

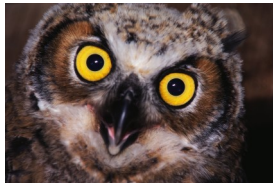
Mission: Building on the tradition of special interest in birds, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is organized to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat.

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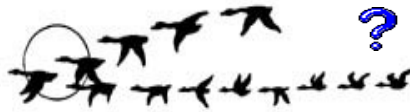
New This Issue

- Northern Flicker Profile
- Helen Carlson's Bird Identification Classes
- Montana Audubon Award Nominations
- YVAS Osprey Project



Inside this issue:

<i>This Month's Chapter Meeting</i>	1
<i>Meetings Schedule</i>	1
<i>Officers and Committees</i>	2
<i>Membership Forms</i>	7
<i>Field Trip Schedule</i>	8

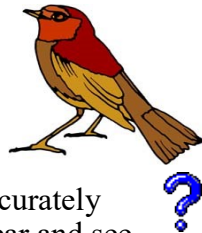


Tell Me: What Bird is That?

Identifying birds is easy -- when you have experts to help you learn the techniques!

The chapter's membership meeting, April 19th, will concentrate on what to look for and how to identify "that" bird, so you can put it on your list.

Three birding experts, Chuck Carlson, Helen Carlson and Steve Hoffman will "show and tell" both beginning and experienced bird watchers how to accurately identify the birds you hear and see and how to get the most enjoyment out of your birding trips.



Chuck Carlson, a recognized bird photographer, will provide a power point presentation of many of his beautiful bird photos and Helen Carlson who leads our

chapter's Annual Bird Identification Classes, will provide tips on what to see and to listen for when you see and hear "that" bird! [Look for information on Helen's upcoming classes on page 4 of the flyer.] Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon and a recognized expert on raptors and their identification, will explain how to identify these great birds when you see them, especially in flight.

Please join us for this informative and fun meeting. There is no admission, public parking is available and non-members are welcome. —Robert Lubbers



YVAS Meetings

All YVAS Meetings are at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, unless otherwise noted.

Monday, April 12th 6:30pm: Board Meeting

Monday, April 19th 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting

We will be holding a YVAS fundraiser dinner before the general membership meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. We will be having a favorite casseroles dinner. Contact Ruth Vanderhorst to contribute to dinner and/or for dinner reservations at 245-5118 or acrv@bresnan.net Note: dinner starts at 5:45 so diners have enough time to turn in dishes to kitchen help by 6:30.



From the Editor

The calendar tells us it is Spring (even though it doesn't always feel like it), and everyone I have talked to says they are ready for it! Spring brings many of our bird friends back, and I love to hear the newly arrived Robins in my neighborhood chasing each other in the evenings. After hibernating a bit too much this past winter, I am anxious to get out more and do some birdwatching. I am always curious to see what birds come back when. I hope you have a chance to get out on birding trips this Spring as well. As always, we would love to hear about your bird sightings, field trips, etc. If you would like to have something printed in the flyer, send it to editor@yellowstoneaudubon.org

Also a reminder that the YVAS board is still looking for officers and board members for the upcoming year (starting in August). Officer terms are for one year and board member terms are for two years. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee: current YVAS Vice-President Dick Moore at 656-6241 or Bernie Mowat at 656-7467.

YVAS board members will be having a meeting with Amy Cilimburg from Montana Audubon to discuss the process the YVAS chapter could take to determine an Important Bird Area (IBA) in our area. If you are interested in taking part in this discussion and in being a part of this project, that meeting will be held at Ruth Vanderhorst's house on Friday, April 16th 5:30pm. Contact Ruth (see her information below) for directions and to let her know you plan to attend.

—editor



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, acriv@bresnan.net

Vice-President: Dick Moore, 656-6241

Secretary: Jeanne Olson, 656-7278

Treasurer: George Mowat, 656-7467, gmowat@bresnan.net

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

Board of Directors:

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

Robert Lubbers: 245-2970, rslubbers@q.com

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

Monty Sullins: 656-5242, ssullins@bresnan.net

Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nancyhwiggins@hotmail.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

Editor.....Jeanne Olson, editor@yellowstoneaudubon.org

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

Injured Raptors.....Robert Lubbers 245-2970

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

Recycling (aluminum).....Tom Davis 656-7618

Website:

Mark Gale, webmaster@yellowstoneaudubon.org

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

- Board Meetings held second Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Board Meetings are open to entire membership.
- General Chapter Meetings are held third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meeting are open to the public.

Northern Flicker



The first time I saw a Northern Flicker on my deck, up close and personal, I was hooked, captivated by its stunning, bright coloring and noble stature.

Because it is in the Woodpecker family you would expect it to feed in trees, but it is mostly a ground feeder with a diet consisting mainly of ants but

also beetle larvae and other insects. It will also eat berries in the fall, winter and spring.

Larger than a Robin, it measures 12.5 inches in length with a 20 inch wing span. It has a slightly down-curved bill and long, flared tail that tapers to a point. Generally it is grayish-brown with a belly that is an off-white with numerous 2-5 mm black spots and a black crescent mark on the upper breast. The Red-Shafted (Western) male Flicker has a red malar and reddish underwings which distinguishes it from the Yellow-Shafted (Taiga-Eastern) Flicker, which has a black malar and yellow underwings. The Taiga Eastern female has a red nape crescent.

The colorful undersurface of the wings are flashed at potential mates or rivals during courtship and territorial defense. Flickers can be easily identified in flight because of a prominent white rump and an undulating flight pattern. Their call is an unmistakable high, clear, piercing Klee-yer or Keew.

Dead or diseased trees, such as pine, cottonwood or willow serve as their favorite nesting cavities with the male doing most of the excavating. Male and female incubate the 5-8 eggs and feed the young. After 24-27 days the young leave the nest with the parents still feeding them until they learn to forage and gather their own food.

They can be found year-round throughout Montana in open woodlands, savannas and forest edges. They adapt well to human habitats so will visit a backyard or birdbath. Unfortunately, Breeding Bird Survey data has found a significant decline in population, most likely

due to loss of habitat and competition with the European Starling for nest cavities. This causes some concern as their excavated cavities are later used by other cavity nesting species, such as the Screech Owl and American Kestrel.

Two important ways you can help Flickers are by providing nest boxes and protecting their foraging habitat. When possible ant colonies should be left undisturbed. Do not use lawn pesticides and plant native fruiting shrubs, such as gooseberry, sumac, Virginia creeper, dogwood and elderberry. Flickers may also visit wire or log suet feeders.

They may occasionally drum on house siding or attempt to excavate a nest site under the eaves of a house. The following website gives suggestions on how to discourage this behavior: www.ext.colostate.edu/Pubs/natres/06516.html

References:

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Alfred A Knoph, 2000. p.318.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology website

MT.gov website

MT.Wildlife Gardener website

Audubon at Home website

Seattle Audubon Society Bird web- site

—Janet Weisz



Northern Flicker photos by
YVAS member Jeanette Tasey.

**Do you see lots of birds and wonder what kinds they are?
You need to sign up for Helen Carlson's
34th Annual Bird Identification Class**

Class Days are Thursdays, May 6th, May 13th, and May 20th from 9:00am to 3:00pm. Cost is \$25. Classes are appropriate for everyone from those just beginning to notice birds to more experienced bird watchers. Classes are all held in the field, and Helen promises there will be no hard final exam at the end. For more information call Helen at 248-8684. Proceeds go to Audubon Adventures, helping teachers bring Audubon into their classrooms.

**Celebrate Earth Day on Saturday, April 17th
Audubon Conservation Education Center**

Join Montana Audubon and the Yellowstone River Parks Association for a day of restoration work in honor of Earth Day. Participants will plant and launch floating islands to improve water quality in Deep Mill Pond. We will also install habitat gardens to attract birds and butterflies around our new building.

Work and fun begin at 8:00am. Volunteers will be rewarded with a free BBQ lunch at noon, which will be followed by a presentation by Amy Cilimburg, Montana Audubon Staff Scientist. Afterwards volunteers can participate in guided hikes and canoe rides. Please join us for an hour or for the whole day. Bring the entire family. No fee for participation.



We are located at 7026 S. Billings Boulevard, 1/4 mile south of I-90 on the right (west) side of the road. Call Heather Ristow at 294-5099 with any questions.

This event is made possible by grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Together Green (a National Audubon Society initiative funded by Toyota), and generous donations from Buchanan Capital LLC, Bridger Plant Materials Center, Floating Islands International LLC, Good Earth Market, Great Bear Restoration, Headwaters Floating Islands LLC, Stella's Kitchen and Bakery, and Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. Thank you.

—Heather Ristow

Allison Begley from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks would like to pass along the following information: With Spring approaching, we've had some inquiries for the Montana Bird list. Know that the list can be downloaded at (http://mtnhp.org/docs/MT_Bird_List_2007.pdf). We have not had a recent printing and are low on hard copies at the FW&P office. The list you can download is formatted to print just like the copy you can pick up.

As well, know you can input your bird observations at the Natural Heritage Program via Tracker (<http://mtnhp.org/Tracker/NHTMap.aspx>) or the new simple web entry tool (<http://mtnhp.org/observationform/>). The PD Skaar's *Montana Bird Distribution* book will be reprinted in 2011, so those who are recording information are encouraged to get their observations in by December 2010. There's more information at <http://mtaudubon.org/birds/distribution.html>

**Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival:
Wings Across the Big Sky
June 4 - 6, 2010 In Missoula**

This is a reminder of the upcoming Montana Audubon Annual Bird Festival. The brochures outlining the field trips, events, and registration for the festival have been mailed. You can also access this brochure and registration material at <http://mtaudubon.org/> *Fieldtrip group size will be limited so register early!*

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

We are now seeking nominations for 4 awards that will be given away at Montana Audubon's annual meeting this year. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

To nominate your candidate, please call the Montana Audubon office to request an award nomination form or download the form from our website at <http://mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html>. To be considered for this year's award, nominations and all supporting material must be postmarked no later than May 14, 2010. All nominations and supporting material should be sent to Montana Audubon, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: (406) 443-7144. The award ceremony will take place on June 5 at Montana Audubon's Bird Festival in Missoula. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or jjelis@mtaudubon.org.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2010

The numbers are in for the 2010 Great Backyard Bird Count. Following are some interesting statistics from this year's count. A total 97,209 checklists were submitted by bird watchers in the U.S and Canada. There were a total of 602 species recorded and 11,226,260 individual birds counted.

The Northern Cardinal was the most reported bird, as it has been for the past five years, followed by the Dark-eyed Junco, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Goldfinch, Tufted Titmouse, House Finch, American Crow and Black-capped Chickadee. The most numerous bird was the American Robin, with 1,850,082 individual birds counted. An American Robin roost topping one million birds in St. Petersburg, Florida put the Robin at the top of the list for individual bird counted and St. Petersburg at the top of the list for localities reporting the most birds.

Montana did not make it onto any of the top ten lists in numbers of species, individual birds, or checklists submitted; however, we were not "slacking off." Montana recorded 121 species and a total of 69,977 individual birds. The ten most numerous birds reported for Montana were the Canada Goose (20,952), Mallard (11,912), Rock Pigeon (4,128), House Sparrow (4,126), House Finch (2,058), European Starling (1,811), Horned Lark (1,769), Grey-crowned Rosy Finch (1,561), Common Goldeneye (1,531), and Black-capped Chickadee (1,429). There were also several species with only one recorded individual in Montana; these include the Long-tailed Duck, Canvasback, Peregrine Falcon, Barred Owl, Snowy Owl, Canyon Wren, Winter Wren, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

For a more complete look at all the results as well as pictures and highlights and stories, go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

Next year's Great Backyard Bird Count will be held Feb. 18th-21st, 2011 .

Osprey Project



You may have seen the articles in *the Billings Gazette* or *The Outpost*, but if you missed them, on Tuesday, March 16th, representatives from YVAS, Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative (YVEC) and federal and state agencies met to erect a new Osprey nest at the Duck Creek Fishing Access. Osprey had been nesting on a nearby electric pole, which was problematic for both the Osprey and the electric company. YVEC had previously removed this nest, but the Osprey returned and rebuilt. It is hoped that this new nest site will entice the birds when they return this Spring.

Photos of new nest pole, nest platform and starter sticks taken by YVAS president, Ruth Vanderhorst.



Working cooperatively with business, utility and government organizations to determine problematic nest sites and erect safer replacement nests is one of the goals of the YVAS Osprey Project. Other goals are to monitor nest sites and fledgling rates as well as spread the word

about dangers to Osprey, such as baling twine.

Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative provided the labor and equipment costs to erect this new nest, a 60 foot pole topped by a circular platform covered with starter sticks. However, there are other problem nests in our area that need to be replaced with these safer nest platforms, and YVAS will continue to be involved in helping to fund and erect them.

YVAS was recently awarded a National Audubon Chapter mini-grant of \$467 to help cover some of the costs involved in the work of helping/monitoring Osprey. However, additional funds are always welcome. If you would like to contribute to the YVAS Osprey Fund, please send your donation to Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Attention: Osprey Fund, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075

State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change: This annual report highlights how climate change will influence bird populations and their habitats. The report calls attention to the collective efforts needed to protect nature's resources for the benefit of people and wildlife.

To view the full report, which covers the United States, go to www.stateofthebirds.org

The Montana Audubon website profiles the habitats and birds of particular concern for Montana. Climate change will affect Alpine regions, narrowing or eliminating alpine tundra and affecting species such as the White-tailed Ptarmigan and Rosy Finches. "Where do you go if you already live at the top of a mountain?" Wetland breeding birds, such as the Western and Clark's Grebes and Northern Pintail, will be affected by changes in water level distribution. The entire prairie pothole region is at risk. Forest species, particularly the Black Swift which nests behind waterfalls, will be affected by reduced glacial ice melt and streamflow. Grassland and Aridland will become warmer and drier, and their composition will become more vulnerable to invasive weeds, affecting many bird species that rely on their unique habitat complex, such as the Greater Sage Grouse.

For a more complete review of the effects of climate change on Montana see the Montana Audubon website at <http://mtaudubon.org>

Membership Information

1. As many of you know, we offer membership in YVAS as Supporting Chapter Members for \$20.00 per year. We do this to help pay the costs of membership. Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to join our chapter as Supporting Chapter Members. Use the bottom application form on the right to join as Supporting Chapter Members or to renew your chapter member.
2. An application for *initial* membership in the National Audubon Society is also printed in each YVAS Flyer (see application form on top right). If you are NOT a member of the NAS and wish to be, please use this form to join and send it, along with the fee, to the address provided. Our chapter will then receive payment for recruiting a new member.
3. Please note the address label on your issue of the Yellowstone Valley Flyer. If your label has a date on the top, you are a National Audubon Member. If your label has YVAS and a 2 digit year and month, you are a Supporting Chapter Member (or both). For examples, if your address label reads [YVAS JAN 10*] this means your renewal is due by January of 2010. If there is a [*] symbol, it indicates an expired local membership. Please renew chapter memberships when due using the form in the Flyer. Renewal of NAS membership is NOT handled by the chapter. You should renew directly with the NAS.
4. Moving??? Please 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.
5. 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, please make sure you leave a note for the membership secretary indicating your academic affiliation.

—Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary



© Marie Read

National Audubon Society
 Recruitment Code: COZN500Z
 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: COZN500Z
 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



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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. 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.

April 10th (Saturday): Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills. 8:00am-5:00pm. One Mile Walk. Sack Lunch. Leader: Ron Kuhler.

Note: the date for this fieldtrip has been moved up a week from the April 17th date on the 2009-2010 trip schedule to avoid conflict with the Earth Day Celebration at the Audubon Conservation Education Center.

May 8th (Saturday) Lake Basin. 8:00am Sack Lunch. Leader: Mike Weber.

May 15th (Saturday) Meet At Riverfront Park at 8:00am. Half Day. Leaders: George and Bernie Mowat.

Fieldtrip Chairs: George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467

