

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 40, NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2010

New This Issue

- Presidential Reflections
- NEW FLYER
- Memorials
- Audubon Adventures
- Study Abroad
-



GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

What are our common interests with these birds?

Bruce Waage is the Greater Sage-Grouse coordinator for private lands in Montana, and presently is employed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Bruce's presentation will include an introduction to and basic ecology of the species, some current activities and our common interest concerning Greater Sage-Grouse.

Most of Bruce's professional career has been in private industry. He has worked for environmental consulting firms, a large coal company; conducting wildlife surveys and coordinating reclamation efforts. He has also been employed with the state of Montana as a wildlife biologist in their regulatory division. He is a certified wildlife biologist through The Wildlife Society. He is past chairman of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council and hosted its bi-annual meeting in Billings.



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 |

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, September 13th 6:00pm: Board Meeting

Monday, September 20th 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting

We will be holding a YVAS fundraiser dinner before the general membership meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. To contribute to dinner and/or for dinner reservations, call Ruth Vanderhorst 245-5188.



PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS



This is the beginning of our 57th year of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society. This is a year when we hope to continue our efforts to foster the health of Osprey in the Yellowstone River valley, when we wish to learn more about the Yellowstone River and what it means to wildlife, and when we wish to continue our support for the natural environment and the creatures within it.

This is a year when we will each need to carry our civic responsibilities by being informed voters and active constituents who talk with legislators regularly about the concerns we have for the good of the habitat we share with all creatures.

This year we ask as many of you who can to be Supporting Chapter members. Supporting Chapter members are just that...they pay a separate \$20. to join the Chapter, in addition to their dues to the National Audubon Society. That money stays with the Chapter and is used to pay the costs of membership. **It is important.** Currently, we have about 120 Supporting members and almost 500 National members. Think about the 10 editions of the Yellowstone Flyer, the comfortable meeting place we enjoy each month, the programs that are carried out by the Chapter that support bird habitat and education about conservation. It is a pretty good deal.

This year, too, we ask you to volunteer in whatever ways you can to support the Chapter and its mission to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education,

(Continued on page 3)

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

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

Vice-President: Dick Moore, 656-6241

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

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

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

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

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

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

Editor.....Nancy Wiggins, nancyhwiggins@hotmail.com

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

Program Chair.....Robert Lubbers 245-2970

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 6:30pm. 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.

activism, and conservation of bird habitat. We are fortunate to have many excellent members willing to give of their time and skills. We have a new Editor of the Flyer, Nancy Wiggins, who has with this issue published her second edition; a new Secretary, Mary Schvetz, a new Treasurer, Deb Regele and two new Directors, Jeannette Tasey and Steve Regele. Kayhan Ostovar, our Past President, has agreed to act as Conservation Advisor, a role he performed without title before. We appreciate the dedicated service of each of you who continue to give of yourself and talents so generously, though all of you cannot be named here. Thank you. Ruth Vanderhorst



A NEW LOOK is coming for the YVAS Flyer, which started publishing in the familiar 'yellow' in January, 1976. After 30 plus years, we are going to change our signature to use recycled paper and a different publishing process in an effort to save environmental and budget costs. Please contact Nancy Wiggins at nancyhwiggins@hotmail.com for any information. Look for your next issue of the Flyer in October to be printed on white recycled paper with a colorful logo!

URBAN BIRDING

Imagine the surprise of my classmates when I suggested at a high school reunion in New York City in May, that we go birding in Central Park; and then imagine my surprise when they agreed to go along! While we had all visited the Park on many occasions in our youth, bird watching was a new adventure there. We met a guide at Turtle Pond and set off in the morning along the Park's many trails and waterways. The day was unseasonably warm and the warbler migration had peaked a few weeks earlier, but the 'urban jungle' experience still led to many new discoveries. Among them were the sightings of a Black-poll Warbler, a Black-and white Warbler, a colorful nesting pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The group was awed by the presence of a Carolina Chickadee because, as the guide explained, while they are common in other city parks, they are rarely sighted in Central Park, the habitat being that much different from one place to the next. As we exited Central Park on the east side we looked up to see the famous (infamous) Pale Male, the Red-tailed Hawk, who has roosted on an antenna atop the world's most expensive real estate, in the middle of Fifth Avenue, since 1991. Central Park apparently provides a bountiful living for him and his brood. His current mate, Lola, was sitting on the nest nearby, and evidence of their aerial campground was strewn down the front the building and sidewalk below. In 2004 the New York City Audubon Society fought eviction efforts from the building's other high rent-paying residents and now Pale Male's offspring have populated different sites in the Park. Nancy Wiggins

Central Park is an entirely manufactured urban oasis right in the center of Manhattan. Its location amidst urban sprawl makes it an irresistible attraction for both the populace of Manhattan and a remarkably diverse array of bird species. Perhaps unexpectedly for a park in the middle of the USA's most populous city, Central Park can attract up to 200 bird species per year.

What makes Central Park special as a birding location is habitat and location. New York City and the associated urban sprawl sit right on the Atlantic Flyway - a major migration route that channels many of the migratory birds down the Atlantic coast.



MEMORIALS

YVAS Chapter members extend sincere sympathy to family members of Helen Brosz. YVAS appreciates the memorial on her behalf, received from Dorcas Halverson who shared that Helen was a long-time member of the Chapter and widow of John Brosz. Both Helen and John taught at Rocky Mountain College.

When Ruth Vanderhorst became involved with YVAS in the nineties, many people mentioned Harriet Marble. She has been known as an outstanding birder. Some might want to send condolences. (PO Box 725, Chester, MT 59522) Her husband was Don Marble.

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 27th 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 2010-2011**

| SCHOOL | TEACHER | GRADE | SCHOOL | TEACHER | GRADE |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| BITTERROOT | Tammie Erickson | 4 | MILES AVE | Lyn Bitney | 3 |
| | Mary Hankins | 4 | NEWMAN | Mandy Bighorn | 4 |
| BLUE CREEK | Julie McNeil | 5 | ORCHARD | Alissa Cox | 4 |
| | Becky Carlson | 6 | | Vicki Cunningham | 3 |
| | Carl Strachan | 5/6 | | Jodi Ervin | 3 |
| BURLINGTON | Ann Brucker | 5 | | Tawna Robinson | 3 |
| CENTRAL (Roundup) | Jim Hegeson | 5 | POLY DRIVE | Charles Bokum | 4 |
| CENTRAL HEIGHTS | Zoe Twichel | 4 | PONDEROSA | Jean Muhlbeier | 4 |
| ELDER GROVE | To be announced | 4 | | Dan Erikson | 4 |
| | To be announced | 4 | ROBERTS ELEM Roberts, MT | George Nelson | 5 |
| ELYSIAN | Cindy Ewen | 4 | ROSE PARK | Robin Manfredi | 4 |
| INDEPENDENT | Denise Haines | 5 | | UINTA MEAD- OWS ELEM, Evanston, WY | Janalee Hamblin |
| | MCKINLEY | Lori Ler | 5 | | |
| Kim Busch | | 4 | | | |
| | Pat Lowthian | 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
- George and Bernie Mowat—for sponsoring the 4th grade at Elysian

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:

WILDLIFE ON THE MOVE: A FOUR -PART EXPLORATION OF MIGRATING ANIMALS:

Amazing journeys and life cycles of

1. Birds
2. Monarch Butterflies
3. Whales
4. Sea Turtles

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

YVAS P.O. Box 1075

Billings, MT 59103-1075

A NOTE FROM GEORGE MOWAT



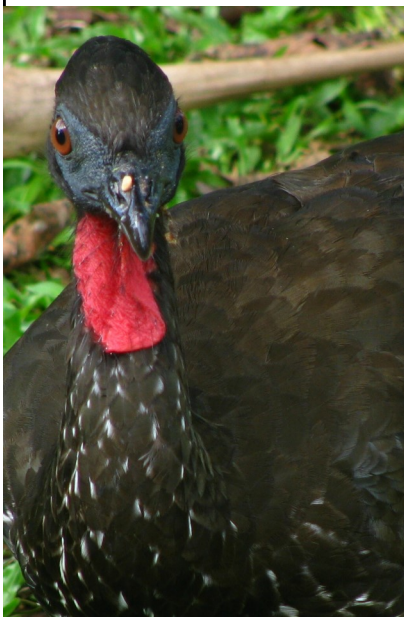
I am attaching a photo that I took on July 7th. I maintain some Mountain Blue-bird boxes in the Phipps Ranch Diamond X area and on June 24th I found that the door had fallen off one box and the box was empty. I put the door back on and didn't make it back out with a new box that was in better shape until July 7th (13 days later). It would have made a great picture of me leaping back when I took the door off this time and saw the snake. Apparently, when I put the door back on, the bluebirds made a nest and probably laid eggs in it. And then the snake climbed the tree, went in the box, and presumably ate the eggs. I believe the snake is a Bull snake.

STUDY ABROAD

Costa Rica Provides Opportunity for Student Research

Study abroad field research trips can allow students an opportunity for rare experiences and possible contacts for future internships in remote parts of the world. The experience often sparks a lasting passion in students for field-based research and conservation. Recently, Kathan Ostover, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at Rocky Mountain College and a Past President of YVAS, took a group of seven students to four national parks and reserves in Costa Rica. Among the students who went on the trip was Mary Schvetz, current YVAS secretary, who provided the following observations of the journey:

What woke us up most mornings were the howler monkeys beginning their daily chorus, troops of them making loud, low calls between them. After you hear the monkeys, you start to hear other noises too: the hums and clicks of insects, the croaks of frogs, and birdsong. The birding in Costa Rica is spectacular and varied, and on our weeklong spring break trip we visited four parks and saw an amazing variety of birds. Palo Verde was our first and driest stop. A marsh concentrated birds into a small area where we saw everything from Purple Gallinule and Northern Jacana to Wood Stork and Roseate Spoonbill, all interspersed with hundreds of Black-bellied Whistlingducks. On one of our outings we even caught sight of a Giant Jabiru! Herons and egrets were plentiful along the Tempisque River, and one night survey resulted in a good view of a spectacled owl right in camp. Our next stop couldn't have been more different: Monteverde, where it was cool, rainy, and vegetation was everywhere. We were fortunate enough to be there on March 1st when they conducted their monthly morning bird walk. We spotted birds like Blue Gray Tanagers, Variable Seedeaters, Turquoise Browed Motmots, and Buff-throated Saltator. Next we traveled to La Selva where one guava tree proved to be the food of choice for dozens of species. Crested Guan and Curassow were joined in foraging by iguanas, while the branches were filled with Mealy Parrots, Red Lored parrots, and Long-tailed Tyrants. In the forest, part of our group caught the only glimpse we had of a Keel Billed Toucan, though Chestnut Mandibled Toucans were plentiful. Our last stop was also our most remote, Corcovado. Almost immediately after disembarking from our plane, we started seeing Scarlet Macaws flying over us. On our 12 kilometer hike into the research station, birds provided a welcome distraction. In addition to the macaws we saw flocks of Brown Pelicans, Royal Terns fishing, groups of Red Knots, and a Swallow Tailed Kite soaring overhead. On one of our last hikes we decided to go for a swim, and then walk the river channel back towards camp; this off-trail adventure resulted in a glimpse of the shy Boat Billed Heron. All too soon it was time for us to head back to Montana, but not without first sailing by a rocky colony of Blue Footed and Brown Boobies and spotting several Crested Caracaras and an Amazonian Kingfisher on the bus ride to San Jose.



CRESTED GUAN Photo by Mary Schvetz

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

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



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

**Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
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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.

- Sept 4 (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. 2nd. Red Lodge members and guests are encouraged to attend.
- Sept 9 (Thur) MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK (Picnic Pavilion to the right of the entrance) at 5 p.m. Fall Migrants. Mike Weber, leader.
- Sept 25 (Sat) MEETSE SPIRES HAWK WATCH (Southeast of Red Lodge) 8 a.m. Bring a sack lunch. Jerry Dalton, leader.
- Oct 2 (Sat) STILLWATER AND COONEY DAM. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Bring a sack lunch. Helen Carlson, leader
- Nov 6 (Sat) YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY. 8a.m. to 6 p.m. Bring a sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.
- Dec 18 (Sat) ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. More details will be announced in the FLYER



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