

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 42, NUMBER 7 AUGUST 2012

New This Issue

- **AUDUBON ADVENTURES**
- **2012-2013 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE**
- **BIRDATHON 2012**



Inside this issue:

- This Month's Chapter Meeting* 1
- Meetings Schedule* 1
- Officers and Committees* 2
- Membership Forms* 7
- Field Trip Schedule* 8

**DO BIRDS PASS THE SNIFF TEST?
CAN THEY SMELL SURROUNDINGS?**

After a recent column in the Alaska Dispatch about whales' ability to smell, a few people wanted to know more about the same sense in birds.

"Every bird that's been studied has a sense of smell," said Julie Hagelin, a biologist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks who has pondered that overlooked ability in birds for years. Hagelin's small but expanding field has changed how some people interpret bird behavior. Biologists have focused for a long time on flashy feathers (which seem to show the importance of a bird's vision) and pretty songs (which probably indicate that hearing is also a big part of a bird's world). But Hagelin finds the topic of bird scent fascinating, because so little is known about birds sniffing their way through life.



Smelling may be significant for some birds, according to Paul Ehrlich, David Dobkin and Darryl Wheye, co-authors of the Birder's Handbook. "Kiwis, the flightless birds that are the national symbol of New Zealand, appear to sniff out their earthworm prey. Sooty shearwaters and northern fulmars are attracted from downwind to the smell of fish oils, squid, and krill. Leach's storm-petrels appear to use odor to locate their burrows on forested Kent Island, New Brunswick."

Not only do birds use their noses, they generate plenty of odors, good and bad. In

(Continued on page 2)

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.

Monday, August 13, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 10, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 17, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting



 We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

THIS FLYER IS PUBLISHED ON SFI CERTIFIED PRODUCT

a paper she co-wrote, Hagelin described “the musky plumage of storm-petrels, the tangerine-like perfume of crested auklets, the acrid, sour odor of hooded pitohuis, the sweet and dusty fragrance of the kakapo and the foul stench of the hoatzin.”

Scientists can only guess the significance of the hoatzin’s stink, but some birds might use odors as mammals do, Hagelin said, and one possibility is that it might prevent inbreeding. Un-hatched chickens she once studied could learn about scents that naturally diffused through the shell. “Even embryonic birds can potentially be paying attention to the scent of their incubating parent,” Hagelin said.

Black-legged kittiwakes, birds which nest on cliffs along much of Alaska’s southern coastline, carry a powerful body odor that “may function as a signal associated with individual recognition and mate choice,” biologist Sarah Leclair wrote in a paper she co-authored with Anchorage’s Scott Hatch.

Hagelin is doing an experiment in Fairbanks with tree swallows and peppermint. She attached small tubes of peppermint oil inside swallow boxes on the UAF campus. Adult swallows, which migrate to Alaska each year to build their nests, lay eggs and rear chicks in the minty surroundings. She and her students compared swallow nestlings hatched in the essence of peppermint to those hatched in unscented boxes on campus and at Creamer’s Field. “The protocol involved holding each nestling in a warm, specially made swallow ‘sleeping bag’ until it closed its eyes and fell asleep, while gently puffing scented air near the bird’s nostrils with a squeeze bottle,” Hagelin wrote in a newsletter story. The degree to which a bird responded by clapping its beak, squirming, or shaking its head was scored . . . Birds reared in minty environments reacted less to mint than those that had never smelled mint before.”

“Hagelin wonders if swallows that return as adults to Alaska to breed might choose a scented box, much like salmon use their sense of smell to find their way to their birthing stream. If so, it “would completely alter our basic understanding of how birds migrate, in a way that no one had ever expected,” Hagelin said. “If tree swallows do this, then the possibility exists that other migratory birds do the same.”

Ned Rozell is a science writer at the Geophysical Institute of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Published with permission from The Alaska Dispatch, Mar 10, 2012 .

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, battie@bresnan.net
Vice-President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
Secretary: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
Treasurer: Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com
Past-President: open

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Rita Harding: 259-7586, mtroses22@bresnan.net
 Jeanette Tasey,: 669-3169 , jtasey@gmail.com
 Shelia McKay: 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggin83@gmail.com

Montana’s Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Max Baucus: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 website: <http://baucus.senate.gov>

email: max@baucus.senate.gov

Billings: 657-6790 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-332-6160

Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510

website: <http://tester.senate.gov>

email: senator@tester.senate.gov

Billings: 252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 1-866-554-4403

Rep. Dennis Rehberg: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515

website: www.rehberg.house.gov

email: denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov

Billings: 256-1019 Wash. D.C.: 202-225-3211

Committees and Special Assignments:

Archives and History.....open

Audubon Adventures.....Jeannette Davis ,656-7618

Bird Questions.....George Mowat ,656-7467 or
 Helen Carlson ,248-8684

Christmas Bird Count.....Helen Carlson, 248-8684
 or Billie Hicks, 962-3798

Conservation Chair.....Kayhan Ostovar, 256-7481,
kayhan@q.com

Editor.....Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Field Trip Chairs... George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467,
gmowat@bresnan.net

Greeters.....Phyllis Holt 252-7373
 Audrey Jurovich 656-2748

Injured Raptors...Jeanette Tasey 669-3169,jtasey@gmail.com

Membership Secretary.....Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,
 cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com

Program Chair...Shelia McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Recycling (aluminum).....Will Crain, williamcrain@earthlink.net
 656-7618

Website.... Tom Lyman, Tomglyman@gmail.com

Meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg:

- Board Meetings held second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to entire membership.
- General Chapter Meetings are held third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Annual Report Balance of YVAS Funds July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

	Operating Fund	Audubon Adventures	Special Project (Osprey)	Chapter Dinner (ACEC)	General Project (Yellowstone)	Endowment
July 1, 2011	11,412	855	364	0	1,518	38,015
Revenue	11,558	1,210	696	457	5,544	1,069
Expense	10,706	429	80	457	5,035	0
June 30, 2012	12,264	1,636	980	0	2,027	39,084

NOTE: A minimum of \$5,000 must remain in the YVAS Savings Account in order to maintain the YVAS Checking Account and CD rates. The Operating Fund is currently supplying that minimum balance.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Audubon Adventures is the National Audubon Society's award-winning environmental education program about the natural world and how to protect it, which provides opportunities for students in grades 3-6 to achieve new understandings and demonstrate their learning skills in language arts, science, and social studies. The program covers topics and themes that are important to Audubon's mission in a way that supports schools and helps the chapter to gain visibility and new members. The 28th season of Audubon Adventures begins in September and fosters in children a stewardship ethic to last a lifetime. YVAS has long raised funds to support the program in local schools, which is coordinated by Jeannette Davis who provided the following update:

YVAS will sponsor the following classes for Audubon Adventures for the school year 2012-2013

SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE	SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE
BITTERROOT	Tammie Erickson	4	MILES AVE	Lynn Bitney	3
	Mary Hankins	4		Sandra Abraham	4
BLUE CREEK	Julie McNeil	5		Roxana Blackwell	4
	Carl Strachan	5		Sandy Sullivan	5
	Ann Brucker	5		Michael Thomas	3
BURLINGTON	Zoe Twichel	4		Craig Thompson	5
CENTRAL HEIGHTS	To be announced	4	ORCHARD	Alissa Cox	3/4
	To be announced	4		Jodi Ervin	4
ELDER GROVE	Randy Hartman	4	POLY DRIVE	Tawna Robinson	3
	Denise Haines	5		Charles Bokum	4
HIGHLAND	Lori Ler	5	PONDEROSA	Jean Muhlbier	4
INDEPENDENT	Kim Busch	4	ROBERTS ELEM Roberts, MT	George Nelson	4/5
MCKINLEY	Pat Lowthian	4	UINTA MEADOWS ELEM, Evanston, WY	Janalee Hamblin	4

SINCERE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR SPONSORING THE 2012-2013 AUDUBON ADVENTURES

- Helen Carlson—for raising funds with bird classes and for sponsoring the Evanston, WY class
- Tom and Jeannette Davis—sponsoring two 4th grade classes at Elder Grove School
- Phyllis Holt— sponsoring the 5th grade class at Roberts
- George and Bernie Mowat— sponsoring the 5th grade at Elysian School
- Dorcas Halverson—sponsoring J. Michael, home-schooled 5th grader in Sitka, Alaska

We warmly invite you to participate by sponsoring an AUDUBON ADVENTURES CLASSROOM KIT WHICH INCLUDES 32 COPIES OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS FOR GRADES 3-6:

The working title of our 2012-2013 kit is “**SHARING OUR EARTH**”. This new kit will contain four new editions of “Audubon Adventures” which cover the following themes (one is yet to be announced):

- Save Our Shores and Seas
- Bird Friendly Communities
- Forests For People and Wildlife

Any Size Contribution Will Help! For Questions, contact Jeannette Davis, 656-7618

Yes, I would like to contribute \$ _____ toward the Audubon Adventures program, or _____ \$46 to sponsor a class. My school preference is _____ grade _____. Or, I want to sponsor the class that student _____ will be in during the 2012-2013 school year.

A home-schooled student may be sponsored by ordering the individual packet of four issues for \$25.00. Please include the child's name, address and grade.

Donor Name: _____

Donor Address: _____

EVENTS AT THE AUDUBON CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

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



August 28 Free Evening program with David Salomon, author of Penguin – pedia: A Magical Look Inside the World of Penguins. Mr. Salomon will share photographs and facts from his search for the penguins of the world; 7 – 8 PM. No registration required.

NESTING MATERIALS



- Watch feeding, fledging and learn about seldom-seen Osprey, Puffin and other birds in live HD action at www.explore.org
- Audubon's Christmas Bird Count is featured in a new HBO film about birding in New York City's Central Park, where the count began in 1900! Watch for "Birders: The Central Park Effect" Monday, July 16, 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET/PT. See a video clip from the film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNLnvYZVUyo> .
- More bird watching news and live cams at www.birds.cornell.edu



FIELD TRIP NOTES

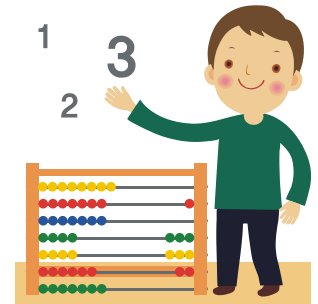
26 MAY POMPEY'S PILLAR

A rainy and cool morning did nothing to dampen the spirits of the eight birders who trudged through the wet grass and mud to identify 45 species in the half day trip. Though birds were few and far between, perhaps smarter than we, they did provide enjoyment. Gritty Stone Fishing Access was unusually quiet though we identified Yellow-breasted Chats, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrows, House Wrens, American Goldfinches and others. Many of the regulars at the site were missing. On the back road that parallels the Yellowstone River, we had the thrill of the day when we spied two shorebirds standing at the edge of the gravel road. Phil McBride suggested Upland Sandpiper, and we all were puzzling about the birds when it was suggested they had the field marks of Buff-breasted Sandpipers. After more study, we all agreed this rarity did indeed stop over on their way north. Jeff Marks of the Rare Bird Committee, who checked pictures taken of the bird, said Phil had it right...Upland Sandpiper. At Bundy Bridge we saw the Osprey on her nest and her mate fishing, while a short distance up stream we saw two young Bald Eagles on their nest. Their mother did not appear. A short distance away we saw 4 Wood Ducks, 6 Great Blue Herons, 5 Mountain Bluebirds and a Belted Kingfisher.

At Pompey's Pillar there was birdsong to greet us and a small number of species, all delightful. We had a quick glimpse of a Great Horned Owl while searching in vain for a number of usual species. We did see Western Wood Peewees but no Least Flycatchers. Say's Phoebe appeared in a number of places as did many Western and some Eastern Kingbirds. We headed back to Billings shortly before noon to launder our wet jeans and clean our shoes. It was a great morning thanks to the group who enjoyed being out. Thank you to Ruth Vanderhorst

BIRDATHON 2012

The 2012 Birdathon took place early last month. The YVAS Birdathon is a fundraiser combined with a friendly competition between birding teams. At 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 2, five teams flew off in different directions to count bird species for 24 hours. At 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 3, the teams returned to roost at the Regele's to count and compare bird species. The winning team for the second consecutive year was the 'Senior Moments' of Ruth Vanderhorst and Phil McBride fame, with 92 species of birds recorded. In second place was the twosome known as 'Mowats' at 79 species. In third place was a new team, 'The Goldeneyes' with 72 species followed closely by the Screechers and the Wood Carvers. A grand total of 115 species of birds were seen. \$915 was raised with this year's proceeds going toward YVAS' conservation projects including our annual Conservation Grant that is awarded early every spring. Watch for details on next year's Birdathon in next spring's issues of the YVAS Flyers. Thank you to Deb Regele



JUNE 8-10 MA 'WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY'



CHALLENGING MOOSE
PHOTO BY WILL CRAIN

Observations from local members who participated.

Will Crain: Steve Gnaidek produced a plethora of bird species in spite of damp and rainy weather in West Glacier for the Saturday early morning watch. Although there were lots of birds, it was difficult to photograph under the gray skies. Our Saturday afternoon was filled with several outstanding programs from a 20 year study of Golden Eagle migrations to a presentation on the eBirding program, and one on bat studies in Montana and the issues of White Nose syndrome. The main performance of the evening was by Denny Olson, Educator and Entertainer, who kept us amused and informed with his program of Professor Avian Guano and Magical Birding Calls and Competition. Sunday's adventure with Lou Bruno took us to

(Continued on page 6)

East Glacier, where one person was able to call in a Sora, and some saw a Northern Waterthrush. Then onto Kiowa campground and to Two Medicine campground where we were going to lunch until someone spotted a Grizzly Bear and our food became an afterthought. We took advantage of the close-up, separated by 50 yards of a shallow river, to check our pepper spray supplies and adrenalin levels. As we hiked down from the campground to the lake, we caught sight of a moose off in the underbrush, far enough away we felt safe continuing to bird to the lake where we sighted a couple Buffleheads. As we turned to go back, the female adult moose put its ears down and came right at the 12 of us scattering the group to any tree of safety. Kelly Lynch did a yeoman's job of keeping us together and coordinated, as the moose ran wildly, kicking its legs out as if to say this is her territory. We got by her through default as she circled below and we went on our way.

Rita Harding: Thompson Lake was superb!!! The trip leader was a science teacher just retiring from a long career. She did her original thesis work on loons and spent her life studying them. She is president of Montana Loon Society (<http://www.montanaloons.org/index.html>) and very enthusiastic. She brought recordings and explained the meaning of the four different calls, described unique loon movements and talked about how loons could only take off to flight while swimming and not from the ground, emphasized how easily they were disturbed while on nest (anything within a football field makes them abandon the nest), and described the volunteer loon patrol. And of course seeing loons is always wonderful.

23 JUNE PRYOR MOUNTAINS



A caravan of 5 cars headed to Bridger and the water treatment plant which proved fruitful with the appearance of a Bullock's Oriole. We then went on to Sage Creek where a Sage Thrasher made itself quite visible but not long or close enough to get a photo. At the hummingbird haven of Mick Knight, we were treated to Calliope and Broad-tailed hummingbirds and Violet-green Swallows. Mick was glad to have us visit along with his other guests, the Hummingbird Society.

After a lunch stop we hit the dusty trail, proceeding to the surprise destination of the BIG ICE CAVE! We bird-watched down the asphalt walkway to the entrance, down the stairway, and saw a flycatcher or two flitting about. Most of the group went down in the Ice Cave pondering the incredible coldness. Compared to the 90* + heat outside, the ice floor of the cave seemed quite illogical. Once back on the surface we got us a bonus bonus! That flycatcher turned out to be the Cordilleran Flycatcher in the mating stage.

The Caravan separated from the Ice Cave in different directions... our vehicle driven by Donn B managed to get a nice view of a sedentary Long-billed Curlew while the folks in George's car were bombed by several Long-billed Curlew's and that can be very exciting... as they come in screaming. Needless to say this was another great adventure in birding with the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, led by George and Bernie Mowat. Thank you to Will Crain

30 JUNE RED LODGE

We were treated to a wonderful early morning surprise when leader Jerry Dalton brought us to his home where Lois Dalton had the spotting scope set up to view a family of falcons, four Merlins. Next Jerry and Lois led us to a Cooper's Hawk's nest on Billings' westend with three chicks. Apparently Cooper's Hawks are becoming more common urban nesters. Heading to Red Lodge we observed an Osprey on the nest, a rack of Turkey Vultures and a captivating Sandhill Crane. Other favorite sightings were a brilliant Yellow Warbler in equally brilliant yellow flowers and two far-off Bobolinks. Sightings also included the Eastern Kingbird, Cat Birds, Widgeons, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Gadwalls, and Tree Sparrows. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak (a rare migrant in the west), rallied group members with high-tech audio equipment to call him in and even get a response. A Western Meadow Lark presented himself in full-dress front view and a murder of Crows displayed their flight magic in the sky. The scenery of Willow Creek Road out of Red Lodge to the Missouri cut-off, and the Red Lodge Creek Road was pastoral, green with rolling hills and so beckoning. Thanks to our leaders Lois and Jerry Dalton and organizers George and Bernie Mowat. And thank you to Vonnie Anderson

National Audubon Society
 Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
 Application for New Membership

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society. I understand that I will receive the Audubon Magazine and Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Flyer. Make check payable to **National Audubon Society**. *Renewals will be sent to you through National Audubon.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

One Year Membership

\$20 One year new membership

Send this application and your check made out to **National Audubon Society** to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
 Attention: Membership Secretary
 P.O. Box 1075
 Billings, MT 59103-1075

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
 Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
 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 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
 Attention: Membership Secretary
 P.O. Box 1075
 Billings, MT 59103-1075



WHOOPS!!

Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or 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 SUPPORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$20, USING THE FORM ON THE RIGHT. YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS FUND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FLYER ALONG WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR CHAPTER.

Membership Information

Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encourage you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for \$20 a year. Use the application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.

1. **Moving???** 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.
2. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society offers Supporting Chapter student memberships for a reduced rate of \$10 a year. If you applying for a new student membership or are renewing a student membership, make sure you indicate your academic affiliation in your application . Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

**Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BILLINGS, MT
PERMIT NO. 27**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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. 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.

Aug 4 (Sat) SHOREBIRDS, HAWKS & PRAIRIE BIRDS. 8 a.m. Sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader.

Aug 24—26 (Fri—Sun) FORT PECK AND BOWDOIN NWR, MONTANA. Observe migrating birds including warblers and shorebirds found in Northeast Montana. George Mowat, leader. **Call George at 656-7467 for information.** Make your own reservations for two nights at the Maltana Motel in Malta (406-654-2610).

Sept 6 (Thur) MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK. 5 p.m. Fall Migrants. Mike Weber, leader.

Sept 29 (Sat) MEETEETSE SPIRES HAWK WATCH. 8 a.m. Bring a sack lunch. Jerry Dalton, leader.



Oct 6 (Sat) STILLWATER AND COONEY DAM. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sack lunch. Helen Carlson, leader.

Nov 10 (Sat) YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467