

October 2017

Birding Observer



Five Valleys Audubon Society, a Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Calendar of Events

- **Monday, October 2nd, 7:00pm:** The board meeting will be held in the large meeting room in the Missoula County Library.
- **Saturday, October 7th:** All day field trip to Rob Domenech's Golden Eagle banding site. **We're sorry, but this field trip is already full.**
- **Monday, October 9th, 7:00pm:** Amy Cilimburg of Climate Smart Missoula will present on how the climate impacts birds and what we can do to help them at the October program meeting. Please join us at the University of Montana, in room 123 of the Gallagher Business Building.
- **Sunday, October 15th:** The deadline for the November edition of the *Birding Observer*.
- **Saturday, October 21st:** Bird walk at Lee Metcalf NWR from 10:00am-Noon. Meet the field trip leader at the Refuge Visitor's Center.
- **Saturday, October 28th:** All-day field trip to Brown's Lake to look for scoters and loons. Meet in the NW corner of the Adams Center parking lot at 8:50am.
- **Saturday, November 4th:** All-day field trip to the Lee Metcalf NWR. Meet in the northwest corner of the Adams Center parking lot at 8:50am.

Welcome To Our Newest Members

Renae Aigner	Mae M. Coover
Ralph English	Michael Fredrickson
Katie Ghen-Simpson	Michael Hickey
Frances Higinbotham	Lewis Higinbotham
Eric Hutchins	Elizabeth Johns
Peter Kearns	Michelle Lower
Annette Sontag	Dana Spierling,
Andrea Wiley	

Birds, climate, and the summer of 2017: Where do we go from here?



This summer's wildfires, smoke, and heat are still on our minds. How does a summer like the one we just experienced like for our native birds and wildlife? And what are the projections for the future? Amy Cilimburg of Climate Smart Missoula will share some insights based on

years of researching and monitoring Montana birds and her experience understanding climate impacts and working on climate solutions. Join the chapter for our next monthly program on Monday, October 9 at 7:00 p.m. in room 123 in the Gallagher Business Building on the University of MT campus.

Amy will offer ideas about current local climate resiliency and mitigation efforts, particularly from Climate Smart Missoula, the nonprofit she helped launch two years ago. Climate Smart Missoula is the outgrowth of community efforts to take action on climate, and Amy will showcase where this collaborative effort is headed and how folks can lend a hand, either directly or indirectly.

Amy Cilimburg is the Executive Director of Climate Smart Missoula. She has worked on climate and energy policy for over a decade, educating and encouraging solutions at the local, state and federal levels. Amy did much of this through her work at Montana Audubon and by volunteering locally to help develop Missoula's municipal and community Climate Action Plans. She was also the Director of Bird Conservation for Montana Audubon for seven years. Prior to that she co-directed UM's Avian Science Center. Presently she assists with conservation efforts at Five Valleys Audubon Society and serves on the Mountain Line Board. Amy has an MS degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana where she studied Yellow Warblers in the Bitterroot. She lives, birds, runs and hikes in the Rattlesnake with her husband, and teenage daughter.

Peeps From The Board: What Kind of Bird Are You?

By Catherine C. Goodman

If you were a bird in the USA, what bird would you be? Do you ever think how fun it would be as a raptor soaring on the air waves, catching updrafts, and looking down on the prairie below? Or perhaps being suspended in mid-air gently lulled by the air currents?



Would you rather be a sea-faring bird, letting a current of a different kind float you up and down, up and down on a hot, sunny day? It might be fun to be a pelican dropping head first at full speed into the water, scooping up a beak full of fish and then lifting up, up and away. Famous poet, Ogden Nash, captured the scene very well in this limerick:

A wonderful bird is the pelican,
His bill will hold more than his belican.
He can take in his beak
Food enough for a week,
But I'm damned if I see how the helican.

Perhaps you are more of a shy type of bird like the marsh or canyon wren – heard but not often seen. If you are more of a socialite, the condominium of the Purple Martin or rookery of the heron might suit you better. For the narcissist, some of the flashier birds might suit: scarlet tanager, painted bunting, northern cardinal, rufous hummingbird, greater flamingo, or bluebird.

What are your preferred hours? Up all hours of the night? Consider being a common pauraque, beautiful barn owl, or northern mockingbird. Like to sing or yodel like the warblers and canaries? Make cat calls (cat bird)? Imitate others (mockingbird, crow, starling)? Or just sing pleasantly over and over (song sparrow, thrush). For those of you who don't have much of a singing voice, there's always the sound of a rusty door opening (yellow-headed blackbird), harsh grating sound of the common raven, or western screech owl.

Oh my... we haven't even touched on the possibility of being a shore bird, tree duck, woodpecker, swan, stork, swift, turkey, kingfisher, avocet, flycatcher, whip-poor-will...

Let's imagine a different scenario. What if you were alone on an island (nightmare or dream...take your pick) and there was only one bird to keep you company? Would you choose the American robin to awaken you each morning and gently signal the end of each day? Or a little chickadee,

always so quick to come when we pschttt pschttt with our lips? Maybe a house finch going up and down the scale with different intonations as if to carry on a full conversation.

Personally, I would choose the common crow for its personality, imagination, and clever ability to strategize and solve complex problems. Still...I love the song sparrow and then think... well, maybe the mourning dove would be better calming me with the lovely cooing sound. If, like in the story of Noah's ark, the dove could bring me an olive branch to remind me of the outside world, then I would be happy...but no, wait! A carrier pigeon! A bird to take a message of my location and my need for help! The possibilities are endless. What are your choices?

Field Trips

By Larry Weeks

August 19, 2017: The August field trip ended up going to Freezout Lake. The primary purpose of this trip was to search for migrating shorebirds. Based upon scouting the previous Thursday, the best location for shorebirds was Pond 4, so we started there. There must have been 300 shorebirds in the pond. Lesser Yellowlegs were by far the most abundant bird with a few Greater Yellowlegs mixed in. Then there were pockets of American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and Long-billed Dowitchers. Baird's Sandpipers fed along the shoreline along with Least Sandpipers and the occasional Semipalmated Sandpiper. The "peeps" are always the most challenging to identify correctly. A Black-bellied Plover in breeding plumage was found on a large mud flat. After spending a large amount of time searching, the author finally located a Semipalmated Plover on the same mud flat. We then moved across the highway to Pond 1. This pond had a large amount of floating algae mats which did have a few shorebirds but nothing different. A couple of White-faced Ibis flew the length of the pond. We then moved to the lake shoreline next to Pond 3 and found 2 Stilt Sandpipers. After chasing a group of 5 Dowitchers, we got close enough to see the buffy bars on the tertial feathers and we thought that they were Short-billed Dowitcher. However, Rose



Leach has subsequently determined that they were all Long-billed Dowitchers because they had bulges on their backs. Short-bills have flat backs. We also birded Pond 6 and the boat ramp, but we didn't add any new shorebirds. Other good birds included a Swainson's Hawk near Fairfield, and Common and Black-

Terns at the main lake. There were only 5 people on the trip and we had a total of 49 species.

September 9, 2017: The September field trip was to Ninepipes and Pablo Reservoirs to look primarily for shorebirds. The first stop was at Ninepipes where we walked out onto the mud flats of the drawn down reservoir. There were hundreds of waterfowl which included ducks, coots, pelicans, grebes, gulls, and geese. Shorebirds were limited to Killdeer and Greater Yellowlegs. There was a Caspian Tern flying around when we got there and as we were leaving, we found Yellow-rumped Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrows, and White-crowned Sparrows at the edge of the bull rushes. We also had a weasel on the paved path as we returned to the cars. We then drove to the Pablo Reservoir. On the north end of the dike, we had Sandhill Cranes, Wood Ducks and a Long-tailed Duck. I wasn't able to convince everyone on the identity of the Long-tailed Duck because it was a long ways away. Steve Flood tried to take a photo but it

was too fuzzy due to the distance and the smoke. When we moved to the south end of the dike, we got a super close look at a Sanderling that was with Killdeer, a Spotted Sandpiper and a Least sandpiper. We walked out on the mud flat and found a Great Egret. However, there were no Black-bellied or American Golden Plovers this year. We stopped at a road-side pond south of Ronan and found a Wilson's Phalarope, 5 red-necked Phalaropes, a Greater Yellowlegs, a Spotted Sandpiper, and several Killdeer. Other good birds for the day included a Merlin, Kestrels and Virginia Rails. There were 8 people on the trip and we had 58 species.



Five Valleys Audubon Society Membership Application

Please support Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS). There are several ways to donate. Any method ensures that you will receive our *Birding Observer* newsletter and may participate in all chapter activities. Please help us reduce our \$3,700 annual newsletter cost by signing up for email delivery. FVAS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit.

Make checks out to Five Valleys Audubon Society and mail to: PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807
Or donate on our website: fvaudubon.org/join

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| <p>\$ _____ \$15 FVAS membership only, includes newsletter sent via email.</p> <p>\$ _____ \$25 FVAS membership only, includes newsletter sent via USPS.</p> <p>\$ _____ General Fund, use as needed for conservation, field trips, education and outreach.</p> <p>\$ _____ Phillip L. Wright Fund, small grants for student research.</p> | <p>\$ _____ Legacy Fund, creating and supporting local urban bird habitats for citizen enjoyment without leaving the city.</p> <p>\$ _____ Total contribution</p> <p>_____ Volunteer - Please contact me. I would like to know more about how I may help birds and FVAS.</p> |
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Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: (Required to receive the newsletter and birding alerts via email.) _____

Please note: FVAS does not share email addresses with anyone except Montana Audubon. Your email address is safe with us!

Please be aware that membership in Five Valleys Audubon Society (FVAS) alone does not confer membership in the National Audubon Society (NAS). FVAS and NAS are separate 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. To become a new member of NAS and receive Audubon magazine (or to renew a current or lapsed membership) visit the website: fvaudubon.org/nas. Using this website will ensure that FVAS receives a \$20 one-time credit for your NAS membership. All NAS members become members of FVAS. A third organization, Montana Audubon (MTA), is also an independent organization and receives no financial support from NAS. MTA handles statewide issues and is responsible for its own fundraising. To assist in this important statewide work you may contact MTA through their website: <http://mtaudubon.org/>. Please give generously to each organization. Although independent we work together to protect what we all love.

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