the staff of the Center for the Arts, managed by Mike Dowda, for providing essential expertise and stellar service.
- Many Jackson businesses large and small donated items for our auction.
- And all the attendees provided the food and good cheer.

Thank you!

[Nature Mapping Training Opportunities](#)

YouTube Video - Paul Hood has developed a YouTube video on how to use the new data entry form, which streamlines entering the location UTMs, as well as other data. Now you can enter data while on the road or trail using a smart phone (if you can get a signal), or more easily at home. See how to pin point the location of an observation and tap it to enter coordinates. Go to <http://www.naturemappingjh.org/> , scroll to the bottom of the page and click "New Entry Form."

Nature Mapping Certification Training - Monday, April 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Teton County Library, 125 Virginian Lane, Jackson. Free. - Learn how to be a Nature Mapper in this two-hour, interactive training session. We will present an overview of the program, give tips on ungulate identification, and demonstrate data entry techniques. If you would like to register or need more information please contact Paul Hood: paul@jhwildlife.org or call: (307) 739-0968. Please note if you have a laptop you can bring to the training. Don't



worry if you can't make this training, we will notify you of the next one, most likely in May. For more info on Nature Mapping: <http://www.naturemappingjh.org>

Talon Nights - Tuesday, April 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Old Wilson Schoolhouse Community Center, Wilson. Free. - Come to the 2nd in a 3 part series sponsored by the Teton Raptor Center and Nature Mapping. Learn more about raptor ecology and how habitats can offer clues to finding and identifying wild raptors. Biologist Roger Smith will guide participants through some of Jackson Hole's key habitats, followed by a hands-on opportunity to learn key birding techniques and technologies including optics, GPS, keys and guides, plus on-line and mobile resources. Space is limited so please call TRC at 307-203-2551 to reserve your spot.

Other Calendar Events

Mule Deer Movement Study - Tuesday, April 8, 6:00 p.m. Teton County Library. Free - Dr. Corinna Riginos, Research Ecologist, will present the results of a 3-year study started in fall 2010 by the Teton Science School's Conservation Research Center and funded by the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Corinna will report findings on mule deer habitat use, movement patterns, and mortality patterns relative to roadways in Teton County, Wyoming. Key to understanding our wildlife and land use issues. Sponsored by JH Bird and Nature Club and Nature Mapping.

Restoring Sagebrush Habitat Plant by Plant in GTNP - Tuesday, April 22 - EARTH DAY - 6 p.m. Teton County Library. Free - Miles Proctor, vegetation restoration specialist with Grand Teton National Park, will discuss methods and challenges in returning cultivated hayfields back to sagebrush habitat to benefit a diversity of wildlife large and small. Sponsored by Wyoming Native Plant Society - Teton Chapter <http://tetonplants.wordpress.com/>

Common Loon Research and Conservation in Wyoming - Tuesday, May 13, Old Wilson Schoolhouse Community Center, Wilson. Free. Co-sponsored by the JH Bird and Nature Club and Nature Mapping. More details in next e-news.

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