

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 46, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2016

The Pryor Mountains - Crow Sacred Land

Presented by the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, February 15, 2016 7:15pm

Mayflower Congregational Church, Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings

This video features Crow Elder, Burton Pretty On Top, and emphasizes the importance of the Pryor Mountain landscape to the culture of the Apsáalooke (Crow) people. Speaker Dick Walton, and Susan Newell, worked closely with Mark Edwards to produce the video. Dick personally "discovered" the Pryor Mountains when he moved to Billings in 1966, and over 50 years he has developed a special expertise of the area. He will explain how and why the video was made, and discuss some of the ways this very special place is important to all of us.

Many of us are familiar with the Pryor Mountains, located 40 miles south of Billings and just north of the Wyoming border, and know that they are unlike any other landscape in Montana and different from the Beartooth Mountains, only 40 miles to the west. With a documented diversity of unique ecosystems, the Pryor's provide recreational opportunities and economic assets to the area, attracting both tourists and job seekers. The Pryor's are also a rich resource for scientists, teachers, students, and lay naturalists, offering opportunities for biological and geological discoveries. The diverse habitats in the Pryor's are home to a broad range of birds, butterflies and other wildlife, including bighorn sheep, mule deer, black bear and mountain lion, and ten species of bats. Two hundred resident species of birds include Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Calliope Hummingbirds. Equally important, the Pryor Mountains are a recognized sacred Native American spiritual site. Pictographs, tepee rings, ancient vision quest sites, and numerous shelter caves in the limestone canyons provide archaeological evidence of human use for at least 10,000 years.



Big Pryor (left) and East Pryor Mountains from the Bighorn Mountains to the east. Devils Canyon in the foreground. *Photo by Dick Walton*

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, February 8, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, February 15, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Marlene Pietz and Larry Newell has generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact them at 406-321-4910 [before February 12](#) to make reservations and your dish contribution.



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☞We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

And Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/Yellowstone-Valley-Audubon-Society-504343829741848/>

At the January 11th meeting of the YVAS Board of Directors, the following topics were discussed:

- Joel Bowers, YVAS Membership Secretary attended the meeting. Joel explained how he backs up his files using the Cloud. In addition Joel will send a complete registry of membership to Steve Regele twice a year. Steve R. will transfer it to a flash drive which will be stored in the YVAS safety deposit box.
- The Board is looking for a new board member to fill the position vacated by Marco Restani. Steve Linder was added to the Nominating Committee chaired by Donn Bartlett. YVAS members who have an interest in being on the Board or would like to recommend someone should contact Donn at 252-0757.
- YVAS and the Baling Twine Committee will have a table at the MATE show at the Metra.
- There was extensive discussion about the special film showing of The Messenger at the Metra in Feb. (see article in this Flyer) and the details and logistics of the showing.
- The process of transferring money from the YVAS checking account to the Endowment Fund managed by the Billings Community Foundation was also determined.

Submitted by Dorothy Bartlett

YVAS President, Steve Regele, recently did a television interview with Mike Penfold of 'OUR MONTANA, INC.' This aired on Community TV Channel 7. Steve eloquently highlighted YVAS mission and activities. You can access the discussion at yvaudubon.org or Yellowstone Valley Audubon on Facebook.

Submitted by Nancy Wiggins

Apologies and Corrections:

I am sorry for the mix-up on telephone numbers regarding last months YVAS pre-Chapter meeting potluck. I incorrectly listed Ruth Vanderhorst phone number instead of Lois Daltons. Sorry, Ruth, but I hear lots of folks enjoyed talking to you.

The bird photo credit to Daniel Casey in last months Creative Corner was listed as a Common Grackle, but was rather a Great-tailed Grackle. Sorry, Dan, and no one but you came forward with that misidentification.

Submitted by Trenay Hart

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

AREA CODE 406

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com

Vice-President: OPEN

Secretary: Doreen Hartman, 697-0277, rdzlh-man@bresnan.net

Treasurer: Pam Pipal, 245-4517, ppipal@charter.net

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
 Steve Linder: 380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregale@gmail.com
 Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Steve Daines: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 website: daines.senate.gov

email: senator@daines.senate.gov

Billings: 406-245-6822 Wash. D.C. 202-224-2651

Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510

website: tester.senate.gov

email: senator@tester.senate.gov

Billings: 406-252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 202-224-2644

Rep. Ryan Zinke:

website: zinke.house.gov

email representative@zinke.house.gov

Billings: 406-702-1182 Wash, D.C: 202-225-3211

Committees and Special Assignments: AREA CODE 406

Audubon Adventures: Jerry Dalton, daltonlj@centurylink.net

Baling Twine Project: Lisa Bessasparis, ospreybtc@gmail.com

Bird Questions: George Mowat, 656-7467 gbmowat@gmail.com
 or Helen Carlson Cummins, 248-8684

Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, erv132@charter.net

Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 259-5099, C: 860-0450,
custertours@gmail.com

Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com

Facebook: Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Flyer Editor: Trenay Hart, 860-1175, yvasflyer@gmail.com

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com

Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, 406-585-1211; Raptor Transport Jeanette Tasey 669-3169,
jtasey@gmail.com

Membership Secretary: Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,

C: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com

Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregale@gmail.com

Publicity: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com

Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com,
 Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com,
 Sheila McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com

Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker, 855-9832,
 918 AVE C, Billings

Website: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregale@gmail.com

Meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg, Billings, MT:

• Board Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to the entire membership.

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

FIRDAY, JANUARY 1, 2016 YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY

Six enthusiastic birders headed toward Yellowtail Dam Afterbay on a beautiful New Years Day. Numerous Bald Eagles and Rough-legged Hawks were seen along the way. Several Snow Bunting were spotted with a flock of Horned Larks on the side of the road. Another winter visitor, Common Redpoll, was observed shortly thereafter along the same stretch of Old Hardin Road. There were the usual ducks seen, with the Common Goldeneye being very abundant. Thousands of ducks were enjoying the water. On the way home a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds and several Western Meadow-larks were seen.

Over 40 species were spotted throughout the day. Thanks to George and Bernie Mowat for leading the trip! It was a great day!

Submitted by Lois Gorseth

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. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS.** 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. Binoculars and birding books are available on loan at the field trips

FIELD TRIP CHAIR: Donn Bartlett 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com

March 19	Sat	DUCK DAY: LEARN YOUR WATERFOWL AT WJH. 8am to noon.	Meet at Rocky Mountain College at 8am for guidance to WJH (2753 S 56 th St. W) or at WJH between 8 am and 8:30 am Sheila McKay and George Mowat, leaders
April 9	Sat	EXXON PONDS AND EMERALD HILLS. 8am to 3pm.	Sack lunch; ONE MILE WALK , Ron Kuhler and George Mowat leaders



IT WAS A FIELD TRIP IN HIS OWN BACKYARD...BALD EAGLE IN BILLINGS

On December 29, 2015 Bernie received a call from a neighbor that there was a Bald Eagle nearby. While getting ready to search for it, another neighbor called to say that it was perched on a power pole in our alley. George photographed it.

We live a short distance east of West High and theorize that the abundance of cottontails attracted it into town. We also think that pet owners might wish to keep their cats and small dogs in their houses when the eagles visit.

Submitted by Bernie & George Mowat with photos below



The Baling Twine Committee will have a table (booth) at the Montana Agri-Tech Exposition (MATE Show) February 18, 19, and 20 (Thursday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). Some people have already volunteered and signed up to assist staffing the booth. We appreciate that and look forward to having you there! For every hour overseeing the booth, each volunteer will receive a ticket for a drawing to win a framed print of a Red-tailed Hawk (see right).

This is a fun and wonderful opportunity to spend time with fellow YVAS members and get better acquainted. The purpose of the booth is to bring attention to baling twine in the environment and its negative impact on wildlife and domestic animals. Previous articles in The Flyer have reported that the Committee is seeking a building to store a large quantity of twine until it can be hauled to Minnesota for recycling. We will be putting that message out to MATE Show attendees.



If you are interested in volunteering your time to help staff the booth, please email Lisa Bessasparis, osprey-btc@gmail.com or Deb Regele, debregle@gmail.com. Let us know your availability so we can add your name to the schedule. Thanks!

Submitted by Doreen Hartman

FREE SHOWING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SUNDAY, MARCH 6 3:00pm-4:30pm

THE MESSENGER

PREPARE TO BE TRANSFIXED BY THIS NEW DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE DECLINE OF THE SONGBIRD POPULATIONS.



Please join Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society for a free, exclusive one-time showing of *The Messenger*. It is a visually captivating documentary about songbirds, and declines in their populations. Directed by Su Rynard, it won Best Conservation Program at the [2015 Jackson Hole Film Festival](#), and presents extraordinary shots of birds in flight, and close-ups that you may have never seen before. Bird watchers, bird ecologists and many others have been aware for decades that songbird populations are declining. Enjoy this wonderful experience in environmental cinematography and special opportunity to understand why songbirds are declining around the world.

For a preview, visit <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/search/?q=the%20messenger>

SUNDAY, MARCH 6 3:00pm-4:30pm DOORS OPEN AT 2:30pm

PETRO THEATER MSUB Come early, seating is limited, no reservations

TICKETS AVAILABLE at the February 15 YVAS Chapter meeting (details at yvaudubon.org) or at the door

FREE PARKING In front of the MSU Student Union Building, off Rimrock Road (avoid 'reserved'

spaces) **CONTACT** Deb Regele at 962-3115 with any questions *Above photo from film review at Cornellbirds.com*



7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT 59101 www.mtaudubon.org

Please refer to Montana Audubon Center website for current schedule and watch future Flyers for more details. www.mtaudubon.org/education or call 294-5099.

The results of the YVAS Christmas Bird Count for 2013, 2014, and 2015 can be found on the YVAS website. From the Home Page go to Birding and select Christmas Bird Count. Scroll down if necessary to find the links for the years 1973 through 2015.

Submitted by Deb Regele

2015 Osprey Nest Monitor Sean Ellis earned and received Eagle Rank with the Boy Scouts of America on December 20, 2015, at the age of 16. The Eagle Scout is the highest advancement rank in Boy Scouting.

One of the many requirements of this prestigious rank is to give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, school, or community. The project must benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.

To fulfill this requirement, Sean chose YVAS' Osprey Nest Monitoring to include the completion of two tasks. He prepared an Osprey nesting platform for attachment to a utility pole which would then form a free standing Osprey nesting pole and platform. The original Osprey nest was on an energized power pole creating a dangerous situation for Ospreys, Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative, and the landowners. Sean was also present to observe the installation of the new pole and platform by Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative in March 2015.



Following the installation of the new nesting site, Sean officially joined the YVAS Osprey Nest Monitors, attended the orientation class, regularly monitored and recorded data at his assigned nest, and posted observations to the YVAS Osprey Google Group. However by the first of July, it was determined that this new nest had failed despite the faithful incubation of the adults, possibly due to severe storms that moved down the Yellowstone River earlier in the summer. In July, Sean attended and participated in the banding of Osprey nestlings at nearby nests. The data he recorded was transferred to a data spreadsheet, along with the data from other Osprey nest monitors, and submitted to the Montana Natural Heritage Program.

Photo by Steve Regele of Deb, Marco, Sean, and his parents. Submitted by Deb Regele

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Submitted by Jerry Dalton and Pam Pipal

Following is a report on Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society's (YVAS's) use and administration of the National Audubon Society (NAS) Audubon Adventures program for the past 3 years. For 2014, NAS emphasized the new digital version of Audubon Adventures. Fourteen Montana schools participated in that version for 2014. For the current school year, NAS featured their new lesson plan with printed materials, plus digital access, and many printed topics from previous years. With a cap of \$50 per school (determined by the YVAS Board of Directors) six schools are participating this year (see list of schools on p. 2 of this Flyer). Contact Jerry Dalton for additional information on program participation, and Pam Pipal for financial information (see p. 2 of flyer for contact details).

Report of Audubon Adventures
Jan. 1, 2013 - Dec. 30, 2015

	Revenues	Revenues	Expenses	Balance
	Cans	Other		
Audubon Adventures Balance on 1-1-13				1,086
Donation/Sponsorships/Chap. Dinner/Birding Classes		1,734		1,734
NAS 2013			-781	-781
NAS 2014			-224	-224
NAS 2015			-290	-290
J. Davis expenses			-22	-22
10% to Operating Fund			-132	-132
Aluminum Cans	594			594

AUBUDON ADVENTURES TOTAL 12-31-15

\$1,965.00

Includes \$26 that was included in Treasurer's Report in Jan. 2016.



American Birding Association has named the Chestnut-collared Longspur as their Bird of the Year. This is great news to YVAS as much of our territory includes this summer migrant. Many field trips to Big Lake have documented seeing this bird. For more information regarding the ABA announcement see: <http://aba.org/boy/>

Picture: CCLO, as depicted by David A. Sibley, ABA web

Don't forget to participate in the **Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 12-15, 2016**. For inspirational details on the record breaking count from 2015, when a new species record was set, go to: gbbc.birdcount.org/2015-gbbc-summary

How many birds will you find?

19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 12-15, 2016

Join in! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

birdcount.org

White-breasted Nuthatch
Photo: Nick Saunders/CEBC

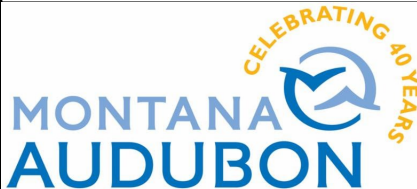
Audubon

BIRD AUDUBON CANADA

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Sponsored in part by:

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Montana Audubon celebrates 2016 as its 40th Anniversary. They are asking for photos and stories to be shared from local Chapter Members of moments captured over the last 40 years. They have recently joined Instagram to streamline these posts. You may submit by the link: <https://www.instagram.com/montanaaudubon/> or by directly contacting Amy Seaman at aseaman@mtaudubon.org

More than 400 Birders took action at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon recently defending their birding hotspot against the occupying militant group. For details: <http://thelapine.ca/79-year-old-bird-watcher-takes-down-oregon-militant-with-old-high-school-wrestling-move/>

Submitted for your entertainment by Will Crain

The Wildlife Society website is an excellent source for current happenings in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation. Recently, an article regarding "Acoustic Recorders Track Bird Activity" might be of interest to YVAS Flyer readers. The passive acoustic recorders are combined with recognition software to accurately distinguish bird calls from other noise. Marbled Murrelets in California and Wild Turkeys in Georgia are a couple of the birds being tracked in this fashion. See the full link: <http://wildlife.org/fieldnotes-acoustic-recorders-track-bird-activity/>

*I need air traffic control for my bird feeder.
I saw a gray bird take off from the feeder to
run into a brown bird trying to land on feeder.
They both crashed two feet before flying away.*

CREATIVE CORNER

At left, Observations, submitted by member David Omen.

At right, Hairy Woodpecker, photographed by Will Crain in his bird sanctuary.



The YVAS Board of Directors is trying to find a better way to alert supporting Chapter Members of their renewal dates. The list below consists of those members up for renewal in January and February. Please use the application form below (include your email address) and submit it, along with a check, to any Board Member or mail it to the address on the application when it is time to renew. Contact Membership Secretary Joel M. Bowers at 406-534-3672 or jmba@jmba.com, with any questions.



January: Robert & Audrey Jurovich, James Wiggins, Norma Devan, Michael & Jenette Erwin, Nancy & Dale Detrick, Wiley Bland, Peggy Schottlaender, M. Cotner, Brian Henderson, Karen Heil, and Eric Halverson.

February: Kathleen Anderson, Leslie Marty, Charles W. Paris, Vonnie Anderson, Terrance Eby, Lorraine G. Ondov, Paulette Jackson, and Nancy Ballou.

Larry Handsaker would like to thank the folks who have recently dropped off full sacks of aluminum cans off at his home for the recycling program. He encourages more donations to be left at his home: 918 Ave C or Helen Carlson's: 519 Highland Park Dr. Larry is willing to pick up cans if you give him a call at 406-855-9832.

Coordinators for the two remaining Potlucks on April 18 and May 16 are still needed. Please contact Sue Weinreis at 406-855-4181 if you are willing to provide the main dish or if you are willing to assist another with the main dish. Your help is very much needed and appreciated!

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

CANCELLED: for now, The Billings Winter Art Walk is February 5, 2016, from 5 pm to 9 pm. YVAS baling twine artists have crafted creative pieces using twine and continue to ask for others to create items and submit them to the BTC. These unique pieces of art were to be on display during the Art Walk at the Sandstone Art Gallery, 2913 2nd Avenue North this Feb. However, for now the event for the BTC is postponed. Watch future Flyers for when the event is rescheduled.

Submitted by Deb Regele

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 (electronically), 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
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
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 family 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
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PERMIT NO. 27



Northern Flicker, *photo submitted by Nick Wells*
captured in his Roundup, MT backyard.



YVAS Bird of the Month **Sharp-tailed Grouse**

A chicken like bird of open prairies and parklands. These birds use a lek for breeding where male birds display for female birds who may visit more than one lek during the breeding season.

Adapted from All About Birds, website.

Don't forget to look for this year-round resident. *Recent photos were captured on Canyon Creek Road by Will Crain.*

