

Bird Field Note
Shrubby Draws, Songbird Banding
Kate Stone
9/05/14



Western Tanager

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Small flocks of Lewis's Woodpeckers joined Clark's Nutcrackers, sapsuckers, and other woodpeckers in extracting seeds from Ponderosa Pine cones. We only spotted one color-marked woodpecker on transects this week.



William spotted a group of Bobolinks foraging in the agricultural fields near the marmot colony.



Most hummingbirds have migrated out of our area; no hummingbirds visited our feeders during surveys in the past two weeks. Next week we will install cameras to capture visits by late-season migrants.



Shrubby Draw Surveys - August 29th

Species diversity in shrubby draws increased this week. We recorded 41 species compared to 29 last week. Vesper Sparrows continued to dominate surveys.



Vesper Sparrow

Species detected in shrubby draw surveys August 29th, 2014				
	Partridge Alley	Sheep Camp	Tongue Creek	Total
Vesper Sparrow	45	8	48	101
European Starling	56			56
Chipping Sparrow	4	21	10	35
Spotted Towhee		15	3	18
Cedar Waxwing	6	11		17
House Wren	3	9	2	14
Pine Siskin		14		14
Unknown Sparrow	1	3	9	13
Red-breasted Nuthatch		12		12
Western Meadowlark	7		4	11
Yellow-rumped Warbler	3	6	1	10
Black-capped Chickadee		9		9
American Goldfinch	6		2	8
Clark’s Nutcracker		7		7
Mourning Dove	1	1	5	7
Rock Wren	6	1		7
Western Tanager		7		7
Unknown Flycatcher		4	1	5
White-crowned Sparrow			4	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet		3		3
Mountain Chickadee		3		3
Northern Flicker		1	2	3
Williamson’s Sapsucker		2	1	3
Black-billed Magpie	1		1	2
Dusky Flycatcher		2		2
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	1		2
Red Crossbill		2		2
American Kestrel		1		1
American Robin	1			1
Calliope Hummingbird		1		1
Downy Woodpecker		1		1
Eastern Kingbird	1			1
Gray Catbird		1		1
Grasshopper Sparrow	1			1
Horned Lark	1			1
Lazuli Bunting	1			1
Lincoln’s Sparrow		1		1
MacGillivray’s Warbler		1		1
Nashville Warbler		1		1
Say’s Phoebe	1			1
Savannah Sparrow	1			1
Song Sparrow		1		1
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1
Unknown Hummingbird		1		1
Unknown Warbler		1		1
Total	147	152	94	393
Species Richness	19	28	13	41

Berries attract many species into the shrubby draws.



Spotted Towhee

Migrating flycatchers make few vocalizations, which impairs our ability to identify them. We record birds like this one as an “Unknown Flycatcher”.



Avian Science Center: Fall Migration Highlights

8/25-8/9/14

A stormy weekend preceded this week of banding. During migration, birds often move in accordance with weather patterns. Rain, wind, and cloud cover may prevent movement, push movement, or change the direction of movement. After this storm moved through, we saw an increase in capture rates at all three banding stations. Each station captured over 40 birds in five hours. We also saw high diversity, with a minimum of 18 species captured among all stations. Although capture rates decreased throughout the week, we continued to catch unusual birds, such as a Red Crossbill, Clark's Nutcracker, and a new species for the ranch: a Canada Warbler.



Clay-colored Sparrow



Few detections of Canada Warblers exist in Montana. This species breeds in the forests of central and eastern Canada, and typically migrates through the eastern United States. We captured this bird at our upper elevation station on Baldy Ridge.



We captured this *Empidonax* flycatcher at Sheep Camp, and identification proved impossible. A combination of body measurements may help to determine flycatcher species. We narrowed this individual down to two choices: Western Flycatcher or Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. We collected feathers for genetic analysis.



This Red Crossbill still retains some of the green plumage of a younger bird as it transitions into the red plumage of an older bird. Crossbills use their unique bills to pry open cones and forage on the seeds inside.



We regularly observe Clark's Nutcrackers at our banding stations, but we rarely catch them. These noisy altitudinal migrants forage on pine seeds, and for the most part, stay high above the mist nets.

