



Brent McWhirter, JH Wildlife Photos



Mark Gocke



Thomas D. Mangelsen

Nature Mapping's volunteer citizen scientists gather data that can be used to help our community live more compatibly with wildlife.

Keeping common species common

Nature Mapping volunteers rack up 11,000-plus observations in two years.

By **Megan Smith**, *Project Coordinator, Nature Mapping/Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation*

Nature Mapping Jackson Hole got off the ground in May 2009, and in two short years, its volunteer citizen scientists have already recorded more than 11,000 observations of wildlife in and around the valley.

The program's motto is "keeping common species common from the backyard to the backcountry," and it's clearly off to an amazing start in generating a long-term dataset of wildlife observations on both public and private lands in Teton County. With the dual goals of engaging citizens and contributing to the body of knowledge available for researchers and local decision makers,

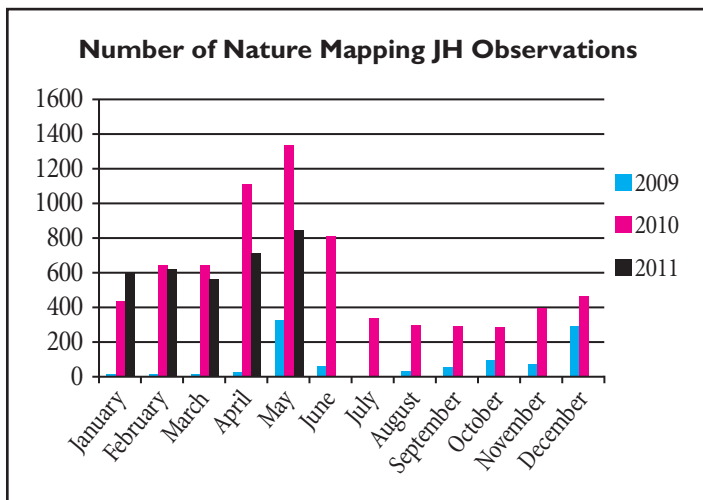


Megan Smith

Nature Mapping Jackson Hole shows that when everyone contributes a small amount, the end result really adds up.

As of April 2011, 326 volunteers have been trained to collect Nature Mapping data. With at least 50 percent of their observations on private lands, these volunteers gather data while commuting, enjoying the outdoors and watching wildlife in their own backyards; many also participate in systematic projects with stricter protocols.

Casual sightings represent the majority of observations and are incredibly important for long-term comparisons and identifying trends, while systematic projects are able to provide snapshots or multi-year comparisons to answer specific research questions.



Become a trained Nature Mapping citizen scientist!

Nature Mapping volunteers help create an accurate picture of what kinds of wildlife we have and where they live. As little as 15 minutes a week of just recording what wildlife you see in your own backyard, during your commute, or while you're out exploring can make a big contribution toward conservation efforts in the valley.

Certification trainings, offered monthly, are the first step for anyone interested in learning more about the project and how to use its web-based data management tools. People who've taken the initial two-hour class then become eligible to take a whole host of other trainings; visit www.naturemappingjh.org and click on "Event Calendar" to get an idea of what's available. To register, contact project coordinator Megan Smith at Megan@jhwildlife.org or (307) 739-0968.

Nature Mapping Jackson Hole is sponsored by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation and the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund.



Mark Gocke

Summer's a satisfying time to participate!

Nature Mapping's partnerships on projects with Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative and Teton Science Schools' Conservation Research Center have allowed citizen scientists to contribute valuable data directly to these groups' research efforts. For example, volunteers have so far contributed 25 percent of the total observations for CRC's pika project. These observations are a useful addition to those made by partner agency personnel and paid researchers. Nature Mapping data has also been helpful to area agency personnel and land trusts looking for an allied dataset to compare with their own research.

Upcoming, exciting projects include the second year of Snake River Floats sponsored by AJ DeRosa's Wooden Boat Tours, two Osprey Days surveying the local osprey population, and a partnership with Teton Science Schools' Wildlife Expeditions to have trained citizen scientists join wildlife tours to collect data on the trip's observations.

To become a trained citizen scientist for Nature Mapping, volunteers participate in a two-hour certification class (see box at left). For more information and reports on specific projects, visit www.naturemappingjh.org, or contact project coordinator Megan Smith with any inquiries at (307) 739-0968. Thank you to all the volunteers who are the heart of Nature Mapping! ■



Greg McHuron's lovely painting of long-billed curlews graces *Birds of Sage and Scree*.

Bert's book and fund benefit Nature Mapping Jackson Hole

Another way to support Nature Mapping Jackson Hole is by purchasing the elegant book *Birds of Sage and Scree*, a heartfelt collaboration between legendary local birder Bert Raynes and renowned wildlife painter Greg McHuron.

All proceeds from sales of the book go to the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund, enabling it to help other entities with projects – including Nature Mapping – that support viable and sustainable wildlife populations into the future.

Writer Todd Wilkinson calls the publication “more art book than portable field guide” and says it “makes the reader want

to set out immediately with binoculars in hand to see if the real feathered denizens match up to the stunning visual portrayals of them by McHuron.”

In Todd's words, “When you buy a copy of *Birds of Sage and Scree*, you get more than an art book.... You have the bonus satisfaction of supporting the survival of animals sharing the landscape with you.”

“*Birds of Sage and Scree* is not merely a statement about Rayne's

and McHuron's love for nature and the importance of friendship between two old codgers; it's an endearment they're sending to the rest of us, too,” he adds.

See below for purchasing information.



Bert Raynes

Published last summer, *Birds of Sage and Scree* includes reproductions of 27 oil paintings by Greg McHuron, paired with Bert Raynes' musings about the feathered friends that frequent this region.

The softbound edition, \$24.95, is 60 pages, produced in a one-foot-square format. There's also a collector's edition for \$300. To purchase, visit www.birdsofsageandscree.info, or contact publisher Ken Thomasma at (307) 733-4593 or grandviewpublishing@gmail.com. For more about Bert and Meg's fund, visit www.rayneswildlifefund.org.

