



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 8

AUGUST 2013



**BE SURE AND
SAVE THE
'2013-2014
FIELD TRIP
SCHEDULE'
ENCLOSED
WITH THIS IS-
SUE!**



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A VERY PROUD OBSERVER

On July 11th, eleven of us gathered at the Billings Wastewater Plant to support the Osprey Project. We had the great privilege of watching three osprey chicks have



Ruth Vanderhorst with osprey chick
Photo by Bill DeMeyer

their beaks and wings measured, weights recorded, and feathers taken for DNA analysis. In addition, one had his blood drawn for heavy metal testing. With the help of Yellowstone Valley Tree Surgeons, Tom Yelvington provided and ran the lift truck so Professor Marko Restoni could bring the chicks down for testing. Renee Seacor, the YVAS intern from Rocky Mountain College, was the 'holder', Kayhan Ostovar, also from Rocky Mountain College and Director of The Yellowstone River Research Center,

was the data recorder, while Marko supervised the project. One individual was especially pleased to see the chicks up-close and personal. Ruth Vanderhorst was all smiles, for these were 'her' osprey that she has been observing the last three months for the Yellowstone River Research Center in conjunction with YVAS Osprey Project. She was particularly excited when she was allowed to hold one and I believe this was a moment in her life she will not soon forget. So to all of you 'observers' out there that have so diligently reported on the osprey nesting sites, be proud of what you are doing and thank you very much for all your work. Some 75 osprey nest locations were originally identified to be monitored as part of the project. Bill DeMeyer, YVAS President

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 12, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 9, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 16, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting



☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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WEDDING BELLS On June 18 at 3pm, a year to the day from when they met, YVAS' celebrated Helen Carlson married the charming Peter Cummins. The wedding took place at Helen's home, where the couple was surrounded by family, friends and the birds. Peter's brother and sisters came from their home in Liverpool, England to participate in the celebration. Helen and Peter honeymooned, where else, but birding in Yellowstone National Park. Helen has been such a significant part of YVAS, serving on the Board of Directors, as an officer, leader of field trips, 37 years of teaching birding classes, presenting the excitement of birds to schools and groups, and being an inspiration to many. YVAS wishes the couple much happiness. They will reside in Billings in between birding travels.



Peter and Helen Cummins
Photo by Payhem Ostovar



The getaway car

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, bademeyer@gmail.com

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Secretary: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com

Treasurer: Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com

Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com

Jeanette Tasey: 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com

Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@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. Steve Daines: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515

website: www.rdianes.house.gov

email: steve.daines@mail.house.gov

Wash, DC: 202-225-3211 Billings: 406-969-1736

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

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, jta-sey@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)...Larry Handsaker, 406-855-9832

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

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

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



FIELD TRIP NOTES

SATURDAY, MAY 25

POMPEY'S PILLAR

As is customary on YVAS birding trips, the stops on the way can be as rewarding as the intended destination. Our trip leaders, in this case Ruth Vanderhorst, enrich the experience by their knowledge of the best routes and the stops on the way. On this trip a short diversion from the highway led us to a Bald Eagle nest high in a tree with one immature and two fledglings while back on the ground three little fox kits played in the grass. The group identified 60 species on that half-day trip including Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Common Merganser, Great Blue Heron, Upland Sandpiper, Peregrin Falcon, Eastern and Western Kingbirds, Gray Catbird, Ovenbird, Brown Thrasher, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Yellow-breasted Chat, American Redstart, Lazuli and Lark Buntings, White-throated Swift, Bullock's Oriole, Say's Phoebe, Wilson's Snipe, and Pine Siskin. At one point in the day, a flock of 40 or more American White Pelicans put on a truly stunning air show. This Pompey's Pillar trip is one well worth doing over and over for the variety, the setting, and the hope of seeing the American White Pelicans fly once more. Thank you to Nancy Traeger

The Pillar overlooks the Yellowstone River about 25 miles east of Billings, Montana. The area is easily accessible from Interstate 94, using exit 23, or from State Highway 312. Signs at the site quote from Clark's journals and tell of the Lewis and Clark party's experiences from their entry on the Yellowstone on July 15, 1806, to their encampment at the confluence of Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers on August 3, 1806.

BIRDATHON 2013



The twenty-four hour competitive fundraiser called Birdathon was held this year on June 1 and 2 and, though only two full time teams and one part time team competed, over \$900. was raised and 131 species were identified in the 24 hour period.

The winning team, The Cravin' Ravens, composed of Mike Weber and Will Crain, reported 114 species. They identified many grassland birds as well as waterfowl and popular song bird species. Mike participated in Birdathon many years ago and his return to this fun and useful activity is welcomed. For Will this was a first time experience. It is likely not his last.

Second place went to the Senior Moments who won in 2012 and 2011. They, Phil McBride, Nancy Traeger and Ruth Vanderhorst, identified 104 species and raised the most donations for YVAS.

Deb and Steve Regele continued to compete while supporting their grandchildren's softball efforts. Birdathon *needs* more teams to solicit donors and compete in this very fun activity. Those of you who enjoy the Christmas Bird Count would find Birdathon a great way spend a day in June. So, start planning now to form a team, identify donors and mark your calendar for the first weekend in June 2014.

A special thank you goes to all of you generous people who supported the event with donations. Thank you to Ruth Vanderhorst

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

PRYOR MOUNTAINS

Remember from Kermit the frog's song, "Rainbow Connection?": 'Someday we'll find it, the rainbow connection . . .'? Well, the birders out for this trip surely saw a "rainbow" of birds.

We oohed over the six Sandhill Cranes we saw stepping across a field. We smiled as we drove by the Killdeer family with four little ones, only belly-high to mom, running on their little stick legs. We marveled at the Green-tailed Towhee, calling, in perfect view, from the top of a bush. We delighted in watching the Calliope Hummingbirds feed from feeders located at the ranch on our lunch stop. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were spotted perched on top of tepee sticks at this same stop. (We could also see an American Robin nested right below an eave of the cabin at this site.)

In one of the wildflower-filled fields, we happily spotted the Lincoln's Sparrow and the White-crowned Sparrow. In the higher elevations of the trip, we delighted in sighting the Mountain Bluebird and four from the

(Continued on page 4)

woodpecker species, a Northern Flicker, a Hairy Woodpecker, an American Three-toed Woodpecker, and the Williamson's Sapsucker! And back to Kermit's rainbow song: ' . . . we know that it's probably magic . . . Well, this trip surely was magic! For a complete list of species sighted, please contact Bernie Mowat. Thank you to Pam Pipal.

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 29th 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 2013-2014

SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE	SCHOOL	TEACHER	GRADE
BITTERROOT	Tammie Erickson	4	MILES AVE	Sandra Abraham	4
				Roxana Blackwell	4
CENTRAL	Mary Hankins	4	ORCHARD	Angie Gray	4/5
HEIGHTS	Zoe Twichel	4	POLY DRIVE	Bryan Demartin	4
GRAFF (Laurel)	Carla Garner	4		Tawna Robinson	4
INDEPENDENT	Denice Haines	5	PONDEROSA	Shayla Bryson	3//4
	Laura Zimmerman	5		Tamara Spillum	3/4
			ROBERTS ELEM	George Nelson	4/5
MCKINLEY	Pat Lowthian	4	Roberts, MT		
MEADOWLARK	Julie Winkler	4	UINTA MEADOWS ELEM, Evanston, WY	Janalee Hamblin	4

COMMENTS FROM THE TEACHERS ABOUT AUDUBON ADVENTURES

- Tammie Erickson and Mary Hawkins: "Loved them! They fit in perfectly with our owl novel and ecosystems studies!!"
- Angie Gray: "Awesome! Thanks"
- Pat Lowthian: "I use these in teaching science. Thanks"
- George Nelson: "Thanks for your support of my class for the last 34 years. I still really look forward to receiving my Audubon Adventures for the next school year."

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
- Phyllis Holt— sponsoring the 5th grade class at Roberts

Continued on page 5

We 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 2013-2014 kit is "**SHARING OUR WORLD WITH BIRDS**". This new kit will contain four new editions of "Audubon Adventures" which cover the following themes:

*Raptors *Sea Birds *Hummingbirds *Planet Earth

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

I would like to contribute \$ _____ toward the Audubon Adventures program, or _____ \$46 sponsor a class. My school preference is _____ grade _____. Or, I want to sponsor the class that student _____ will be in during the 2013-2014 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: _____

Mail form to: Jeannette Davis, YVAS Audubon Adventures Chair, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075

FUN FACTS ABOUT CHICKADEES

- Chickadees are found across much of North America. The more common species include the Black-capped, Carolina and Mountain Chickadees. Have you noticed the following about chickadees in your backyard?
- Chickadees are easily identified by their namesake call "chick-a-dee."
- They are a favorite feeder bird for many and really enjoy sunflower seeds.
- They are inquisitive and found in wooded areas.
- The Black-capped generally sings out a "fee-bee" call while the Carolina sings "fee-bee fee-bay;" however, this song is learned and, in overlapping territories, may be learned from the "wrong" bird.
- Chickadee's wing beats are about 27 times per second. This compares to a hummingbird's 80 beats per second.
- They are cavity nesters. They will excavate their own nest site in rotten or decaying wood, use an old woodpecker hole or use a nesting box. (Mountain chickadee may not excavate its own hole and will nest under rock in a bank or in a hole in the ground.) They add a cozy nest on a moss base.
- They usually lay 6-8 white eggs with a light reddish-brown speckling. They hatch in about 12 days and fledge about 21 days later.
- Research has shown that while Chickadees are regular visitors to feeders, only 75 to 80 percent of their food comes from natural sources. However, when the temperature falls below 10 degrees, the survival rate of chickadees almost doubled when they had access to feeders.
- Chickadees are a tough little bird that do not migrate. During cold weather Chickadees have been found to need twenty times more food than they do in summer.
- They like to eat seeds, suet and even coconut; Chickadees weigh less than one-half of an ounce.

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EVENTS AT THE AUDUBON CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

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

Summer 2013



Wednesday Aug 7 Reading by Doug Peacock, author of *In the Shadow of the Sabertooth*, 7:30 PM. Presented by YMCA's Writer's Voice. Free and open to the public! More info online at www.mtacec.org.

Sunday Aug 18 Big Sky Writers Workshop 6:30 – 8 PM. Fee \$25/person. "Ten Habits of Highly Successful Writers" with Danell Jones. This workshop is for anyone who wants to learn the time-tested techniques experienced writers use to find inspiration, write effectively, and connect with readers. Call 294 – 5099 to register or download a registration form www.mtacec.org

Monday Aug 26 Registration opens for fall Audubon Adventures in Nature programs: afterschool, preschool, and homeschool classes for every age. Call 294 – 5099 or visit www.mtacec.org.

American Bird Conservancy **PARTNERS IN FLIGHT V** Workshops, Birding Field Trips, Poster Sessions - Snowbird, Utah, August 25 – 28 Register online now to join the fun and be a part of the premier bird conservation strategy opportunity for all the Americas. Be a part of the solution for migratory birds, go birding in spectacular Utah, socialize with colleagues, and share your work at the poster sessions. See www.PIFV.org for more information.

NESTING MATERIALS



AUDUBON AND EXPLORE.ORG high-def bird cams are streaming live from Maine all summer long. Become a bird cam super-fan to receive updates on ospreys, puffins, and terns. With Audubon bird alerts you'll be the first to know when eggs are hatching, chicks are fledging, and more. Don't miss a thing, all summer! Visit audubonconnect@audubon.org.

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY joined with Birds & Beans to encourage all coffee drinkers who care about bird conservation, sustainable farming and the environment we all share, to always buy and drink certified 'Bird Friendly®' coffee. Shade coffee farms like those supported by Birds & Beans are essential to the future of neotropical migrants," says David Younkman, Vice President for Conservation at ABC. "There's no easier way for people who love birds to help the environment than buying Bird Friendly coffee. They encourage you to give this great-tasting, Bird Friendly® coffee a try. It meets the highest certification standard and provides the most benefits to birds. www.birdsandbeans.com/

SLOW DOWN AND SOAK IN THIS GORGEOUS HIGH-SPEED VIDEO

On a recent student workshop, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library recordists took six students to southern California armed with parabolic microphones, recorders, and a high-speed video camera. They collected fascinating footage of a beetle taking flight, shorebirds gulping down food, and a Costa's Hummingbird visiting her nest—all slowed down to one-eighth normal speed. Cornell senior Shailee Shah compiled the highlights into a short, beautiful video that lets you see what these fascinating animals can do in the time it takes you to blink. Watch it at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST8kxWlpeQo&feature=player_embedded

PBS SPECIAL Take a moment to preview this forthcoming documentary on the prairie ecosystem--its beauty, its wild, its birds. <http://netnebraska.org/interactive-multimedia/television/great-plains-america%E2%80%99s-lingering-wild-michael-forsberg-feature>

SHARE IN THE FABULOUS RESULTS of Montana Audubon's 14th Annual Festival *Wings Across The Big Sky* by visiting www.mtaudubon.org/about/documents/WingsAcrossBigSky_Audubon_BLM.pdf.

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



WHOOOPS!!

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 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 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

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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. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS.** Do make sure you check all field trips with listings in the Flyer each month for any changes.

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

Aug 10	Sat	SHOREBIRDS, HAWKS & PRAIRIE BIRDS. 8 a.m.	Sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader.
Aug 23—25	Fri—Sun	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 5	Thur	MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK at 5 p.m. S Billings Blvd, 1st parking area on right. Fall Migrants.	Mike Weber, leader.
Sept 28	Sat	MEETEETSE SPIRES HAWK WATCH. 8 a.m.	Sack lunch. Jerry Dalton, leader.
Oct 5	Sat	STILLWATER AND COONEY DAM. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. Deb and Steve Regele, leaders.

