

YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

- FROM THE PRAIRIES TO THE PEAKS.

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 42, NUMBER 11/12

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2012

New This Issue

- Christmas Bird Count
- Christmas Pot Luck and Fund-raiser
- Yellowstone River Clean-up
- Nesting Materials



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MONDAY NOVEMBER 19 YVAS MEMBERSHIP MEETING



YVAS welcomes speaker Dave Pauli, Director of the Northern Rockies Regional Office of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). He will speak about the issues of beaver control and habitat. Pauli brings to his audience a quarter century of experience in animal care and emergency response; he has responded to dozens of earthquakes, floods and forest fires across the United States. Pauli's overseas experience includes deployments to Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Taiwan, Turks & Caicos, Haiti and Russia. He was a key command person in rescuing animals (wild and domestic) during and after Hurricane Katrina. He is one of the international leaders in oiled bird response and is directing trainings for bird emergencies in the Billings area. Dave is known nationally and internationally for his skill and expertise with birds and animals. He has a keen interest in "urban wildlife", how humans and animals can come together in an urban riparian setting and how management of urban settings can mitigate wildlife disasters. His human skills in managing teams during crisis and his ability to quickly train other professionals and volunteers to rise to the occasion make him extremely valuable in addressing animal problems. .

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization with more than 9 million members and constituents. HSUS is a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals and equine protection, wildlife and habitat protection, animals in research, and farm animal welfare. The HSUS protects all animals through education, investigation, litigation, legislation, advocacy, and field work. The non-profit organization is based in Washington and has field representatives across the country.

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, November 12, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, November 19, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the membership meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Shelia McKay has graciously volunteered to host. Please email her at wjhbird@yahoo.com or call 652-7175, cell 694-7918 before November 16 to make reservations and tell her what you will bring.



☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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RAB your checklists, warm gloves and binoculars for the 113th year of the National Audubon Society's premier citizen science event, the Christmas Bird Count. The 2013 Christmas Bird Count will be held on December 15th. This ongoing census is one of the oldest in the nation and helps provide important data to determine long range trends. The count will be conducted on 15 counting sections and at bird feeders in the usual 15-centered on the Exxon Refinery. New updated maps will be available this year and one that PARTICIPANTS WILL NO LONGER HAVE TO PAY THE \$5 PRINTING FEE PRE-ED. The census results will now be on line and no printing fee will be needed.

All YVAS members and interested public are encouraged to participate in the count. It is fun, interesting, and we all can meet at Helen Carlson's house after the counts to tally the results and enjoy good home-made soup, goodies, and companionship. Participants usually meet at Denny's Restaurant on N 27th at 7:00am for breakfast and to pick up their survey packets for each counting area. Those wishing to count birds at their bird feeders or volunteer some needed help on Dec. 15th, please contact Bernie Mowat at 656-7467. For more information call Helen Carlson at 248-8684 or Monty Sullins at 656-5242.

From December 14 through January 5 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in this adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season. Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

- General Chapter Meetings are held third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.



ENJOY THE DINNER AND BOB LANDIS' PROGRAM SUPPORT YVAS THROUGH THE SILENT AUCTION AND RAFFLE

WHY DO WE RAISE MONEY? WHY WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

The annual December Potluck Fundraiser which includes the Silent Auction, Raffle and Program is our major fundraiser of the year. This year the proceeds go towards the Operating Fund and the Osprey Fund. The money you spend will support the osprey program, the printing and mailing of the YVAS Flyer, the rental of rooms for Chapter meetings and December Potluck program, the Conservation Grants, maintenance and promotion of conservation efforts in our area and state, and the basic business operations of a registered nonprofit organization.

YVAS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AND FUNDRAISER

DATE: Monday, Dec. 3, 2012 **TIME:** 5:30 p.m. Potluck Dinner

PLACE: Harvest Church, 1235 W. Wicks Lane

ADMISSION: \$7.50 YVAS Members; \$10.00 Non-Members

- **FOOD:** Be sure to bring plates and utensils for personal use, and food to share according to the following directions:

If your last name begins with

AJ - bring entree or side dish, enough for your party plus 6

K....P - bring dessert, enough for your party plus 6

Q.....Z - bring salad, enough for your party plus 6

• SILENT AUCTION AND RAFFLE 5:30-7:30

Think about doing your Christmas shopping on this night. The raffle items AND the silent auction items will be picked up by Rita Harding: 259-7586, mtroses22@bresnan.net and Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918 wjhbird@yahoo.com. Please contact one of them before November 30 if you have something you want to donate.

PROGRAM 7:30pm



Bob Landis will again share his always wonderful and often humorous photography taken in Yellowstone National Park. He will present his recent videos "Blacktail Ponds" and "A Tale of Two Packs". Bob is an Emmy Award-winning wildlife cinematographer who has produced many films for programs such as National Geographic and Nature. Recording wildlife behavior on movie film and video is the hallmark of Bob Landis' films. His work has taken him to Denali, Kluane, and Algonquin National Parks, but his home is Yellowstone National Park, a place dear to his soul. Signed DVDs will be available.

• RESERVATIONS! RESERVATIONS!

Call or email Dorothy Bartlett, 252-075, dpadanyi@live.com to make reservations by December 1. Tell her the number in your party, what type of dish you are bringing and if you need

a ride to the dinner.

*****DIRECTIONS *****

HARVEST CHURCH
1235 W.Wicks Lane
Billings Heights
259-5648

From Metra Park, follow
Main Street (US 87/Old
Hwy 312) to Wicks Lane.

Turn left on Wicks Lane.
Follow Wicks Lane (the
name will change to W.
Wicks Lane)

Harvest Church will be on
your right. It is a total of
4.8 miles from Metra Park
to Harvest Church.





Photo by Christopher L. Wood

RARE BIRD ALERT Sept 21-22 the sighting of a scissor-tailed flycatcher was reported at Pompey's Pillar and was still sighted at the entrance there on September 23. A number of people posted it to the MOB and reported it to George Mowat. If you want to receive notices about rare bird alerts in the area, please send your e-mail address to George Mowat, gmowat@bresnan.net. A striking bird of the central United States, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is nearly unmistakable with its long forked tail and salmon-pink belly. The state bird of Oklahoma, it is commonly found in only a handful of other states.

SATURDAY SEPT 15 6th ANNUAL YELLOWSTONE RIVER CLEAN-UP



2012 marked the sixth year that Yellowstone Valley Audubon and Rocky Mountain College worked together, and with various other groups and sponsors, to carry out the Yellowstone River Cleanup in the Billings area. The participants consisted of a flotilla crew and shore crew. The River boat crew began at Duck Creek Bridge and floated to Coulson Park, stopping to clean up river sections along the way. The shore crews turned out at Two Moon and Riverfront Parks and at Norms Island. The City of Billings helped haul trash from each location.

Sponsors of the cleanup included Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Billings Clinic Foundation, Exxon-Mobil, Rocky Mountain College Environmental Science Program, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Northern Plains Resource Council and the National Audubon Together Green Program with Toyota, Beartooth Paddlers, American Canoe Association, Bureau of Land Management (Billings), Montana Wilderness Association – Eastern Wildlands Chapter, Pacific Recycling, REI- Bozeman, St Vincent Healthcare Environmental Stewardship Committee, Sunshine Sports, The Base Camp, The Pita Pit, Yellowstone River Parks Association, and Wal-Mart King Ave. The 2012 Yellowstone River Cleanup effort retrieved and recycled 5,600 lbs of metal (chiefly from rusting car bodies used historically as rip rap along the river), 39 tires (some very large truck/ heavy equipment tires) and about 60 large bags of trash. Twenty seven people and fourteen boats floated the River for the cleanup, and about 2 dozen people worked shore and riparian areas. There was a general feeling that there was less trash in the parks than previous years. Some passersby on the day of the cleanup took time to express their appreciation of the organized effort and to point out that they routinely lend a hand to pick up the park areas. Thanks to all that contribute efforts to empty the parks and River of junk! Thank you to Steve Regele

SATUDAY OCTOBER 6 COONEY DAM

A small but enthusiastic group of birders including George and Bernie Mowat, Phyllis Holt, Donn and Dorothy Bartlett, Ruth Vanderhorst and myself headed for the Cooney Dam area with our leader Helen Carlson.

We started rather slowly, but we did have some of the usual suspects by the time we reached the dam where the water was still and the sun was shining. We soon added Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Western Grebe, Mountain Bluebird, Gray Partridge, Cedar Waxwing and a White Crowned Sparrow. We set up scopes to see the swimmers and soon saw Common Loon, Canvasback Duck, Ruddy Duck and so many American Coots that it was impossible to count them. The star of the day for me was the Pacific Loon, my first in several years.

We lunched with Horned Larks at the picnic grounds as the wind started to blow. After a short trip away from the dam we broke apart and everyone headed home on their own. We ended up with nearly 40 species for the day, not counting the 200 plus Mule Deer.

As we got past the dam, and before we got to Boyd, we spotted a coyote just across the fence, running as fast as it could. It suddenly turned and went downhill, away from us. We turned around to get a better look at the coyote, but right in front of us was a bull moose. So, in less than 30 seconds we were within 15 yards of a coyote running wide open and less than 60 yards from a bull moose!

Almost everyday birding is a good day, but some days are just better than others. Thank you to Phil McBride

Cooney Reservoir, about ½ hour north of Red Lodge, is one of the most popular Southeastern Montana trout fishing and boating lakes during the summer. Originally created as an irrigation reservoir, Cooney reservoir and lake cover more than 300 acres and nearly 800 water acres, attracting a large number of waterfowl.

LAST ISSUE OF THE FLYER FOR 2012



This YVAS Flyer combines the November and December editions in one Issue. Watch for your next copy of the Flyer to arrive in January 2013. If you would like to receive the Flyer on-line (where it is much more colorful) and help defray mailing costs and printing waste, please send your email address to membership Secretary Joel Bowers at jmba@jmba.com.

Events at the Audubon Conservation Education Center Fall 2012

7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org



November 3 "Nature Photography Workshop" from 9 - 11 AM: If you want to improve your nature photography skills then come learn about digital photography techniques with Montana Audubon Board Member and avid photographer, Bob Martinka. Mr. Martinka will discuss various aspects of digital photography, focusing on scenic, wildlife, and macro/close-up techniques. The second half will feature examples of flower, scenery, insect, and bird photos with commentary on how to achieve the best results. Fee is \$12 or \$10 for Friends of the Center. Space is limited so register early by calling 294

– 5099!

November 9 "Nature Night" at the Audubon Center! Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Program is open to 1st – 6th grade students, and runs from 6 – 8 PM. Fee is \$12 per child or \$10 for Friends of the Center. For more info and a registration form, visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

November 17 "Needle-felted Bird Workshop" from 9 – 12: Spend the morning learning the art of needle-felting with local crafter Hannah Knick. Choose from 8 different bird patterns (including the chickadee, mountain bluebird, red-winged black bird, and robin). Participants will receive a bird pattern starter kit and needle-felting kit (including foam mat and 4 needles). Cost is \$45 per participant. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

November 18 "Weekend Wonders Family Program" from 1:30 – 3 PM: Hibernation Station – winter is upon us, and animals are getting ready for the toughest time of year. We'll learn about some of these magical changes during a hike in search of wildlife, and we'll even make our own "caves" for hibernation! Fee is \$2/person or free for Friends of the Center. For more info and a registration form, visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

November 23 School Break Camp "Terrific Turkeys" for kids in 1st – 6th grades! Join us to learn all about this fabulous bird and its feathered friends during its featured time of year, Thanksgiving. Parents, this is your chance to go prepare for the holidays while we entertain your kids! Runs from 8:30 – 4:30. Cost per day is \$45 or \$40 for Friends of the Audubon Center. One hour of after-care until 5:30 is available for an extra \$5. Call to register at 294-5099 or print out a registration form from www.mtacec.org!

November 27 Free Evening Lecture from 7 – 8 PM with Adam Sepulveda from the United States Geological Survey in Bozeman. He will share his work monitoring bullfrogs in Yellowstone County and beyond.

December 14 Special 3-hour "Nature Night" at the Audubon Center! Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Program is open to 1st – 6th grade students, and runs from 5:30 – 8:30 PM. Fee is \$17 per child or \$15 for Friends of the Center. For more info and a registration form, visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

December 16 "Weekend Wonders" Family Program from 1:30 – 3 PM: River Rocks – we'll get hands-on with real fossils and minerals as we delve into the basics of geology. You'll even get to make your own fossil to take home! Fee is \$2/person or free for Friends of the Center. For more info and a registration form, visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

December 28 School Break Camp "Amazing Adaptations" for kids in 1st – 6th grades! Learn how animals survive during our cold, snowy winters in Montana. We'll make our own bear dens, follow tracks in the snow, and make plaster track casts to take home. Runs from 8:30 – 4:30. Cost per day is \$45 or \$40 for Friends of the Audubon Center. One hour of after-care until 5:30 is available for an extra \$5. Call to register at 294-5099 or print out a registration form from www.mtacec.org!



Conservation Grants

For 2012-2013, YVAS is offering a conservation grant of up to \$1000.00. The grant will be awarded to an individual (student, teacher) or a group engaged in some project which supports the YVAS mission: **“to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism and conservation of bird habitat.”**

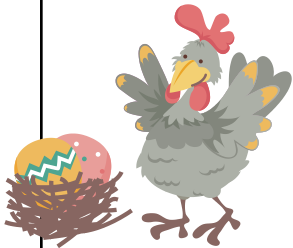
Grants can be awarded help fund a variety of conservation projects including, but not limited to,

- research on birds, plants, habitat, alternative energies, effects of CO₂, etc.
- field work projects, such as habitat restoration, building/establishing bird/bat boxes, monitoring bird/wildlife populations, etc.
- travel, continuing education, advocacy for natural resources, etc.

Applications must be received by February 1, 2013, and the award winner will be expected to submit a written report of their project and its success within one year of the initial award date. They will also be asked to present their results at either an YVAS Board meeting or at a general membership meeting.

For further information and application forms, visit yvaudubon.org or contact Nancy Wiggins nwig-gins83@gmail.com or (406) 651-0218. Address grant applications to YVAS Board, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075

NESTING MATERIALS



◇ **WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 14 ON PBS:** “AN ORIGINAL DUCKumentary” Ducks fly through the air on short stubby wings—traveling in large, energy efficient formations over thousands of miles. There are some 150 species of them, representing a wide variety of shapes, sizes and behaviors. Some are noisy and gregarious, others shy and elusive. They are familiar animals we think we know. But most of us don’t really know these phenomenal, sophisticated creatures at all. The program follows a wood duck family as a male and female create a bond, migrate together across thousands of miles, nurture and protect a brood of chicks, then come full circle as they head to their wintering grounds.

◇ Book Review: **Bird Sense** by Tim Birkhead

What’s it like to be a bird? Delightful, Informative, entertaining, this book really takes off and captures the past eras and current state of Ornithology. It is written by a professional who takes us on a journey from the field to the lab of how birds see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and have magnetic sense and emotions. One break through after another is presented as Tim Birkhead explores the past concepts of Bird life and senses and offers insight into the current state of affairs. It’s astonishing to read about what makes a bird tick, much less fly. It was assumed until recently that birds lacked the sense of smell, taste and touch. However this book not only reveals the scientific truth it gives the background on the prevailing science before new truth came along. Do Birds enjoy Sex? Read the Book and find out ~ you’ll be captivated and smarter about bird life to be sure. Available at the Parmly Public Library. Thank you to Will Crain

C **ONGRATULATIONS!** YVAS has many talented individuals among its membership—not the least of which is Will Crain who was selected by Montana Audubon as the artist for 2013 Convention in Lewistown. Will is having a Preview Opening at the Sandstone Gallery 2913 2nd Ave N on Friday, Nov 2nd. YVAS members are especially welcome to attend.



National Audubon Society
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
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: C0ZN500Z
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 _____

Do you want to receive the Flyer electronically?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Send this application and your check to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075



WHOOPS!!

Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or renew your chapter membership?

PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR FLYER. IF IT SHOWS "YVAS JAN 12" BELOW YOUR NAME, THEN YOU ARE A SUPPORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A SUPPORTING MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$20, USING THE FORM ON THE RIGHT. YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS FUND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FLYER ALONG WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR CHAPTER.

Membership Information

Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encourage you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for \$20 a year. Use the application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.

1. **Moving???** 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 to the Membership Secretary.
2. 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, make sure you indicate your academic affiliation in your application. Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary



YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON FLYER

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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.

Nov 10	Sat	YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBBAY. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.
Dec 15	Sat	ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT.	More details on page 2 in this issue of the Flyer.
Jan 1	Tues	NEW YEAR'S FIELD TRIP. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. Yellowtail Dam Afterbay. Helen Carlson, leader.
Jan 5	Sat	ANNUAL EAGLE MIDWINTER SURVEY in Lower 48 States. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Yellow- stone River: Billings to Colum- bus.	Brad Hall or George Mowat, leader. No Host Lunch.
Feb 9	Sat	WINTER WANDERERS FIELD TRIP.	Rare winter birds. Progressive birding and eating. 9 a.m. FUNDRAISER. Reservations Required by Feb. 7th. See Jan FLYER for more details.
Apr 13	Sat	EXXON PONDS AND EMER- ALD HILLS. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Sack lunch. <u>One Mile Walk.</u>

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

