

Mission: Building on the tradition of special interest in birds, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is organized to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat.

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2018

YVAS Birds of the Month Yellow-headed Blackbird

This bird with its conical bill and large yellow head and breast is a crowd pleaser, for sure. Thanks for the excellent photos, Steve! These birds seem to preferentially nest and forage near Forster's Terns when possible, cooperating to mob predators or give alarm calls. They tend to displace Red-winged Blackbirds and Marsh Wrens (both species seen at the Shiloh ponds) from prime nesting spots. Predators include gulls, Black-billed Magpies, Common Grackles, American Bitterns, American Coot, Marsh Wrens, rails, bull snakes, garter snakes, blue racers, mink, red fox, raccoons, deer mice and skunk.

They are numerous and stable in the long term. In summer, insects are the mainstay, while the rest of the year seeds predominate their diet. Breeding grounds are wetland prairies, mountain meadows, and shallow marshes, ponds and rivers while wintering in crop fields, ranchlands, and farmyards from Arizona to Mexico.

Steve Linder took these beautiful photographs (below) June 8 at Shiloh Ponds.

Submitted by Trenay Hart and adapted from All About Birds



YVAS MEETINGS

All YVAS Meetings are at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings, MT unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome, there is no admission fee and ample free parking is available.

Friday, Sept. 14, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, Sept. 17, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting

We hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Announcements of the host for Sept. dinner will be in the August 2018 Flyer.



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☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

And Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/Yellowstone-Valley-Audubon-Society-504343829741848/>

There was no Board Meeting in June or July nor is there one set for August. There is a Board Meeting Sept. 14 at 4PM. There will be announcements in the September Flyer regarding the pre-meeting potluck.

EDITOR'S CORRECTION: I apologize for running the Exxon Ponds article from May 2018 in the June/July 2018 Flyer. I, also, didn't make corrections correctly to the second running of the article regarding Jim Hansen discussing Red-winged Blackbird vs. Donn Bartlett. Apologies to you both and Robin Manfredi.

The YVAS Board of Directors is trying to find a better way to alert supporting Chapter Members of their renewal dates. The list below consists of those members up for renewal in AUGUST. Please use the application form below (include your email address) and submit it, along with a check, to any Board Member or mail it to the address on the application when it is time to renew. Contact the Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins at member-ship.data@yvaudubon.org with any questions.

JULY remaining renewals: Grace Blair, Judy Fenton, Donna M Lance, Liz Yorgason.

AUGUST Renewals: Donn Bartlett, Donn & Dorothy Bartlett, Darlene Ellis, Cindy Meccage, Sherlene Robinson-O'Dea, Rick & Starr Stevens, Micah Umphrey, Bruce Waage.



Who do you call when you find an INJURED bird?

Injured Birds: Details at yvaudubon.org (select the "Projects" tab and then "Injured Birds") or call MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (M-F) 406-247-2940.

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, Becky Kean, 406-585-1211.

Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources, Sheila McKay, 406-652-7175.

Twine Entangled Osprey in Nest: Dr. Marco Restani, 406-425-2608 or Deb Regele, 406-962-3115

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

AREA CODE 406

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, smregele@gmail.com
Vice-President: Steve Linder, 380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net
Secretary: Doreen Hartman, 697-0277, rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Treasurer: Pam Pipal, 245-4517, ppipal@charter.net

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett: 628-5058, dpadanyi@live.com
 Carolyn Jones: 670-4449, carolyn684@gmail.com
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Marco Restani: 425-2608, restani@stcloudstate.edu
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com
 Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 839-4461, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Steve Daines: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 email Sen. Daines via his website: daines.senate.gov
 Billings: 406-245-6822 Wash. D.C. 202-224-2651
Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 website: tester.senate.gov
 email: senator@tester.senate.gov
 Billings: 406-252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 202-224-2644
Rep. Greg Gianforte:
 email Rep. Gianforte via his website:
<https://gianforte.house.gov/contact/email>
 Billings: 406-702-1182 Wash, D.C: 202-225-3211

Committees and Special Assignments: AREA CODE 406

Audubon Adventures: Jerry Dalton, daltonlj@centurylink.net
 Baling Twine Project: Deb Regele, debregele@gmail.com
 Bird Questions: George Mowat, 656-7467 gbmowat@gmail.com
 or Helen Carlson Cummins, 248-8684
 Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, erv132@charter.net
 Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 259-5099, C: 860-0450,
 custertours@gmail.com
 Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele, 962-3115,
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 Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins,
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 Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 628-5058,
 dpadanyi@live.com
 Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com
 Publicity: contact any Board Member
 Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, smregele@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins, 839-4461, nwiggins83@gmail.com,
 Sheila McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker, 855-9832,
 918 AVE C, Billings
 Website: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com

Meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg, Billings, MT:
 • Board Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at 4:00pm. Board Meetings are open to all members.
 • General Chapter Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.

Saturday & Sunday, June 2-3, Birdathon*Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst*

Birdathon 2018, dedicated to fun, was a success judging by the smiles and camaraderie enjoyed at the BBQ potluck generously and graciously hosted by Sue Weinreis and husband, John Enright in their beautiful back yard. Each of the five teams reported their finds and persons who had not managed to see a reported species were quick to ask where the species has been seen. Maybe that practice is one reason teams often expand the number of species they identify each year. Tired, but comfortable, everyone seemed to have a good time as they recounted their 24 hours of birding.

This year the teams identified 165 species! That is 14 more than the record set last year! WOW!

The winning team, the Avian Rangers, always the most productive, led by Mike Weber and including Brian Henderson, Robert Hill and Will Crain identified 135 species. They were joined by Debbie Lieck who is working with Mike on the Nocturnal Birds project (see report in June 2018 Flyer). We offer our heartfelt congratulations and admiration to these fine birders. As we listened to their reported journey to find all these birds many of us were in awe. They know where various species are, and they seek them out during that 24 hours. They also have unusually fine skills in identifying birds.

Coming in second were The C's from Overseas composed of Peter and Helen Cummins and Peter's brother Tony and wife Janet from England. This foursome of excellent birders identified 99 species. Janet had so much fun she is thinking of organizing a Birdathon in Great Britain. Tony joined the team 2 years ago on his visit to the U.S., so his skills had once before been used in Birdathon. Congratulations to you all.

Deb and Steve Regele identified 98 species. They, too, had an extensive tour of birding areas in this part of the state and it paid off for all of us. How good it is to see excellent birders become available to Birdathon again after several years of conflicting commitments to ball games of their grandchildren.

Next came the Senior Moments, missing one of their original members but augmented by the excellent skills of Sue Weinreis, that's right, the same hostess for the celebratory Potluck. Pam Pipal and Ruth Vanderhorst filled out that team which identified 75 species.

And last, a new team, Rosebud, featured Brenda and Jeff Dunham who started their event at East Rosebud Lake and then birded their way to Billings. They concentrated on getting more mountainous birds and that is what they did with 66 species. Nice work and impressive.

Congratulations to all the birders involved and thank you for the fun and relaxing and delicious dinner. Let's start planning for next year.

Tuesday, June 5, Clarks Fork WMA-Bluewater Fish Hatchery*Submitted by Jeanne Olson*

Eight of us met at Fort Rockvale to begin our birding trip with Steve Regele as our leader. We briefly stopped at the Bridger settling ponds where we saw an Eared Grebe and a few ducks, such as Canvasback and Northern Shoveler. Lark Sparrows were on the fences all along the road up to the Bluewater Fish Hatchery Fishing Access, and several Cliff Swallows were nesting near the Fishing Access stop. We drove past the Fish Hatchery and headed up to the Hidden Valley Ranch, a private property behind a locked gate. Steve had earlier gotten the key to give us access, and we enjoyed a leisurely lunch among the abandoned ranch buildings, along the edge of the spring-fed Bluewater Creek.

Looking up at red rock canyon walls, we found a Rock Wren and additional swallows: Tree, Violent Green, and Barn. We were serenaded by a Spotted Towhee and Yellow Breasted Chat. We then headed back down to the Bluewater Fish Hatchery, spotting our final swallow (Northern Rough-winged) near a roadside pond.

Pulling into the Fish Hatchery, we saw a Common Nighthawk resting on a branch right over the road. At the feeders on the Hatchery grounds, there were Cassin's Finches and a Bullock's Oriole. The hatchery manager showed us where Red-tailed Hawks were nesting near the hatchery grounds. On our way back down to Fromberg, we stopped at a bridge over Bluewater Creek just to see what we might find. We found a lot of raptor activity. First we saw two Northern Harriers, flying high overhead; they were then replaced by Cooper's Hawks and Red-tailed Hawks. Another hawk came whizzing past us, quite close, and we came to the consensus that it was a Northern Goshawk. It was a great end to a great birding day. We ended up seeing a total of 43 species. Thank you Steve for leading us up Bluewater and for making arrangements to get us into the Hidden Valley Ranch.



Dorothy Bartlett submitted this photo of a bird from the Pryor Mt/Sage Creek field trip and the consensus on the ID has been...anyone wanting to guess is welcome to submit their ideas.



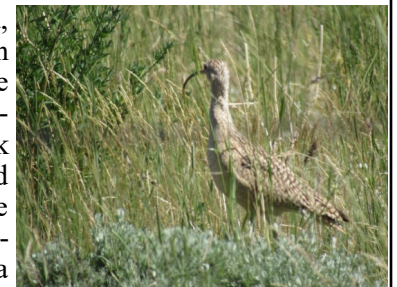
Robin Manfredi, on a trip to Hawaii needs help identifying this bird she observed. Please submit any ideas to the Flyer and we will publish in the next edition.

Friday-Sunday, June 8-10, Wing's Across Big Sky, MT Audubon Bird Festival, Kalispell*Submitted by Trenay Hart*

Member's Trenay Hart, Karen Heil, Robin Manfredi and Carol Pierson have been attending the festival together many years running. At this year's festival they were treated by Dan Casey giving them a personal field trip to see adorable nesting Pygmy Nuthatches and more. We really appreciated it, Dan! He also found Vaux Swifts and Black Terns to make a few more life birds for some of us. The Sells, Jim and Jeanne were also in attendance and Rita Harding was spotted. The photo, by Carol Pierson, is of the "Wing Bats" tattoos they sported during the entire festival supplied by the Montana Loon Society, fitting!

**Tuesday, June 12 Pryor Mountains-Sage Creek***Submitted by Pam Pipal*

Two vehicles met in Laurel to car pool and proceeded on to Bridger Rest Area where they were joined by two additional vehicles. Then Stan Heath led us to our destination, birding along the way. We had to modify our usual route for this trip to avoid a road where the bridge had been compromised by flooding, but we still got to take the road that goes by Blue Grosbeak habitat! And we lucked out, with an extended sighting of this wonderful bird! First sighting was on the right side of the road, where we could barely ID the bird, except by its silhouette and distinctive beak. The Blue Grosbeak then flew to Russian Olives on the left side of the road and we could see its brilliant blue! Other birds of note along the way were a Sandhill Crane, a Wood Duck in a sewage lagoon, Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Long-billed Curlew (Dorothy got a picture of that one), Rock Wren, Mountain Bluebird, and Golden Eagle. We got to the Campground and birded while eating lunch. It was wonderfully balmy there, with a light breeze. A few notable sightings at the Campground were Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Black-headed Grosbeak, and the piece de resistance: a Willow Flycatcher! Stan verified this bird with a recorded call. What a nice life bird for a few of us!



After lunch, and moving on up into the pines, we ID'd the following: Townsend's Solitaire, Western Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a Junco. At this point our vehicle called it a day, while two other vehicles proceeded on. And what a remarkable day it was! Photo of **Long-billed Curlew** by Dorothy Bartlett.

Sunday, June 24, Red Lodge Area*Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst*

After postponement due to repeated rains the trip was thoroughly delightful. On a beautiful sunny day, 10 participants, including our leader, Stan Heath, identified almost 60 species as they drove to and from Red Lodge, and birded the Nichol's Creek area, Stan Heath's yard and the roads leading through Luther to the national forest boundary and beyond. Then Willow Creek road where Bobolinks showed themselves. At Nichol's Creek birdsong was plentiful and quite a few species as well. We enjoyed both Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbirds, several Warblers, including Orange-crowned, MacGillivray's and Yellow-rumped. Ruby-crowned Kinglets seemed to be singing everywhere. Many more species were identified before we journeyed along the roads west of Red Lodge where Mountain Bluebirds made their expected appearance. As we lunched on our leader's porch, we saw both Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks. Stan Heath reported they had been there all winter. A Cassin's Finch also came to feed while we were there. After lunch, we headed for Luther and the Custer National Forest boundary to the west. The expected American Dippers were absent, but we had good looks at Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Dark-eyed Juncos. As we drove in search of the Gray Jay we had seen there before we heard many birds who remained out of sight in the trees. No Gray Jays! As we drove back to Red Lodge we saw our first grassland species including Clay-colored, Chipping, Brewer's, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows. And then, the Bobolinks! A pictorial history of the trip will likely be provided by Dorothy Bartlett and Lynda Zirpoli as they focused in on birds off and on all day. Thanks, Stan, for a superb trip.

Field Trip Calendar:

All field trips depart from Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Rimrock Road, adjacent to Billings Studio Theater, unless otherwise noted, and will be by car. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS.** All field trips are open to the public. Passengers will share gas costs with driver when car-pooling. Do make sure you check all field trips with listing in flyer each month for any changes. Binoculars and birding books are available on loan at the field trips
CHAIR: Donn Bartlett 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com FIELD TRIP

8/4/2018 Sat

Shorebirds, Hawks and Prairie Birds

Mike Weber, leader. Sack lunch.

8/16 - 18/2018 Fri & Sat
Northwestern MT.

Bowdoin NWR

Brian Henderson, leader. Observe migrating birds in
Call Ruth Vanderhorst at 406-245-5118 for information
and make your own reserved for two nights at Maltana,
Malta 406-654-2610.



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Dorothy Bartlett submitted the photo of the Birder's hanging out on Stan Heath's porch in Red Lodge at left, and Lynda Zirpoli submitted the picture at right, of the Western Tanager from the trip. Thank you, ladies, for the visuals!



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Application for New & Renewal Membership

Please enroll me as a supporting member of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society. I understand I will be supporting local Chapter activities and receiving the local newsletter. I will enjoy full family Chapter benefits. Make check payable to **Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society** for \$20. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$10 and indicate academic affiliation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Do you want to receive the Flyer electronically?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Send this application and your check to:
Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1075

Billings, MT 59103-1075





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AUDUBON FLYER**

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Big Lake looking NW
photo by Trenay Hart
taken 7/22 the water is
still VERY big at the
lake and worth a visit.
All roads dry!



White-winged Dove, Merida, Mexico *photo by Robert Hill*. I wonder if he heard Stevie Nicks singing her 1981 song "Edge of Seventeen" in his head? Lyrics include: just like a white winged dove, sings a song, sounds like she's singing, oh baby oh said oh...



At left, **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, at right **Calliope Hummingbird**, *photos by Lynda Zirpoli* on the Pryor Mt-Sage Creek field trip. Thank you for these beautiful examples of our smallest summer visitors!



PEACEFUL BIRDS

Twelve birds at my feeder
Six sitting on my feeder
Six grounded below my feeder
All enjoying eating in peace
Four are small gray birds
Four are small brown birds
Four are small black birds
All enjoying eating in peace

Poem at left
by David
Omen.

Typical.

YVAS Bird-
ers! Enjoying
a day in the
Pryor Mts!
*Photo by
Lynda Zirpoli*

