Birding Spots Outside the Map Area

Little Prickly Pear Creek

Take Lincoln Rd. 12.5 miles north and west from Helena toward Canyon Creek. At the Power Station turn east on Duffy Lane. Wetlands occur along Duffy Lane between Lincoln Road and the Prickly Pear canyon. Long-billed Curlew, Wilson’s Snipe, Willow Flycatcher, Common Yellowthroat and Bobolink are reliable sightings. At the junction of Duffy and Prickly Pear, there are two possible routes: 1) turning north takes you to the Sieben Ranch and Interstate 14 along a corridor supporting diverse riparian vegetation. Common bird sightings here include swallows, Gray Catbird, Warbling Vireo, Veery, American redstart, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting; or 2) turning south takes you to Silver City along a dirt road bordered by grassland and sagebrush where Western Meadowlark, Sage Thrasher, and Vesper and Brewer’s Sparrow can be found.

Lower Skelly Gulch BLM Area

Take Birdseye Road north and west from Helena 4.3 miles and turn left on Austin Road. Follow this dirt road 2.2 miles until you reach a small parking area on the right. This fenced area of 140 acres has riparian habitat along Skelly and Greenhorn Creeks that attracts warblers, flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, and Veery during spring and summer. Watch for Yellow-rumped Warbler and Western Tanager in stands of conifers. Upland grasslands and shrub communities usually provide viewing of a variety of raptors.

Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area

The 5,000-acre state-owned area at the south end of Canyon Ferry Lake has a rich diversity of habitat. Dikes have created 400 to 500-acre ponds which have some 350 small artificial islands for waterfowl nesting Canada Goose, several species of duck, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, California and Ring-billed Gull, Cinnamon Teal, and several grebe species next here. The river bottom and upland plant communities provide habitat for raptors and songbirds. Nesting species include Dusky, Bullock’s Oriole, Least Flycatcher, Clay-colored and Lark Sparrow, and Western Kingbird. To reach the wildlife management area, take W.S. Hwy 32 toward Townsend. West shore access, including Pond #4, is reached from several gravel roads off U.S. Hwy 12 beginning 4 miles north of Townsend. Access to the east shore is reached by going through Townsend on U.S. Hwy 12 and turning north on Hwy 284. Ponds #1, #2, and #3 are reached by road west from Hwy 284: Lower Dry Gulch Road goes to Pond #1 (the farthest north); and Lower Ray Creek Road goes to portions of Ponds #2 and #3. Going west on Delger Road and north on Canton Lane leads to a parking area and trail going to the southeast end of Pond #3.
# Bird Species of the Helena Area

Relative abundance in suitable habitat by season are:

- **Abundant**: A common species sometimes seen in large flocks.
- **Common**: Likely to be seen or heard in suitable habitat.
- **Uncommon**: Present during season, but may not be seen.
- **Rare**: Seen only a few times during season, may be only in limited part of the habitat, and/or may be irregular in occurrence from year to year.
- **Vagrant**: Accidental in occurrence; out of normal range.

## Status

- **B**: Direct evidence of breeding
- **I**: Indirect evidence of breeding
- **N**: No evidence of breeding

### Seasons of occurrence:

- **W**: Winter Mid-November through February
- **S**: Spring March through Mid-May
- **M**: Summer Mid-May through Mid-August
- **F**: Fall Mid-August through November

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## Acknowledgements

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2015

Last Chance Audubon Society