

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 43, NUMBER 11/12

#### Chapter Meeting Monday, November 18, 7:15pm DECLINE OF YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT TROUT IN YELLOWSTONE LAKE

**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013** 

The iconic Yellowstone cutthroat trout, species of concern in Montana, is being threatened in Yellowstone Lake due to the introduced population of non-native Lake trout. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout, a keystone species of the Yellow-

YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT TROUT Photo from NPS.gov Lake trout. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout, a keystone species of the Yellowstone Lake ecosystem, historically celebrated a population estimated near 4,000,000. Today, the population may be too small to even estimate.

Although many factors have contributed to decline of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Yellowstone Lake, pressure exerted by the aggressive non-native Lake trout is thought to be the largest single contributor, according to the National Park Service. To fight back, the National Park Service gill netted\* 1.2 million Lake trout between 1993 and 2012. As a result, the Yellowstone cutthroat trout population is thought to have stopped declining, while the Lake trout population is being held in check. Concentrated efforts by the NPS, USGS, and private organizations such as Trout Unlimited, have been developing technology to target Lake trout eggs to minimize recruitment. Copious gill netting will continue to target the adult Lake trout in Yellowstone Lake.

**Our speaker Dave Sweet** has been a Trout Unlimited (TU) member since the mid 1970's. Since 1988, he has been a member of the East Yellowstone Chapter in Cody, WY, holding numerous positions including President and Chair of the "Save the Yellowstone Cutthroat" committee. He is also active in the Wyoming Council. In 2010, he was named Yellowstone Lake Special Project Manager for the council and has been active in saving the Yellowstone cutthroats of YNP for the past 6 years. At the fall, 2011 National TU meeting, Dave was recognized with the "Distinguished Service Award" for his efforts on Yellowstone Lake and in the Wyoming Council. In 2013, he was named as a finalist for Field & Stream magazine's "Hero's of Conservation" award. Now retired from the guest ranch business, he and his wife Cathy, live in Cody where they raise horses and enjoy the great Wyoming outdoors fishing and hunting. Jon Brun and Sheila McKay

\*a net suspended vertically in the water to trap fish by their gills in its meshes

Inside this issue:		YVAS MEETINGS	
This Month's Chapter Meeting	I	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.	
Meetings Schedule	I	Monday, November 11, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting	
Officers and Commit-	2	Monday, November 18, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting	
tees	-	We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the Chapter	
Membership Forms	/	meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Bernie Mowat has generously volun- teered to host. Please contact her at 656-7467 before November 16	
Field Trip Schedule	8	to make reservations and tell her what you will bring.	
		"We're on the web! yvaudubon.org	

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YVAS is selling Binocular Straps that feature the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society logo engraved on a



genuine leather back patch. These straps can also be used for cameras. They are offered at a very competitive price. The "Made in USA" quality and workmanship is excellent. They are \$20 each and will be available at our Chapter Meetings and Birding Field Trips. All proceeds from the sales go to support the YVAS Conservation Grant fund.

As a reminder, Christmas is just around the corner. Buy 5 Binocular Straps for a special price of \$90. The supply is limited! If you have any guestions, call Deb Regele at 962-3115.

#### \$\$\$\$\$ **Conservation Grants** \$\$\$\$\$

For 2013-2014, YVAS is offering a conservation grant of up to \$1000.00. The grant will be awarded to individual(s), or group(s) engaged in some project which supports the YVAS mission: "to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism and conservation of bird habitat."

Grants can be awarded help fund a variety of conservation projects including, but not limited to,

- research on birds, plants, habitat, alternative energies, effects of CO<sub>2</sub>, etc.
- field work projects, such as habitat restoration, building/establishing bird/bat boxes, monitoring bird/wildlife populations, etc.
- travel, continuing education, advocacy for natural resources, etc.

Applications must be received by February 1, 2014, and the award winner will be expected to submit a written report of their project and its success within one year of the initial award date. They will also be asked to present their results at either an YVAS Board meeting or at a general membership meeting.

For more information and application forms, visit www.yvaudubon.org or contact Nancy Wiggins nwiggins83@gmail.com or (406) 651-0218. Address grant applications to YVAS Board, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:	Committees and Special Assignments:
<ul> <li>President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com</li> <li>Vice-President: open</li> <li>Secretary: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com</li> <li>Treasurer: Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com</li> <li>Board of Directors:</li> <li>Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com</li> <li>Bill DeMeyer: 671-7501,bademeyer@gmail.com</li> <li>Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com</li> <li>Cameron Sapp: 406-702-1138, csapp@wildmontana.org</li> <li>Jeanette Tasey: 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com</li> <li>Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com</li> <li>Montana's Congressional Delegation:</li> <li>Sen. Max Baucus: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510</li> <li>website: http://baucus.senate.gov</li> <li>email: max@baucus.senate.gov</li> <li>Billings: 657-6790 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-332-6160</li> <li>Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510</li> <li>website: http://tester.senate.gov</li> <li>email: senator@tester.senate.gov</li> <li>Billings: 252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 1-866-554-4403</li> <li>Rep. Steve Daines: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515</li> <li>website: www.rdianes.house.gov</li> <li>email: steve.daines@mail.house.gov</li> <li>Wash, DC: 202-225-3211</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Audubon Adventures: Jeannette Davis, 656-7618</li> <li>Bird Questions: George Mowat, 656-7467 or Helen Carlson, 248-8684</li> <li>Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court,406-259-5099, cell 406-860-0456, custertours@gmail.com</li> <li>Conservation Chair: Steve Regele,962-3115,sregele@juno.com</li> <li>Editor: Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com</li> <li>Field Trip Chairs: George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467, gmowat@bresnan.net</li> <li>Hospitality: Phyllis Holt 252-7373, Audrey Jurovich 656-2748</li> <li>Injured Raptors: Jeanette Tasey 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com</li> <li>Membership Secretary: Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672, cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com</li> <li>Program Chair: Shelia McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com</li> <li>Publicity: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com</li> <li>Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker, 406-855-9832</li> <li>Website: Tom Lyman, Tomglyman@gmail.com</li> <li>Meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg, Billings, MT:</li> <li>Board Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to the entire membership.</li> <li>General Chapter Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.</li> </ul>



#### YVAS HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER

WHEN: MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 6:30PM

#### WHERE: The Harvest Church at 1235 W. Wicks Lane in the Heights

Because our event is so close to Thanksgiving, we invite you to a holiday 'social' instead of the traditional pot luck dinner. We ask you to bring a festive dessert, enough to serve 8-10 people. Everyone who brings a dessert will receive a free raffle ticket. Coffee and punch, plates, napkins and forks/ spoons will be provided.

#### RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED: <u>DPADANYI@LIVE.COM</u> OR DOROTHY AT 252-0757 BY DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>.

**WHY:** The fundraiser is very important to YVAS, as it is the way we raise money to support:

- \* The Osprey Project to monitor nesting sites on the Yellowstone River
- \* **Conservation Grant** awarded to groups or individuals working on conservation projects that support the YVAS mission
- \* **Speakers/Program fund** to support efforts to bring quality and diverse programs to Chapter meetings and to offer educational opportunities to our members and the community
- \* **Improving the YVAS web site -** to provide comprehensive information about YVAS which is easily accessible by members and the community
- \* Citizen Science by tracking bird sightings on our field trips and reporting the findings to national data bases
- \* Contributing to joint ventures such as the Yellowstone River Clean Up
- \* Audubon Adventures to support Audubon's award-winning environmental education program designed for grades 3-5.
- \* Yellowstone River Birding and Conservation Project to study and preserve birds and bird habitats along the Yellowstone River and associated areas

**COST:** \$7.50 for members and \$10.00 for non-members.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Bob Landis' presentation of his latest video: 'Yellowstone Park 2013'. Bob is an Emmy Award-winning wildlife cinematographer who has produced many films for programs such as National Geographic and Nature. Recording wildlife behavior on movie film and video is the hallmark of Bob Landis' films. His work has taken him to many parts of the world, but his home is Yellowstone National Park, a place dear to his soul. Signed DVDs will be available for \$10.00.
- Silent and live auctions with terrific items will be available for you to purchase
- **The Raffles:** Tickets will be available for purchase the evening of the event.
  - ~ \$5 Golden Ticket Raffle: The first place winner can claim any item in the silent auction, jumping ahead of other bidders. Second place winner prize to be announced.
  - ~ \$1 Raffle: Anyone bringing dessert for 8-10 will get a ticket for this raffle and be eligible to win selected items.
  - $\sim~$  \$5 or five for \$20 'Seasonal Bouquets' Raffle: Flowers, donated by Gainan's will be delivered monthly for a year.
  - ~ Wine Raffle: Every ticket wins a bottle of fine wine.

# **!!!!! CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT !!!!!**

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH



**No experience necessary—just grab** your checklists, warm gloves and binoculars for the 114th year of the National Audubon Society's premier citizen science event, the Christmas Bird Count! The 2014 Christmas Bird Count will be held on December 14<sup>th</sup>. This ongoing census is one of the oldest in the nation and helps provide important data to determine long range trends in bird populations. The count will be conducted on 15 counting sections and at bird feeders in the usual 15-mile diameter area centered on the Exxon Refinery in Billings. Clearly marked maps will be available, and there is no fee to participate. The census results will be available on line.

All YVAS members and interested public are encouraged to participate in the count. You can form your own group or be paired with experienced birders. It is great fun and always interesting. Participants meet at **Denny's Restaurant on N 27<sup>th</sup> Street in Billings at 7:00am** for breakfast and to pick up survey packets for their counting area. For more information about joining in the **Christmas Bird Count contact Jim Court at** <u>custertours@gmail.com</u>, 406-259-5099, or Gail Speck at <u>gailjspeck@gmail.com</u>, 406-461-1997. At the end of the day we can all meet at **Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings,** to tally the results and enjoy delicious home-made soup, goodies, and companionship.

# **CONSERVATION NEWS**

• **BirdLife** calls for an ambitious response as IPCC finds greater certainty of human influence on climate change. See *Tackling climate change at* Birdlife.org

• If you've ever wanted to create a wildlife-friendly garden, but weren't sure how to keep it from looking too "wild", now is the perfect time to start. Fall is a great time to plan and lay groundwork for a beautiful, bustling spring garden — get started today and then certify your yard as a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wild-life Habitat<sup>®</sup> site. See five simple tips gardeners of every experience level can use to

create a yard both people and wildlife alike will enjoy at <u>www.nwf.org</u>.

MONTANA CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND coordinates the Billings Conservation Roundtable, a network of individuals, organizations and agencies that come together on a bi-monthly basis to discuss conservation-related issues and share information of common concern. <u>Download our brochure</u> to see which organizations participate in the Roundtable, and how you can add your organization to the list. Visit www.mtvotersedfund.org.

#### **Upcoming Billings Conservation Roundtable Meetings**

Meetings are held on the dates listed from Noon to 1pm at the 1st Interstate Bank Operations Center:

<u>\*November 19</u>: Montana Wilderness Association, Cameron Sapp, on Prairie Conservation.

December 17: US Forest Service - Custer Gallatin National Forest.

January 21, 2014: Western Native Voice and Montana Conservation Voters on Protecting Voter Rights

\*Cameron Sapp is a member of the YVAS Board of Directors

## FIELD TRIP NOTES

### AUGUST 23—26 BOWDOIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Our field trip was notable for the effects of the abundant moisture north of Billings. The grass was green, and water levels in Bowdoin NWR filled flooded areas that had been dry for years. Birds were abundant. I learned that juvenile Black Terns were much lighter in color than the adults and that they had a conspicuous head pattern of black on white. Also, the juvenile Eared Grebes had two-toned head patterns of black above the white cheeks.

I especially appreciated the close looks at Sprague's Pipit along the roads, and the abundant White-faced Ibis showing off iridescent colors on their dark background were a special treat. At our lunch stop we spent time sorting out the little sandpipers: Baird"s being the commonest. Willets displayed their spectacular white and black patterns on their wings. The Black-necked Stilts with their fuzzy young brought ohs and ahs from the observers. Finally, we came across a mudbar covered with ducks. The ducks flew off leaving Long-billed Dowitchers covering the mudbar. In Malta, a memorable sight was the flying in and roosting of about 30 Turkey Vultures on a cell phone tower.

On Sunday Ruth Vanderhorst led most of the group to the Little Rockies near Zortman where they were treated to colorful sightings of Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, and American Goldfinch. They then went their separate ways home. Four others drove to Nelson Reservoir, Ft. Peck, and Saco and saw Blue Jay, Brown Thrasher, Baltimore Oriole, Caspian Tern, Black- headed Grosbeak, and Common Loon. In all, we observed about 95 bird species.

Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1936 as a migratory bird refuge. It is located in the short and mixed grass prairie region of North-central Montana and encompasses 15,551 acres. The refuge lies about 7 miles northeast of Malta in the Milk River Valley of Phillip County. It is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System - a system of lands set aside to conserve wildlife and habitat.

Thanks to Chuck and Jean Carlson in Ft. Peck and Don, Holly, and Leah Minnerath in Saco for helping us observe birds at their homes and to Ruth Vanderhorst for leading the Sunday visit to the Little Rockies. And thank you to George Mowat.



Sandhill Crane © Gerrit Vyn Cornell Lab of Ornithology

# SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2013, STILLWATER AND COONEY

It was in a chill wind that a group gathered at Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Saturday, October 5, 2013, to view the bird populations in the Stillwater River and Cooney Dam areas. On the way Steve and Deb Regele led us through Laurel, past the Laurel fishing pond alongside Interstate 90 where Western Grebes and a number of Coots were spotted. The next stop, a place new to some in our group, was Sportsman's Park and the Buffalo Mirage fishing access on the Yellowstone River. Large numbers of Robins were spotted along with Flickers and Black Capped Chickadees. It was agreed that this spot would be a promising place to visit in the spring. The drive along the

Frontage Road to Columbus yielded a great view of a Bald Eagle, a Northern Harrier, Townsend's Solitaire, Cross Bills, Kildeer, and a dark morph Red Tail Hawk.

As we made our way to our destination of Cooney Dam, we were rewarded by the appearance of Ring Neck Pheasant, Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, Horned Larks, Gray Partridge, American Coots, Common Loons, Western Grebes, Golden Eagles, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Western Meadowlarks, Wood Ducks, and American Pipits. It was a fine day but became a great day when at the edge of Cooney Dam, over water set a glimmer by the lowering sun, we saw and heard two large migrating flocks of Sandhill Cranes, one estimated to number about 90 and the other about 75. They flew low enough for us to see clearly their wing patterns and hear their unmistakable rattle—sights that bring bird watchers out over and over in all kinds of weather. Thank you to Nancy Traeger

#### EVENTS AT THE AUDUBON CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

#### 7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101 406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org Fall 2013

**NOVEMBER 8** Nature Night from 6 – 8 PM for 5 – 10 year olds. Cost is \$15/child or \$12/Friends of the Center. Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Visit <u>www.mtacec.org</u> to register.

**NOVEMBER 17** Weekend Wonders Family Program, 1:30 – 3 PM. Open to all ages! Fee is \$2/person or Free for Friends of the Center. Theme this month is "Which way is north?" We'll learn the basic skills of navigation, including how to use a compass and map to find your way north, south, east, or west. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

**NOVEMBER 29** School Break Camp 8:30 – 4:30. For 5 – 10 year olds, \$45/child. Theme is Terrific Turkeys! Join us to learn all about this fabulous bird and its feathered friends during its featured time of year, Thanksgiving. Parents, this is your chance to go prepare for the holidays while we entertain your kids! Visit <u>www.mtacec.org</u> to register.

**DECEMBER 13** Nature Night from 6 – 8 PM for 5 – 10 year olds. Cost is \$15/child or \$12/Friends of the Center. Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Visit <u>www.mtacec.org</u> to register.

**DECEMBER 15** Weekend Wonders Family Program, 1:30 – 3 PM. Open to all ages! Fee is \$2/person or Free for Friends of the Center. Theme this month is "Cloudy with a chance of..." We'll learn how to read the clouds in this intro to meteorology. You'll know how to determine when a storm is coming or when clear weather is on its way. We'll even grow our own clouds! Call 294 – 5099 to register.

**DECEMBER 30** School Break Camp 8:30 – 4:30. For 5 – 10 year olds, \$45/child. Theme is Winter Wonderlands. December 21st is the shortest day of the year, and marks the true start of winter. It's a magical time in the natural world. Animals must adapt to cold, short days with little food. We'll learn all about these amazing changes as we explore the winter world. Visit <u>www.mtacec.org</u> to register.

# **NESTING MATERIALS**

• It's Time for Fall Migration There are about 10,000 bird species in the world, and about half of them migrate. That's an estimated 50 billion migratory birds out of the 200-400 billion individual birds on the planet. In eastern North America over two-thirds of all breeding birds migrate. Visit <u>www.natureshare.com</u>

- DO NOT MISS: <u>WILDLIFE ONLINE</u>. VISIT <u>WWW.NWF.ORG</u> TO SEE:
  - \* RUFFLED FEATHERS: THE SCRAGGLY LIFE OF MOLTING BIRDS
  - \* WHERE ARE MIGRATORY MONARCHS THIS FALL?

WATCH AMAZING HUMMINGBIRD CHICKS HATCH at: <u>http://community-2.webtv.net/Velpics/HUM/</u>

MONTANA AUDUBON

EDUCATION CENTER

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National Audubon Society Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z Application for <u>New</u> Membership Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society. I understand that I will receive the Audubon	Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z Application for New & Renewal Membership Please enroll me as a supporting member of Yellowstone
Magazine and Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Flyer. Make check payable to <u>National Audubon Society.</u> *Renewals will be sent to you through National Audubon. Name	Valley Audubon Society. I understand I will be supporting local chapter activities and receiving the local newsletter. I will enjoy full Chapter family benefits. Make check pay- able to <u>Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society</u> for \$20. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make
Address	check for \$10 and indicate academic affiliation. Name
City	Address
StateZip	City
Email Address	State Zip
One Year Membership	Email Address Do you want to receive the Flyer electronically?
\$20 One year new membership	
Send this application and your check made out to <u>Na-</u> tional Audubon Society to:	Send this application and your check to: Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Attention: Membership Secretary P.O. Box 1075 Billings, MT 59103-1075	Attention: Membership Secretary P.O. Box 1075 Billings, MT 59103-1075
Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or renew your chapter mem- bership?	Membership Information Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encour- age you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for families at \$20 a year. Use the application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.
PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR FLYER. IF IT SHOWS "YVAS JAN 12" BELOW YOUR NAME, THEN YOU ARE A SUP- PORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEM- BERSHIP EXPIRED IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A SUPPORTING MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH	1. <b>Moving???</b> Let us know as early as possible when you plan to move. The Post Office does charge us a fee for returned flyers. Include your old address as well as your new address so we can track you. You may write, call, or email the information to the Membership Secretary.

THOWSTONE LAURA

#### YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON FLYER

P.O. Box 1075 Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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# 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.

	FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467						
Nov 9	Sat	YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.				
Dec 14	Sat	ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	More details are in the FLYER, see page 4.				
Jan 1	Wed	<b>NEW YEAR'S FIELD TRIP</b> Yellowtail Dam Afterbay 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch George Mowat, leader.				
Jan 4	Sat	ANNUAL EAGLE MIDWINTER SUR- VEY in Lower 48 States. Yellow- stone River: Billings to Columbus 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	No Host Lunch. George Mowat, leader.				