

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 41, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2011

New This Issue

- YELLOWSTONE RIVER OIL SPILL
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- AUDUBON ADVENTURES
- BIRDATHON



YVAS PRESIDENT BILL DEMEYER ON THE OIL SPILL

Hello to everyone. My time as YVA President certainly got off to a very interesting start with the oil spill on the Yellowstone River July 2nd. I am hopeful that we will learn from this experience and begin to discuss changes and planning for disasters so that we can be proactive. I would also like to see Audubon take a role in the conversation about safer measures regarding the transportation of oil. I do have to say that our local Exxon people have been great; I



could tell that Pam Malik with Exxon does care about the river and the animals. Their response was immediate. She was also very informative as the Wildlife Rescue team was on its way, but it took time for them to arrive from out of state. She was also very open to the idea of using the Education Center as a staging site if necessary and working with the state and local Audubon. Recent reports indicate numerous bird deaths as well as some animals. A Bald Eagle was covered in oil as well as geese and a hawk. I am hopeful the Rescue team will have captured the bald eagle and others and cleaned them by this publication. I am sure there will be more birds and ani-

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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 8, 6:00 pm: Board Meeting AT NANCY WIGGINS' HOUSE: 3016 BRENTWOOD LANE (North of Rimrock, 1 mile west of Rocky Mountain College)

Monday, September 12, 6:00 p.m: Board Meeting

Monday, September 19, 5:30 p.m: General Membership Meeting POT LUCK PICNIC AT THE AUDUBON CENTER . See September Flyer for details.



☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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mals found as the clean-up process continues. During this tragedy I realized that we need to build an Emergency Response Plan. This will help us contact members quickly in an event such as this. The plan will help us establish contacts to the Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Exxon (or whatever entity is involved), the media, and other organizations that might be involved. We need to determine media communication and how to handle any birds that are harmed by an event. I would like to see our web site be a source for members and the public in such an event. We should update our site to allow people to enter photos and document what is happening to the Yellowstone River and ecosystem and the animals with the oil spill and the long term effects. At this time there is another oil spill on the Blackfoot Reservation. I don't know too many details at this time, but I hope this doesn't become a common occurrence in Montana.

Moving on, I would like to hear from all of you. I would like to hear your ideas on ways we can raise money. Some thoughts I had are community walks and races and selling and auctioning off home-made bird houses. I would like to bring more community awareness of Audubon to Billings and try to encourage younger people to become involved. I would like your feedback on what you would like to see and do at the meetings. To me it is all about birds, our feathered friends. A goal for all of us is to raise the endowment fund to \$50,000 (thank you Ruth). This is important and will take our thoughts and energy to accomplish. Important Bird Areas (IBA's), especially after the oil spill on the Yellowstone, are also goals we need to work on and push for.

So, with all of that said, please continue to pay your \$20.00 dues, attend our meetings, enjoy our feathered friends, get involved and have fun doing it.



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, battie@bresnan.net

Vice-President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com

Secretary: Mary Schvetz, 720-935-2504, mary.schvetz@rocky.edu

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

Past-President: Kayhan Ostovar, 256-7481, kayhan@q.com

Board of Directors:

Rita Harding: 259-7586, mtroses22@bresnan.net

Jeanette Tasey, 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.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

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gmowat@bresnan.net

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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.....open

Recycling (aluminum).....Tom Davis 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.

Below is the annual financial report submitted by Treasurer, Deb Regele

YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2011

	Operating Fund	Audubon Adventures	Special Project (Osprey)	Chapter Dinner (ACEC)	General Project (Birdathon)	Endowment
Balance	10,700	1,138	1,010	245	0	37,243
Revenue	9,286	911	1,425	1,535	1,578	772
Expense	8,574	1,194	2,071	1,780	60	0
Balance 6-30-11	11,412	855	364	0	1,518	38,015

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 school 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 2011-2012

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
BURLINGTON CENTRAL HEIGHTS	Ann Brucker	5		Michael Thomas	3
	Zoe Twichel	4		Craig Thompson	5
ELDER GROVE	To be announced	4	ORCHARD	Alissa Cox	3/4
	To be announced	4		Jodi Ervin	4
HIGHLAND	Randy Hartman	4		Tawna Robinson	3
INDEPENDENT	Denise Haines	5	POLY DRIVE	Charles Bokum	4
	Lori Ler	5	PONDEROSA	Jean Muhlbeier	4
MCKINLEY	Kim Busch	4	ROBERTS ELEM Roberts, MT	George Nelson	4/5
	Pat Lowthian	4	UINTA MEADOWS ELEM, Evanston, WY	Janalee Hamblin	4

SINCERE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR SPONSORING THE 2010-2011 AUDUBON ADVENTURES

- Helen Carlson—for raising funds with bird classes and for sponsoring the Evanston, WY class
- Tom and Jeannette Davis—for sponsoring two 4th grade classes at Elder Grove
- Phyllis Holt—for sponsoring the 5th grade class at Roberts

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 2011-2012 kit is "**Feathers, Fur, Fins, and You**". This new kit will contain four new editions of "Audubon Adventures" which cover the following themes:

Pollinators featuring hummingbirds and bees

Wild Alaska

Rivers of Life

Caring for our Planet – a special "Action for Planet Earth" edition focusing on ways that young people can actively participate in Audubon

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 2009-2010 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



FIELD TRIP NOTES

ON MAY 28TH, nine birders, weary of unbirding-like weather, set out for Speidel and Broadview Pond. We arrived in the Speidel area (just yards into Golden Valley Co.) and found water that reached over a mile in length.

After seeing many of the usual suspects on the way along the roadside, it was good to see new birds for the year. At our stop we saw Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged teal, Willet, Upland Sandpiper, Brewer's Blackbird, Bufflehead, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Marbled Godwit, Semipalliated Sandpiper and heard a Wilson's Snipe.

At Broadview Pond we saw Yellow-head blackbird, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Redhead Duck, Lesser Scaup, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird and Common Raven. On the way back toward Billings we ventured west of the highway where we saw Loggerhead Shrike, Lark Bunting, Red-tailed Hawk and an exceptionally good-looking Bullock's Oriole. I was riding with George and Bernie Mowat who did a great job leading us. Also in our caravan were Jerry and Lois Dalton, Don and Dorothy Bartlett, Brad Hall and William Crain. We saw a total of 49 birds and heard 1. GREAT DAY! Thanks to Phil McBride.

JUNE 3-5 *Wings Across the Big Sky*

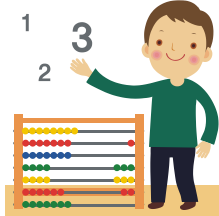
At 6:00 a.m. on a chilly, windy Friday, June 3, 2011, *Wings Across the Big Sky* was under way in Glasgow, Montana. This year in addition to Saturday and Sunday's events, two all-day tours were offered on Friday with one group going to northern Valley County (Grassland Bird Conservation and Management) and the other to south Valley County (Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation and Management). With excellent guides and speakers, both groups came away with a better understanding of the fine balance nature maintains in this unique ecosystem.



Saturday afternoon's workshops offered a wide variety of topics and very knowledgeable speakers, my favorite being the Sparrow Identification lecture by Dan Casey. (One can never know enough about those confusing little brown birds!) Saturday and Sunday's early morning birding trips were worth the 6:00 a.m. rise. Friday's wind and chill left the area leaving behind great weather. Despite the extremely high water in the Glasgow area, all trips went as scheduled. There were birding trips to the well known birding hotspots, including one by canoe, another to Manning Lake Tribal Wildlife Refuge IBA, and a hands-on bird banding experience.

Saturday's luncheon speaker was Gary Ferguson from Red Lodge who gave an inspirational and very compelling talk that spoke to the whole audience. Saturday evening's dinner also featured the presentation of awards, auctioning of desserts, and a silent auction followed by a live auction. Montana Audubon's web site has further information on the festival including the recipients of this year's awards, the bird list for each of the birding tours, and other bits of interest.

Another awesome aspect was of course, the flooded conditions between Billings and Fort Peck and the water level of Fort Peck Reservoir. The day before the birding festival, the Corp of Engineers began releasing water from Fort Peck over all spillways. My understanding is this was the first time ever that water was released from all spillways at the same time. Thanks to Deb Regele



JUNE 11, 2011 BIRDATHON

The day promised more stormy weather when the first collaborative Birdathon between Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and the Montana Audubon Conservation Education Center was to take place. At 5 pm, when the event started the rains began and the sky looked ominous. However, an immediate clearing made for some good bird sightings by the three teams who started to look for birds in the Billings area while another team began their bird identification in Red Lodge. These teams were at it again by dawn on Sunday morning and kept going until the 5 pm deadline. Two other teams birded for shorter periods on Sunday, one in Bozeman, and another, in Billings.

A birdathon is a competitive event used to raise money and have fun. It involves teams who attempt to identify the most species in a given time period. Pledges from sponsors are sought by the teams to raise money for important projects. This year, the featured project is establishing an Osprey nesting site equipped with a web cam at the Audubon Center. That project is underway and funds are sought to support its completion.

Having fun is another major goal of the Birdathon and have fun we did. Each team reported the thrill of discovery. The early morning chorus of birdsong in a country yard was reported by Billie Hicks; the turning around and spying an Eastern Screech Owl followed almost immediately by the appearance of a friendly Great Horned Owl brought smiles to the faces of the Spring Chicks team of Rita Harding, Mary Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Jones. They saw the only owls reported. The Senior Moments team of Phil McBride, Anne Cowan and Ruth Vanderhorst experienced the low of not seeing hawks followed by all the big buteos popping up one after another; Red-tailed Hawks followed by gorgeous Ferruginous Hawks and a lonely Swainson. All teams reported the fun of seeing birds everywhere from a ball field in Bozeman where Steve and Deb Regele's granddaughters were performing to Jerry and Lois Dalton using their few free Sunday hours to collect 30 identifications in Riverfront Park to George and Bernie Mowat hunting a nice number of species in the Red Lodge area. Billie Hicks and her team began in her yard in the Joliet area and The Senior Moments went from Pictograph Caves to Woodbine Campground to Rapelje and Big Lake and the Spring Chicks went

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from Broadview to Pompey's Pillar. Of course, each team examined many sites in between. Helen Carlson and Laura Robinson raised money to support the whole event, benefitting all.

All teams together reported 119 species while the winning Senior Moments got 90 to win the competition. At the Audubon Center five families took advantage of a short course in bird identification followed by a brief field trip in search of the birds. Tired teams returned to the Audubon Center to share stories and refreshments. A brick honoring the winning Senior Moments will be laid in the Commemorative Walkway at the Center. All teams and the two organizations thank the many donors to this event. After expenses were deducted, \$2,166.92 was shared equally between YVAS and the MT Audubon Conservation Education Center. If further donations are received they will be split between the two organizations. Thanks to Ruth Vanderhorst

JUNE 25 PRYOR MOUNTAINS Six birders from Billings joined George Mowat for our drive to Bridger; on the way we checked for activity in the Osprey nests and were delighted to see adults – hopefully with chicks tucked down in the nest out of sight. It was a wonderful day weather-wise, but the roads into Sage Creek were washed out, deeply rutted and a driver's challenge. While we didn't see a Blue Grosbeak or Mountain Plover, Northern Mockingbirds or Chukars as were spotted as in previous years, three Turkey Vultures sitting on a fence line greeted us. We had lunch at Sage Creek and continued on to Nick Knight's house where the feeders on the porch were quite busy with Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. He also showed us a hummingbird that perished hitting a window which he stored in a baggie in the freezer. What beautiful, tiny creatures these birds are! We saw Mountain Bluebirds, swallows and an American Redstart flitting in the bushes. We were also entertained by a herd of Black Angus yearlings and a white horse who galloped playfully out of the trees, possibly going to greener pastures. On the way out, we got to see a couple of Long-billed Curlews. Thanks to Joan R. McKeown



COMING AT THE AUDUBON CENTER on Sunday, Aug 28, 2011 from 12-7pm **Yellowstone Riverfest**

Bike/canoe race, free children's bike race, outdoor concert by Downtime, raffles and cook-out. Proceeds to support the Audubon Conservation Education Center and Yellowstone River Parks Association. All activities held at Audubon Center and Riverfront Park **Registration Opens** on August 31st for Audubon Afterschool Adventures in Nature classes. Visit www.mtacec.org for class days and themes.



NESTING MATERIALS

Here are some insect book ideas, all available at Parmly Billings Library. When it's too hot to go birding, consider the insect world in your own backyard, what many of the birds have been eating. These books are about identifying and understanding the lives of insects, not so much about how to kill the ones bugging you. Thanks to Jerry Dalton

- 577.784 Grissell Insects and gardens: in pursuit of a garden ecology / Eric Grissell, Timber Press, 2006
- 595.57 Grissell Bees, wasps, and ants: the indispensable role of Hymenoptera in gardens / Eric Grissell, Timber Press, 2010
- 635.0497 Cranshaw Garden insects of North America: the ultimate guide to backyard bugs / Whitney Cranshaw, Princeton University Press, 2004 (Color photographs to help with identification)
- 578.757 Nardi Life in the soil: a guide for naturalists and gardeners / James B Nardi, U of Chicago Press, 2007
- 639.92 Tallamy Bringing nature home: how native plants sustain wildlife in our gardens / Douglas W Tallamy, Timber Press, 2007

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 _____

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 FOR EXAMPLE, 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**

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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. Do make sure you check all field trips with listing in flyer each month for any changes.

- **Aug 6 (Sat) SHOREBIRDS, HAWKS & PRAIRIE BIRDS.** 8 a.m. Bring sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader.
- **August 25 to 28 (Thurs--Sun) WESTBY AND NORTHEAST MONTANA.** Observe migrating birds including warblers found in Northeast Montana. Helen Carlson, leader. (TRIP MAY BE DELAYED DUE TO MOWING IN THE WESTBY PARK) Call Helen at 248-8684 for information. Make your own reservations for two nights at the Sherwood Inn in Plentywood, MT 406-765-2810 and one night at the Maltana Motel in Malta 406-654-2610.
- **Sept 8 (Thur) MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK** at 5 p.m. Fall Migrants. Mike Weber, leader.
- **Sept 10 (Sat) CLARK'S FORK AND PRYOR MOUNTAINS.** Meet at 8 a.m. at Rockvale (parking lot at southwest end of Rockvale farthest from Billings and closest to Red Lodge). Bring Sack Lunch and water. Billie Hicks, leader. Reservations required. Phone Billie at 962-3798 by Sept. 8th. Red Lodge members and guests are encouraged to attend.
- **Sept 24 (Sat) MEETEETSE SPIRES HAWK WATCH.** 8 a.m. Bring a sack lunch. Jerry Dalton, leader.



Field Trip Chairs: George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467