

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.

AUGUST 2021

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 7

A Note about Bird Hardships

I and many YVAS members think about, and receive concerns from others about, the hardships birds endure and sometimes die from, and what we each might do to help ease those hardships.

There are many natural hardships for birds such as excessive heat and cold, hail, drought etc. Humans can do little to alleviate those things. We humans do however have a heavy hand in so many things that adversely affect birds: habitat losses and changes, climate change, irresponsibly discarding baling twine and net-wrap, free ranging domestic cats (very lethal), collisions with man-made structures and windows, infections from neglected bird feeding stations and bird baths, electrocutions - to name a few.

It is hard to know what each of us might do to help minimize some of the hardships that birds encounter. Learning more about specific and most common human-related impacts to birds can help lead us to some solutions we can each pursue. Check out the following web link examples to discover some more about this:

Google search: "[Top 10 Threats to Birds](#)"

And: US Fish and Wildlife Service web link "[Threats to Birds](#)"

Your own Google/Web search will lead you to many other good sources of such information and ideas.

A particular 'hardship' focus for this issue of the Flyer is pesticides. Herbicide and pesticide effect on plants and animals is colossal. The effect of pesticides on skin, lungs and reproduction etc. is profound but so is the effect on the "food chain" - ex. poison the grasshoppers and mosquitoes and many birds take a hit too. Widespread use and overuse of pesticides in agriculture, landscaping, and by various other industries is very hard on birds and is hard to control. Individual use of toxins can be comparatively easy to reduce. Reaching out to others to do the same, and supporting better research into effects of pesticides and better regulation of pesticide use overall - these are things each of us can do to help reduce unintended pesticide impacts.

Google search: "[pesticide effects](#)".

Google Scholar search: "[pesticide effects](#)".

If you don't have access to a computer or smart phone to access the web links, a public library is a very good place to do that.

Living our lives with an eye and purpose trained on helping to minimize hardships for birds also helps to alleviate hardships and adverse impacts to other wildlife, habitats and all of us humans too.

Submitted by Steve Regele

VISIT THE YVAS WEBSITE AT: YVAUDUBON.ORG

YVAS ON FACEBOOK: FACEBOOK.COM/YVAUDUBON



The "Other" Bird Watching

It's one thing to go out for a Feathered Easter Egg hunt but quite another to sit in your Avian Viewing location watching the birds, be it couch or out under an umbrella all day with a fan. Gotta have the fan! ~ It's 94° as I type this while comfortably under my outdoor avian viewing canopy with fan, book, 'puter, and other creature comforts, watching a fascinating show by a female Downy Woodpecker...I call her, Phoebe.

During the long Winter I watched the birds from my bedroom/indoor avian observatory. I put some of my homemade suet in the covered feeder cage as an experiment for the HOFI's BCCH's, RBNU'z ... mesh opening nothing larger than a Downey could enter.

One day I watched this female Downey eyeing the bird candy hanging upside down, and dang if Phoebe didn't enter the cage an beak her way to a good Suet dining position.

She'd nibble a bit then with a beak full of suet she'd zoom out of there an another Downey would drop near but not able to go in cuz, ldk, cuz woodpeckers don't eat in cages? She'd do it over an over an zip away with a beak full of stuff to stash.

Fast fwd. She was a model woodpecker to be sure, Phoebe's intro to the water in a pond was amusing...she'd hop along the shore, then behind the fountain, and finally,

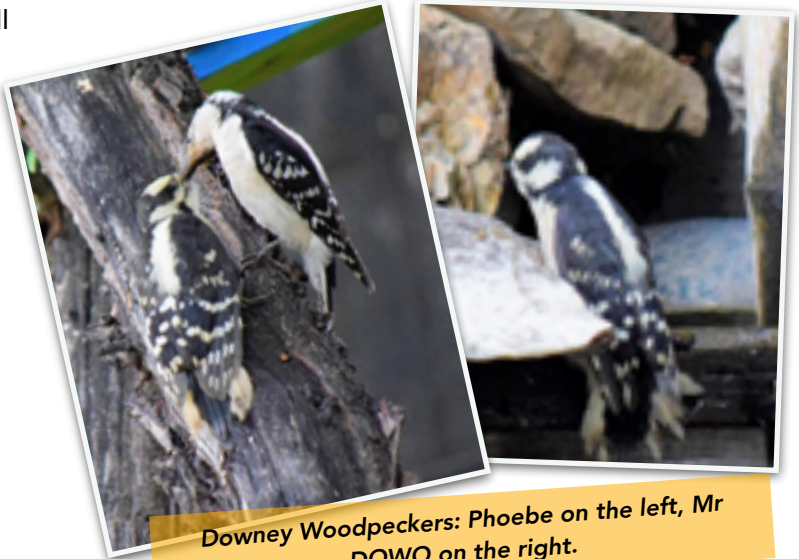


*Downey Woodpecker
All photos on page by Will Crain*

with her whole feather mass anticipating, she completes swan dive, 9.9!, underwater and up for air! The other 3 Downey's watched and applauded. The other female, Edna, did get her feet wet, though the boys got more feathers wet than she did during the day; but this isn't about Edna, it's about Phoebe.

I put homemade suet at the top of the feeder barrels and sure'nuff, Phoebe was first on it! I caught her taking bits in beak to a male Downy, who musta known Phoebe to be

taking suet like he was, acting like some new fledgling! Phoebe bounced to wherever he was, giving him tasty beef kidney suet mixed with peanut butter.



Downey Woodpeckers: Phoebe on the left, Mr DOWO on the right.

Meanwhile the Chickadee drama continues ~ I have 9 of them at count yesterday. I'm not sure any are fledges, cuz I've often had 8 BCCH's at a time... who can tell, they carry on an on an on.



Yellow Warbler

Also I have a dandy pair of Yellow Warblers (YEWAz) who've been regular nesters with broods for the last 7 years.

Here Ms YEWA is down to the pond to drink and cool down at the fountain. Note the 'Brood Patches' on Ms YEWA.

The Nuances of bird watching can be found wherever those colorful feathered creatures are dining.

Submitted by Will Crain

Red Lodge Area Field Trip

June 12th started out a nice sunny and warm day and got warmer as it went along. A group of 18 with seven cars gathered in Red Lodge and met our leader, Stan Heath. This was an always popular outing and a large group. We first went to Nichols Creek where we were met by the ever-present Calliope Hummingbird. Most of the group went on the hike up the creek and were gone a bit longer than the anticipated 45 minutes.....they had a good time.



We were pleasantly surprised to be invited to the back yard of Susan and Steve in Red Lodge where we were met by a young black bear scrambling down from a tree where he had been trying to get to the bird seed. He was unsuccessful because of the ingenious feeder line they had built and trotted off to



the shade of some trees where he watched us until Susan chased him off. The back yard is a haven for birds and birders and we observed Mountain Chickadees, Yellow Warblers and Red-naped Sapsuckers, to name a few. The next stop was for lunch on Stan's spacious porch, also in Red Lodge. Stan seems to be the originator of the feeder line which is suspended between trees and the feeders are filled via a pulley. The birds kept everyone entertained while enjoying socializing and having their sack lunch.



After this stop we separated, smaller groups following their own interests and adventures. One group took the back road to Luther and saw Clay-colored Sparrows and Bobolink. Another group decided to follow Red Lodge creek to drive the loop. They were stopped by a recently felled tree across the road and after trying to cut it, move it and drive around it, they ended up having to turn back and take another route. All in all, it was the "best birding trip ever" to quote one of the participants! Thank you, Stan, Susan and Steve!

Submitted by Dorothy Bartlett

*Photos by Dorothy Bartlett
Above: Black Bear; Calliope
Left: Pine Siskin munching on dandelions*

Stillwater-Woodbine Field Trip , June 25, 2021

A beautiful day in late June, congenial birders and lovely birds: perfection. Two members started in Billings and enjoyed seeing a few species on the pond at 64th street before meeting with the three others at Ich Kepi Park in Columbus: Yellow-headed Blackbirds, a pair of Red-headed Ducks and a few other species.

Steve and Deb Regele and Linda Zirpoli were at the park in Columbus. Together we walked a bit and saw the expected Spotted Sandpiper, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warblers, Yellow-rump Warbler, Tree Swallows, Black-headed Grosbeak, Least Flycatcher and many other species. Mergansers flying up and down the river channel entertained us for several minutes.

We went next to Fireman's Point Fishing Access where birdsong was plentiful, particularly from the many Yellow Warblers, Least Flycatchers and others. Red-tailed Hawks were seen high on the ridge above the park. At Cliff Swallow fishing access we failed to find the usual Dipper and the Cliff Swallow but Deb used her eagle eyes to locate a Bullock's Oriole hiding in shrubs along the Stillwater River. By this time, Steve had helped us all see 5 swallow species: Bank, Cliff, Tree, Violet Green and Barn!

Other species were seen as we traveled up the road to Castle Rock F.A. included a Bald Eagle at the nest with 2 eaglets, House Wren, Mountain Bluebird. Our only Kingbird sighting the entire trip was an Eastern Kingbird on this stretch of the river. A Lazuli Bunting was another thrill. At Castle Rock we were greeted by a huge flock of Pine Siskins. They seemed to almost dance before our eyes as they moved away.

When we went to the spot where we have found a Calliope Hummingbird for at least 20 years we found 5 at first and then one entertained us for as long as we stayed.

Then, we were off to Woodbine Campground at the end of the trail. There, we saw a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a drilling Hairy Woodpecker. We looked in vain for the Red-naped Sapsucker and other species we have often seen at the campground.

We ended our trip here with approximately 54 species. While some of the species often seen on this trip were not identified this year, we all seemed to enjoy the trip. It makes me want to go again. That seems to happen a lot on birding days.

Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst

Upcoming Birding Field Trips:

Aug 7 Sat: Shorebirds, Hawks, Prairie Birds Mike Weber, leader; Sack Lunch

Aug 20-22 Sat-Mon : Bowdoin NWR Make your own reservations for two nights at the Maltana Motel in Malta 406-654-2610.

Sept 4 Sat: Bridger Creek Stan Heath, leader, Sack lunch, Meet at 8:00a.m. Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus

Sept 8 Wed: Riverfront Park Meet at the parking area on the right once in the park at 5:00 p.m. Mike Weber, leader

Sept 18 Sat: Red Lodge Area Hawk Watch. 8:00a.m. In Red Lodge Town Pump Conoco Marco Restani, leader, Sack Lunch

Please check for updated/correct times and meeting places prior to field trip: Donn Bartlett
donnbartlett@msn.com

Mysterious Disease Affecting Birds in the Eastern United States

Many of you may have already read reports about the new illness spreading among birds in District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. In recent weeks, the disease has been found in Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee. National Audubon and wildlife partners have been working to identify the disease and will publish updates as they learn more.

For more information and to read the latest update (July 15, 2021), visit: <https://md.audubon.org/news/mysterious-illness-affects-birds-district-columbia-maryland-pennsylvania-virginia-and-west>.

Submitted by Deb Regele

August Events at the Montana Audubon Center

As a courtesy, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society publishes events of the Montana Audubon Center in our newsletter "the Flyer". Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and Montana Audubon Center are two separate nonprofit organizations.

❖ **Nature Nuts Preschool Program: Every Tuesday 10 - 11am** Nature exploration comes naturally, especially for little kids! Children ages 1 to 4 (and an accompanying adult) join our teacher naturalists for guided outdoor play and learning about the local area. Monthly themes are posted on our website. Suggested donation \$5/child or free for members.

❖ **Open House: Every Saturday 9am - 1pm from June-August** We are excited to again offer our weekly Saturday Open Houses this summer! Come down to explore and enjoy the great outdoors. Ask a naturalist your essential questions about animals and plants. Borrow field guides, insect nets, and binoculars. Or get in a canoe and explore the ponds. Suggested donation \$10/canoe, free for members.

❖ **Weekend Wonders Family Program: August 21st from 9:30 - 11am** These naturalist-led programs are designed for all ages of explorers. Every month features a different topic that will get you and your family outdoors, learning about the plants and animals in our big backyard. Monthly themes are posted on our website. Suggested donation \$5/person or free for members.

❖ **Bird Stroll: August 14th from 8:30 - 10am** Enjoy a morning stroll by the river and learn a few birds along the way. Great for beginning birders. Binoculars and guidebooks available to check out. Suggested donation \$10/adults, \$5/students, or free for members.

❖ **Bugs N Brews: Friday August 13th from 9pm-12am**

Join entomologist Marian Kirst on an invertebrate-filled adventure you'll never forget! Participants will use different insect collecting techniques to attract, examine and identify the insects and spiders that make the natural world go round. Enjoy some local beverages while you learn about the tiny creatures that make up most of this planet. Bring a headlamp or flashlight, or borrow one from us! Cost is \$25/person for non-members, \$22.50/person for members.

❖ **Evening Walk with a Naturalist: August 24th from 6:30 - 8pm** Join us to make observations, follow our curiosity, and share naturalist knowledge with each other. Each month we'll explore a different natural area in and around Billings. This month we'll meet at Sundance Lodge in Laurel, a BLM property situated between the Yellowstone River and Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone. Prepare to explore local birds, insects, arachnids, flowers and more! Please bring any naturalist tools you like to use (binoculars, field guides, magnifying glasses, journals, etc.). We'll also have some equipment you can borrow. Suggested donation \$5-10/person.

❖ **Bat Night Hike: Friday August 27th from 8:30 - 10 pm**

Dive into the mesmerizing world of bats! Join Megan O'Reilly from Fish, Wildlife and Parks to learn cool bat facts, then head out with special acoustic equipment to find them. Bring a flashlight and good walking shoes. Suggested donation \$5/person

Advance registration is required for all programs. Visit our website at mtaudubon.org/center for more info or to register. Current members of the Montana Audubon Center receive discounts on our programs! Become a member today by visiting our website.

Submitted by Becca Mathias

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Annual Report of YVAS Funds
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

	Operating Fund	Aud. Adv. Fund 2/	Osprey Fund	Yellowstone R. Fund	Gen. Proj. Fund*	Twine Recyc. Proj.	Endow. Fund 3/	BCF Endow. 1/
Bal. 7-1-20	23,064	0	18,588	1,744	12,834	20,023	76	80,528
Revenue	4,519	0	10,250	0	225	5,200	1,179	1,184
Expenses	(2,513)	0	(8,776)	0	(397)	(7,330)	(1,184)	11,150
Bal. 6-30-21	25,070	0	20,062	1,744	12,662	17,893	71	92,862

TOTAL YVAS FUNDS: 170,364.00

***General Projects Fund includes:**

OSPREY PROJECTS	
Osprey Rescue Fund	\$ 2,672.20
CONSERVATION PROJECTS	
Conservation Grant	650.00
Unspecified Conservation Projects	282.00
Endangered Species Donation	332.00
Clark's Fork WMA	233.88
SPECIAL PROGRAMS	
Holiday Fundraiser/Other	1,263.86
Birdathon 2018/2019 - YVAS "party" fund	110.00
EDUCATION	
Rose Sylling Trust	3,139.68
Birdathon 2016 - for Dover Park signs	259.25
Birdathon 2017 - for Dover Park signs	1,085.07
Audubon Adventures Repurposed 2/	1,775.61
M and K Fried Community Education	500.00
Chapter Dinner 1-16-17, 1-15&5-21-18	358.00
Nocturnal Bird Call Recording Project	-
TOTAL	\$ 12,661.55

1/ Revenue represents deposits by YVAS to the Endow. Fund and Expenses represent net changes to the Fund.

2/ Repurposed under General Projects Fund - EDUCATION.

3/ Expenses represent transfers to BCF Endowment.

Government and Policy Note

The YVAS policy and process does not include direct financing of lobbyists. However YVAS members are encouraged to research and support other NGO's that do employ lobbyists that pursue missions consistent with that of YVAS and the member's personal ideology.

The YVAS 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."

Submitted by Steve Regele

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: AUG 9, 2021 —The YVAS meeting of the Board of Directors will be held from 4pm to 6pm. Board of Directors meetings are held the second Monday of the month. Board meetings are open to all members.

Next Public Program: September 20, 2021- Watch for details in the next Sept flyer and on the website: yvaudubon.org Doors open at 6:30pm; program begins at 7pm. YVAS Public Programs are held the third Monday of the month, September through May.

All meetings are held at the Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings, MT.

Board of Directors

President: Steve Regele 406-962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
 Vice President: Steve Linder 406-380-0073 becon1@bresnan.net
 Secretary: Sue Weinreis 406-855-4181 granpeak47@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Pam Pipal 406-245-4517 ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

Doreen Hartman 406-697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
 Robert Hill 406-252-4447 rehill49@gmail.com
 Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn648@gmail.com
 Steve McConnell 406-661-0422 mcconnells@ci.billings.mt.us
 Sheila McKay 406-652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Deb Regele 406-962-3115 debregle@gmail.com

Committees and Chairs

Bird Questions: Any Board of Directors or member
Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst 245-5118 erv132@charter.net
Christmas Bird Count: Jerry Dalton 656-3656 daltonlj@centurylink.net
Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Facebook: Nancy Wiggins 839-4461 nwiggins83@gmail.com
Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett 812-1008 donnbartlett@msn.com
Flyer Editor: Teresa Henderson 337-263-7985 yvasflyer@gmail.com
Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center 406-585-1211
Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources: 652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
Membership Data Admin: Peter Cummins 248-8684
membership.data@yvaudubon.org
Mt Blue Bird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones 670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
 Sue Weinreis 855-4182 granpeak47@gmail.com
Osprey Project Nest Monitor Coordinator: Deb Regele 962-3115
debregle@gmail.com
Osprey Project Research Coordinator: Marco Restani 425-2608
restani@stcloudstate.edu
Twine Recycling Project: Deb Regele: 962-3115 debregle@gmail.com
 Doreen Hartman 697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Program Committee: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Publicity: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker 855-9832918 Avenue C, Billings
Recycling (baling twine): Deb Regele 962-3115 debregle@gmail.com
 Doreen Hartman 697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Website: Deb Regele 962-3115 debregle@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation to the US Congress:

Senator Steve Daines
www.daines.senate.gov
 Billings: 406-245-6822 Wash DC: 202-224-2651

Senator Jon Tester
www.testersenate.gov
 Billings: 406-252-0550 Wash DC: 202-224-2644

Representative Matt Rosendale
<https://rosendale.house.gov/contact>
 Billings: 406-413-6720 Wash DC: 202-225-3211

Membership Updates

Chapter members listed below are up for renewal. Please use the application form below (include your email address) and submit, along with a check, to any Board Member or mail it to the address on the application. Contact the Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins at membership.data@yvaudubon.org with any questions.

- ❖ Aug renewal: Donn and Dorothy Bartlett, Martha Crofts, Stephen Linder, Cindy Meccage, Mat Regele, Sherlene Robinson-O'Dea
- ❖ July outstanding: Vonnie Anderson, Donna Lance

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 \$25. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$15 and indicate academic affiliation. **PayPal option is also available for renewing or joining YVAS. It can be found on the YVAS Website under Memberships.**

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





**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
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Red-shafted Northern Flicker Photo: Will Crain



*Lazuli Bunting Photo by J Dunham from YVAS archives-
<https://yvaudubon.org/>*

Please submit articles, notes, and photos that you would like to see in a YVAS Flyer newsletter on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of preferred publication. This is your chance to use your writing and reporting skills! All contributions are appreciated.