



# oice of the Meadowlark

Newsletter of the  
Meadowlark Audubon Society  
of the Big Horn Basin and Northwest Wyoming

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Fall 2013



## President's Letter

Dear Members,

Thank you all for your contributions to a full summer of conservation projects, including the Poo Poo Project, parking lot barrier construction at Thomas the Apostle Wildlife Sanctuary, and working with Marathon Oil for proper nest platform construction and placement at Beck Lake. In addition to allowing some field time for birding, working on these projects really leaves you with a

feeling of fulfillment and a sense of accomplishment.

Few people know that better than one of our valued colleagues and board members, Ann Belleman, to whom we must say goodbye. Ann has retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service and will be relocating from Cody to



Minnesota. In addition to her great civil service looking after the endangered species in the area, Ann was greatly instrumental in

leading the effort to screen Forest Service vent pipes on vault toilets, which are a hazard to cavity nesting birds looking for a hollow to nest in or find shelter. She was a long time mid-winter eagle survey volunteer and breeding bird survey participant. I am

sure she will be an active participant in similar causes wherever she settles. We will miss you Ann—thank you for your dedicated service and support!

I also want to welcome Melissa Hill from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West Greater Yellowstone Raptor Experience program manager to our board! Over the years the Draper Natural History Museum and Meadowlark Audubon have partnered on so many projects and efforts. We have consistently had board members from the Buffalo Bill Center and it is a great connection to have. Melissa has extensive experience with raptors and will be a great addition to our ongoing eagle research and monitoring.



*In addition to being a longtime board member and membership coordinator, Donna Haman has overseen the Beck/Alkali Lake Complex Bird Monitoring Project for many years.*

I encourage everyone to participate in the ongoing Beck and Alkali Lakes Monitoring

effort, led by Donna Haman. This group is very dedicated, getting up early each Monday morning for nine weeks to note the species and abundance of birds using this notable Wyoming Important Bird Area. Their long-term data is invaluable when analyzing climate change and species viability.

There is so much going on and there are so many ways to get involved. If only there were more time to fit it all in! Thank you all for being members and supporting this wonderful group we have here in the Bighorn Basin. Here is to another year of great speakers, field trips, monitoring, and birding! My fellow board members and I hope to see you at our meetings on the second Thursday of each month from now through May (except for December, when we don't meet).

Happy birding!

Destin Harrell

## **Fall Beck/Alkali Bird Monitoring Begins September 16**

Monitoring of the Beck/Alkali Lake Complex Important Bird Area will begin one hour after sunrise on Monday, September 16, and will continue each Monday to November 11

during the fall bird migration period.

The purpose of the monitoring is to provide an index to trends of bird species numbers and occurrence from year to year. The data gathered records variations in bird populations from year to year and is designed to help researchers track and understand these changes. The long-term goal is to help protect this Important Bird Area (IBA) and the birds which use it. Fall Monitoring of the Beck/Alkali IBA began in September 2005 and has continued during both Spring and Fall Migrations since then, thanks to many dedicated and experienced birders.

Survey volunteers meet about 20 minutes prior to the start of each Monday's count at McDonald's restaurant in Cody, or volunteers can show up at the first monitoring station behind Taco John's at the west end of Beck Lake at the start time for monitoring:

<b>September 16</b>	<b>7:57 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time</b>
<b>September 23</b>	<b>8:05 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>September 30</b>	<b>8:13 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>October 7</b>	<b>8:22 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>October 14</b>	<b>8:30 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>October 21</b>	<b>8:39 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>October 28</b>	<b>8:49 a.m. MDT</b>
<b>November 4</b>	<b>7:58 a.m. Mountain Standard Time</b>
<b>November 11</b>	<b>8:08 a.m. MST</b>

We welcome anyone who is interested in viewing and identifying birds—or maybe just enjoying being out viewing nature in general—to come join us for the count, and stay for lunch afterwards to share an enjoyable ending to an enjoyable morning! If you are interested in joining the survey group, please contact me at 307-587-4190 for more information.

— Donna Haman

## **Adelaide Trail Field Trip to Shell Canyon**

This past June 24th, twenty-one enthusiastic nature lovers trudged up the Adelaide Trail in the Bighorn National Forest, following leader John McGough. The sky was leaden and the birds were subdued, sharing only a few calls, but the display of wildflowers was explosive! The white trunks of the aspen trees were perfect backgrounds for the purple lupine and yellow Balsam Root, with a carpet of smaller wildflowers covering the ground.

The sky darkened as the group advanced. As we sat on a rock ledge, enjoying lunches and snacks, raindrops appeared but could not lessen our pleasure at seeing a small herd of bull elk enjoying lunch in a green clearing

nearby. Although the rain continued as we walked back to the parking lot, the pleasure of the field trip endured.

— Jo Cook

## **Outhouse Screens Keep Birds Safely Out**

*Reprinted with permission*

Gib Mathers, *Powell Tribune*, June 6, 2013



*On Saturday, June 1, Meadowlark Audubon Society of Cody volunteer Ann Belleman (left) and Shoshone National Forest Wildlife Biologist Joe Harper install a screen to keep birds and other wildlife from entering outhouse vent pipes and subsequently dying. Powell Tribune photo by Gib Mathers. Courtesy Powell Tribune.*

Members of the Meadowlark Audubon Society of Cody were not out on a lark Saturday [June 1]. Rather, the bird lovers were making outhouses on the North Fork of the Shoshone River safe for their fine feathered friends.

Recently, the U.S. Forest Service became aware of birds getting entrapped in the new CXT toilet’s ventilation pipes. Birds were entering the big 12-inch diameter pipes that allow the toilets to be smell-free, said the Shoshone National Forest.

“Each year, thousands of cavity-nesters—animals that prefer dark, narrow spaces for nesting and roosting—become entrapped and die in open pipes,” said the Teton Raptor Center’s website.

The center, in Wilson, calls it the “Port-O-Potty Owl Project” or “PoO-PoO Project,” aiming to keep birds and mammals out of the pipes.

There are approximately 100 outhouses with pipes in need of screens in the Shoshone National Forest. Of those, 38 are on the North Fork of the Shoshone River, said

Shoshone National Forest wildlife biologist Joe Harper.

Meadowlark Audubon volunteered to place screens purchased from the Teton Raptor Center over the pipes on the North Fork to keep birds out.

“This is version 3.0,” said Harper, holding a screen intended for an outhouse at Clearwater Creek campground.

With the aid of a ladder and cordless drill, Harper and Ann Belleman of Meadowlark Audubon climbed a ladder to the roof of the outhouse and attached the screens to the vent pipes.

Two other Meadowlark volunteers ascended other outhouses to attach the screens.

The center’s screens stop birds without disrupting ventilation, said the center.

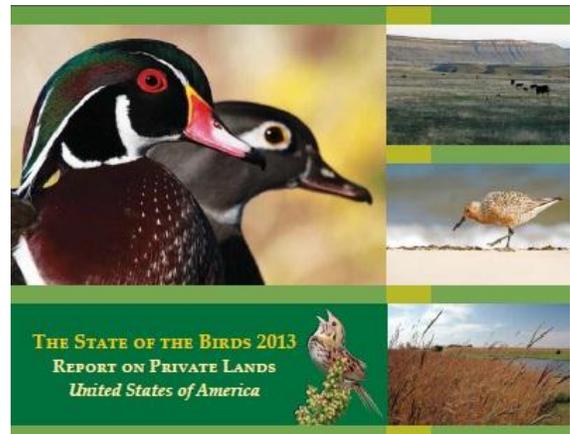
The Forest Service bought the screens and is using volunteers to install them, Harper said.

Meadowlark is working with the service to protect the birds.

“That’s why we’re doing this,” said Belleman, grabbing a ladder.

## **Download These Publications of Interest to Meadowlark Members**

Are you interested in conservation measures to protect birds and their habitats? Looking for ways to design, plant and maintain landscapes that will benefit wildlife and people alike? Seeking bird-friendly solutions to hazards posed by buildings? If so, you may want to check out the following publications, each of which can be downloaded for free in PDF format.



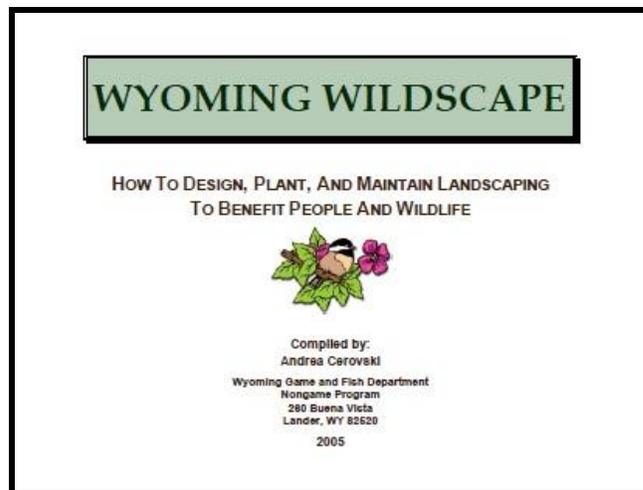
### *The State of the Birds*

Produced by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative in collaboration with a host of federal and state wildlife agencies, ornithological organizations, and conservation groups, the *State of the Birds*

reports are “valuable conservation tools . . . [that] examine the status of birds in the United States and identify high-priority conservation solutions.” Four reports have been published: an overview on the state of our nation’s birds (2009); *Report on Climate Change* (2010); *Report on Public Lands and Waters* (2011); and, most recently, *Report on Private Lands* (2013). Private landowners own and manage nearly 1.5 billion acres, or approximately 60%, of the nation’s land area, encompassing wetlands, grasslands and aridlands, forests, and coastal habitats.

Nearly all of the terrestrial and aquatic birds found in the United States use private lands; the report focuses particular attention on “obligate species”—those which depend upon a single primary habitat. The report describes each habitat area and the birds that rely on them, the conservation challenges facing a respective area, and examples of “conservation success stories.”

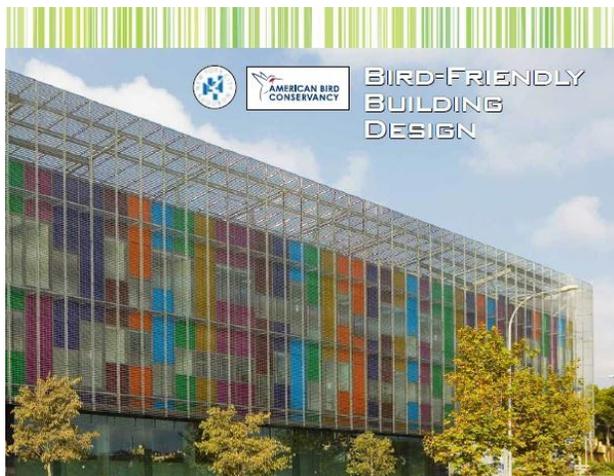
Profusely illustrated and containing charts, maps and graphs, the report also offers a comprehensive directory of private lands conservation programs. Downloadable copies of this and previous *State of the Birds* reports are available at [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org).



*Wyoming Wildscape: How to Design, Plant, and Maintain Landscaping to Benefit People and Wildlife*

As opposed to “landscaping,” the coined term “wildscaping” involves planting native species with an eye toward restoring wildlife habitats. Published in 2005, *Wyoming Wildscape* remains an indispensable resource for anyone interested in becoming part of this effort. Compiled by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in partnership with Wyoming Partners in Flight and Audubon Wyoming (now part of Audubon Rockies), the 66-page publication is packed with timely tips, step-by-step instructions for handling a range of wildscaping projects, and resource materials. Most notably, it provides a detailed tabulation of “selected native plants ideal for wildscaping,” giving information on a given species’ habit, sunlight conditions,

moisture preferences, soil needs and pH tolerances, wildlife values, and stress, disease and pest tolerances. Downloadable copies of the publication can be accessed on Audubon Rockies' website, <http://rockies.audubon.org>.



### *Bird-Friendly Building Design*

What is the leading cause of bird mortality in the United States? If you guessed collisions with glass, you're right. Each year, such unfortunate encounters claim the lives of hundreds of millions of birds. More positively, a range of bird-friendly design strategies and techniques is available than can significantly reduce this hazard. Published by American Bird Conservancy, *Bird-Friendly Building Design* offers an in-depth analysis of the hazards posed by building glass and poor lighting, specific and practical solutions, and guidelines for legislation and policies to reduce the risks. Of particular interest to

birders are two appendices. "The Science of Bird Collision" details the latest research results and offers fascinating insights into avian vision and the ways birds orient themselves to the Earth's magnetic field. "Bird Migration" offers an excellent, succinct overview of "diurnal" (daytime) and "nocturnal" (nighttime) bird migration strategies. To download a copy of the report, visit <http://www.abcbirds.org>.

— John Rumm

### The State of the Birds 1913

***Editor's Note: This year marks the centennial of what is believed to be the first official checklist of birds in and around Cody, prepared by William Richard, a local taxidermist. Summarizing observations made from the spring of 1906 to February 1912, Richard's checklist was published by B.H. Grave and Ernest P. Walker in their Wyoming Birds and Their Value to Agriculture, University of Wyoming Bulletin, Volume 12, Number 6 (February 1916). Grave and Walker surveyed Wyoming's avifauna "for the purpose of ascertaining whether the balance of nature has been disturbed as more and more of the territory of the state has come under cultivation" (5). In a letter to Grave and Walker, Richard wrote "It has been my opinion for several years that the birds are on the increase, excepting the sage hens, ducks, and eagles, which seem to be decreasing" (quoted, p. 7). In the table that follows, we have preserved Richard's order and the names of species/subspecies as he gave them in his checklist.***

<b>Grebe, Eared</b>	Summer resident.
<b>Loon</b>	Found during the spring and fall, occasionally in winter.
<b>Gull, Herring</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Tern, Black</b>	One specimen taken at Cody during the fall.
<b>Pelican, White</b>	Common resident in the Park.
<b>Merganser</b>	Resident on all streams.
<b>Mallard</b>	Common summer resident about Cody. Winter resident in mild winters.
<b>Gadwall</b>	Spring and fall migrant at Cody.
<b>Baldpate</b>	Common about Cody during spring and fall migration.
<b>Teal, Green-winged</b>	Occasionally found about Cody.
<b>Teal, Blue-winged</b>	Occasionally found about Cody,
<b>Teal, Cinnamon</b>	Occasionally occurs about Cody as a migrant. One pair observed as summer resident.
<b>Shoveller</b>	Common about Cody during migration.
<b>Pintail</b>	Spring and fall migrant at Cody.
<b>Duck, Wood</b>	3-4 noted on Greybull River during fall of 1903.
<b>Redhead</b>	A few about Cody during migration.
<b>Canvasback</b>	A few about Cody during spring migration.
<b>Duck, Ring-necked</b>	Occasionally found about Cody during migration.
<b>Goldeneye, Barrow's</b>	Common resident
<b>Bufflehead</b>	Common winter resident
<b>Old-squaw</b>	Three taken near Cody during the fall of 1911.
<b>Duck, Harlequin</b>	Resident in the mountains. A few on each river. Noted on Crandall Creek and headwaters of Clark's Fork. Female and young seen on South Fork of Shoshone, summer of 1911.
<b>Duck, Ruddy</b>	Common during migration; occasional winter resident.

<b>Goose, Snow</b>	One taken at Cody, fall 1910.
<b>Goose, Canada</b>	Uncommon winter resident.
<b>Swan, Trumpeter</b>	Two specimens taken during fall migration, 1909.
<b>Bittern</b>	One specimen taken, fall 1911.
<b>Heron, Great Blue</b>	Summer resident, uncommon
<b>Crane, Whooping</b>	Summer resident, Jackson's Lake, Yellowstone; occasionally found at Cody during spring migration.
<b>Rail, Virginia</b>	Specimen taken on Greybull River, September 1902.
<b>Coot</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Phalarope, Wilson's</b>	A few about during migration. Probably summer resident.
<b>Avocet</b>	A few about during migration.
<b>Woodcock</b>	One shot near Cody, 1906.
<b>Snipe, Wilson's</b>	A few about Cody during migration. Some winter in the vicinity of warm springs.
<b>Sandpiper, Baird's</b>	Occasional summer resident. Common during migration.
<b>Sandpiper, Semipalmated</b>	A few about Cody during migration.
<b>Yellow-legs</b>	A few about during migration.
<b>Willet, Western</b>	A few about Cody during migration.
<b>Curlew, Long-billed</b>	Abundant summer resident.
<b>Killdeer</b>	Common summer resident
<b>Plover, Mountain</b>	Common summer resident at altitudes not higher than Cody, 5,000.
<b>Grouse, Richardson's</b>	Common resident, mainly at timberline.
<b>Ruffed Grouse, Canada</b>	Common resident, found up to 5,900 feet.
<b>Grouse, Columbian Sharp-tailed</b>	Rare resident on Clark's Fork. During winter 1910-1911, took one specimen of a flock of four.
<b>Hen, Sage</b>	Resident, but becoming scarce. Ranges from 4,000 to 5,900 feet.
<b>Dove, Mourning</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Hawk, Marsh</b>	Common during migration.
<b>Hawk, Sharp-</b>	Summer resident, but not

<b>shinned</b>	common.
<b>Hawk, Cooper's</b>	Summer resident, but not common.
<b>Hawk, Western Red-tailed</b>	Uncommon summer resident.
<b>Rough-leg, Ferruginous</b>	Noted only in winter.
<b>Eagle, Golden</b>	Resident, becoming less common. Many trapped and killed annually.
<b>Eagle, Bald</b>	Uncommon resident.
<b>Hawk, Sparrow</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Osprey</b>	Common summer resident in Yellowstone Park.
<b>Owl, Long-eared</b>	One specimen taken at Cody.
<b>Owl, Short-eared</b>	One specimen taken at Cody.
<b>Owl, Saw-whet</b>	Rare winter resident.
<b>Owl, Great Horned</b>	Common resident.
<b>Owl, Snowy</b>	Rare winter resident at Powell.
<b>Owl, Burrowing</b>	Common summer resident about Cody.
<b>Kingfisher, Belted</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Woodpecker, Red-headed</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Woodpecker, Lewis's</b>	Common summer resident at Cody and lower.
<b>Flicker, Red-shafted</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Nighthawk</b>	Abundant summer resident.
<b>Swift, White-throated</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Magpie</b>	Abundant resident.
<b>Jay, Black-headed</b>	Common resident high in the mountains.
<b>Jay, Rocky Mountain</b>	Common resident high in the mountains.
<b>Jay, Pinyon</b>	Common resident.
<b>Blackbird, Yellow-headed</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Redwing, Thick-billed</b>	Common summer resident about Cody.
<b>Grosbeak, Pine</b>	Resident high in the mountains.

<b>Finch, Cassin's Purple</b>	Common summer resident high in the mountains.
<b>Crossbill</b>	Common winter resident high in the mountains. Probably there in summer. Single specimen taken on Rock Creek, 1902.
<b>Finch, Gray-crowned Rosy</b>	Winter resident. Common at Cody.
<b>Finch, Black Rosy</b>	Winter resident. Common at Cody.
<b>Redpoll</b>	Winter resident about Cody, but not common.
<b>Sparrow, White-crowned</b>	Common about Cody during migration.
<b>Junco, White-winged</b>	Common summer resident and becoming almost a winter resident.
<b>Bunting, Lazuli</b>	Common summer resident at Cody and higher.
<b>Tanager, Western</b>	Common summer resident in the mountains about Cody.
<b>Waxwing, Bohemian</b>	Common resident in the mountains.
<b>Warbler, Yellow</b>	Common about Cody during migration.
<b>Warbler, Myrtle</b>	Common about Cody during migration.
<b>Yellow-throat, Western</b>	Common about Cody during migration.
<b>Chat, Long-tailed</b>	Summer resident on Greybull River.
<b>Dipper</b>	Common resident.
<b>Thrasher, Sage</b>	Common resident about Cody.
<b>Wren, Rock</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Wren, Canyon</b>	Common summer resident in the canyon of Spring Creek.
<b>Wren, Western House</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Creepers, Rocky Mountain</b>	Common summer resident.
<b>Chickadee, Long-tailed</b>	Common summer resident in the mountains.
<b>Bluebird, Mountain</b>	Common summer resident about Cody and higher elevations.
<b>Sparrow, English</b>	Becoming too common.



Meadowlark Audubon Society of the  
Big Horn Basin and Northwest Wyoming  
P.O. Box 2126, Cody, Wyoming 82414

### Calendar of Events

*Unless otherwise noted, all events take place in the basement community room of Big Horn Federal Savings, 1701 Stampede Avenue, in Cody. Please make sure to check our website (<http://www.meadowlarkwyo.org>) for updates!*

**Thursday, September 12, 2013: Board meeting, 6-6:45; Program meeting, 7-8:30. Presenters: Meadowlark Audubon members Rex Myers and Susan Richards, “Baffin Island Birding Trip.”**

**Monday, September 16 through Monday, November 11, 2013: Weekly fall survey of migrating birds on Beck/Alkali Lakes Important Bird Area in Cody. See article inside for more details.**

**Thursday, October 10, 2013: Board meeting, 6-6:45; Program meeting, 7-8:30. Presenter: David B. McDonald, Ph.D., Department of Zoology and Physiology, University of Wyoming, “Ornithological Research on the Manakins of Central America.”**

**Thursday, November 14, 2013: Board meeting, 6-6:45; Program meeting, 7-8:30. Presenter: C.J. Grimes, Natural Resource Specialist, Bureau of Land Management, Worland Office, “The Unique Bird Communities of the Bighorn Mountains.”**

**Note: There is no program meeting in December. We encourage you to take part in your local 2013 Christmas Bird Count! See the website and Winter 2013 newsletter for more details!**