



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.

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Chapter Meeting Presentation: Monday, January 16, 2017 7PM

Montana Birds and Birders in the 21st Century: There's an App for That!

Dan Casey, Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Coordinator

The relationship between birding and conservation has matured in many ways over the past three decades. Priorities have been established, partnerships formed, and opportunities for birders to engage in data collection and conservation action continue to increase. With new monitoring efforts, Montana Online Birders (MOB), and "Birds of Montana", we have access to more information than ever before regarding our birds and their habitats. But perhaps the most significant advance is "eBird", an automated interactive database launched by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and National Audubon in 2002. Tapping into birders' passion, knowledge, energy, and (yes) competitiveness, eBird now houses more than 350 million bird records worldwide! Available as a free app for mobile devices, and with an easy-to-navigate website, eBird has many innovative uses, including helping to inform conservation action across the continent.

Dan Casey will incorporate many of his fine bird photos into an entertaining summary of the latest and greatest in MT bird conservation, including an update from his role with the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, and a full demonstration of what eBird has to offer. This will include showing how by entering your own checklists into eBird can have a lasting influence on habitat conservation efforts in in southeast Montana and elsewhere. In addition to enjoying photos of Montana's birds and habitats, you should come away from the presentation inspired to play a personal role in connecting birding to conservation, and ready to go "e-Birding"!

Dan Casey has been a fixture in Montana's ornithological community for nearly 35 years, and co-authored the recently-released "Birds of Montana". After more than 30 years in the Flathead Valley working for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and American Bird Conservancy, since October of 2014 he has worked for Ducks Unlimited, as the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Coordinator out of Billings.

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.

Tuesday, Jan. 10, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, Jan. 16, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting



We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Gail McGlothlin & Peggy Schottlaender have generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact Gail [before Friday, Jan. 13](#) to make reservations and your dish contribution at 628-5778.

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☞We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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

Highlights of the November 15, 2016 Board Meeting*Submitted by Sue Weinreis*

The Board unanimously approved the appointment of Marco Restani to the YVAS Board of Directors. Marco resigned from the Board earlier this year, but is again able to accept the responsibilities of a position on the Board.

Jerry Dalton presented a plan to increase participation in the Audubon Adventures program. In collaboration with the Montana Audubon Center, letters will be sent to 45 Billings School District 2 teachers, as well as schools in the Yellowstone Basin inviting them to participate. YVAS will provide the educational materials to participating classrooms.

No Board Meeting was held in December.

**YVAS CONSERVATION GRANT***Submitted by Nancy Wiggins*

YVAS offers an annual Conservation Grant of up to \$1000, to fund a Montana educational institution, group, individual or individuals, 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." Applications will be accepted year-round until February 1 of each year. The Grant Committee will review the grant applications and present the top candidates to the YVAS Board of Directors at the March meeting for voting and approval. Any applications received after February 1 will be eligible for the award pool the following year. For more information and to obtain an application form, visit YVAS website yvaudubon.org or contact Steve Regele 406-962-3115, or sregele@juno.com.

RECYCLE those excess HOLIDAY aluminum cans all you birders emptied over food, family and friends!

Larry Handsaker would like to remind folks to drop off full sacks of aluminum cans at his home or at a YVAS Chapter meeting for the recycling program. He encourages more donations to be given. His home address is 918 Ave C in Billings. Helen Carlson also accepts drop offs at her home: 519 Highland Park Dr. in Billings. Larry is willing to pick up cans if you give him a call at 406-855-9832.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:**AREA CODE 406**

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
Vice-President: Steve Linder, 380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net
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
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
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 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: Deb Regele, debregele@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
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 Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748
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dpadanyi@live.com
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 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, debregele@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 Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to all members.
 • General Chapter Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.

Saturday, November 5, 2016 Yellowtail Dam Afterbay

Submitted by Robert Hill

Fifteen YVAS members met at Rocky Mountain College at 8 AM for a trip to the Yellowtail Dam Afterbay. It was a beautiful sunny cloudless day. We headed to Lockwood and took the Old Hardin Road to Hardin. This part of the trip had few stops with the usual Red-tail Hawks, Black-billed Magpie's, Rough-legged Hawks, European Starlings and common waterfowl being seen. We did spot a Ferruginous Hawk on a power pole, this bird was very near the location where we saw it on last the field trip last year.

After a rest stop in Hardin we headed for Fort Smith, and on the road down the bird spotting picked up with: Common Ravens, Rough-Legged Hawks, Tree Sparrows, Hairy Woodpecker, Pheasants, Northern Harrier, and a Merlin.

We arrived at Fort Smith and stopped at the Afterbay Dam, there Marco pointed out 3 Surf Scoters. We also spotted a large variety waterfowl. Then we traveled up to the camping area for lunch and spotted more waterfowl. We did see Red-breasted Mergansers, Belted Kingfisher, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Mountain Chickadee, and Ruby-Crowned Kinglet. We also saw our old friend, the American Dipper, in the same place as we have seen it almost every year.

As you can see, if you did not make the trip you missed a great day with sun, fun birders and plenty of birds.

Monday, December 12, 2016 Holiday Social and Dessert

Submitted by Deb Regele

Bob Landis' awe-inspiring film from our cherished Yellowstone National Park once again provided a close up glimpse into the "almost" unseen encounters between the Park's inhabitants. His new camera with its slow-motion capabilities enhanced the audience's appreciation of the actions and reactions from over a dozen different mammals and birds that survive the harsh winters of this wilderness. A few of these encounters included large animals such as grizzly bears, wolves, bison and elk to the smaller ones such as coyotes, beaver and otters to Ravens, Bald Eagles and Ospreys. As an added bonus, Bob included footage of brown bears from his recent trip to Denali National Park.

Prior to the Landis presentation, YVAS held a dessert social with an amazing array of desserts provided by those attending this event. This year approximately 300 people attended the program. See the YVAS website at yvaudubon.org for more photos.

YVAS extends a big thank you to Bob Landis for his 2016 wildlife program, the Mayflower Church for their unending support of YVAS functions, and the Billings Gazette for YVAS publicity.

Someday in December, Glendive, MT and back for 550 miles of ebird!

Will Crain, Brian Henderson and Marco Restani reported an independent field trip for ebirding but mostly looking for Snowy Owls and Gyrfalcon with out success beyond this photo Will captured.

They did report 13 different species with one being the winter visitor, Snow Bunting, a life bird for Brian Henderson.

Submitted by Will Crain



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

Jan 1, 2017	Sun	New Year's Day Field Trip to Yellowtail Dam Afterbay 8:00 am to 6:00 pm	Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.
Jan 7, 2017	Sat	Annual Eagle Midwinter Survey in lower 48 states. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Yellowstone River, Billings to Columbus. No host lunch. George Mowat, leader.
Mar, 2017	TBD	Learn your waterfowl at WJH, 8:30 am to noon.	Meet at Rocky Mountain College at 8:00 am for guidance to WJH (2753 S 56 th St). George Mowat and Sheila McKay, leaders.



Greetings YVAS,

My name is Ernie McKenzie, I am the "new" Wildlife Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management's Billings Field Office. The Billings Field Office manages approximately half a million acres of public lands in nine counties surrounding Billings, including Bighorn (MT and Wyoming), Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties. The Billings Field Office, in cooperation with MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Montana Peregrine Institute, has monitored Peregrine aeries (nest sites) for a number of years to determine occupancy and production of fledglings. With a busy schedule, particularly during the nesting season, I found it difficult to spend enough time at each aerie to get an accurate account of production. The Peregrine has made a remarkable recovery since the 60's, when only a handful of nesting pairs were documented across Montana and the west, to today when we are monitoring 124 Peregrine territories, with 14 new territories discovered this year!

As members of the YVAS, I know you have an interest in avian ecology and "birding" in general and hope my inquiry generates interest among some of you! Frankly, I am looking for some assistance in monitoring the aeries to get accurate production numbers, or at least, annual occupancy. There are five aeries I have volunteered to monitor. One is right here in Billings, at Sacrifice Cliff on the west end of the Four Dances Natural Area above the Yellowstone River. Maybe you are familiar with this falcon hot spot? The other areas are a little more of an adventure to get to: Bear Canyon, Demi Jon Flat area, Sykes Ridge and Devil's Overlook, all on the south end of the Pryor Mountains. Of the latter four, Bear Canyon is the easiest site to get to, followed by Devil's Overlook (actually on National Park Service land in the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area), then the Demi Jon flat area and finally, the most remote and hard to access aerie on Sykes Ridge, a bumpy and rugged site on the north east ridge of the Pryor Mountains.

Over the next couple months I would love to hear from any of you that would be interested in scheduling visits to any of these sites in order to record Peregrine activity and potential fledging. If a number of you are interested in visiting any of these sites between **April 1st and August 15th**, I would be happy to schedule a meeting (possibly during a monthly membership meeting) to talk about schedules, logistics and methods of observation. There is normally a "lull" in falcon activity in May through early June when the birds are very quiet and cryptic while trying to keep the nest safe and undetected. Once the young start moving around the aerie and start to fledge the activity levels climb and flying falcons and incessant calling can be extremely entertaining.

I hope this peaks some of your interest. I am open to any and all methods of communication regarding this request. Please feel free to contact me at work (896-5244), cell (690-7110) or by email at emckenzi@blm.gov. Thank you for your time and Happy Birding!

Ernie McKenzie
Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management

Armchair Bird Watching

Submitted by Pam Pipal

A great way to make up for the sparse local field trip opportunities during winter is to watch some on-line webcams.

One excellent source is the Cornell University system of webcams (cams). Two of the currently active cams are the Cornell Lab FeederWatch and Ontario FeederWatch. On the Cornell FeederWatch cam recently, Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Blue Jays, and a Red-bellied Woodpecker were seen. On the Ontario FeederWatch a Ruffed Grouse and Pine Grosbeaks were seen. To access the Cornell University cams, key "Cornell Lab Bird Cams" into your browser and click on the web site presented. Then click on the "Bird Cams" tab to see the choices available. (Many cams are off-line this time of year, as you will see if you select one of those.)

Another excellent source, not only of birds, but of many other creatures, is www.explore.org. Scroll down to see the cams available, click on the picture of the cam of your choice, and scroll back up to watch the creature you have chosen to view. [This site can fool you into believing you are seeing live activity. Check the lower left of the screen for the words "**LIVECAM** | HIGHLIGHTS". If those words are there, you are watching pre-recorded activity.]

This time of year, the above sites pale compared to the "Southwest Florida Eagle Cam." Enter those words into your browser and you will see a majestic Bald Eagle couple sharing incubation of two eggs in their nest in Fort Myers, Florida. These eggs were laid November 22 and 25 and are expected to hatch about 35 days from then or around December 27 and 30. Then the best viewing begins, as the Bald Eagle couple starts feeding their white, fluffy nestlings!

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. 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 Data Base Administrator Joel M. Bowers at 406-534-3672 or membership.data@yvaudubon.org, with any questions.

JANUARY: Robert & Audrey Jurovich, James Wiggins, Norma Devan, Michael Erwin, Stephen Linder, Larry Handsaker, Wiley bland, Linda Pickard, Peggy Schottlaender, Phil McBride, Dave Hanson, Steven Wittman, Karen Heil, and Doreen Hartman.



Left: Oriole Nest by photo to Barbara Garrett captured on the Afterbay field trip.

Right: GHO photo by Robert Hill, in a cemetery in October!



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



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"Boots" photo by Will Crain. Little Porcupine Creek Rd, Rosebud County.

"What we really need is a bird book that identifies bird backs." - Ruth Torrence

What's the word, Hummingbird?

We're in Big Sky, Goldeneye.

Wanna walk, Ferruginous Hawk?

Let's fly, Mag-gie pie.

Don't lose your way, Osprey.

Got to truck, Wood Duck.

You're in the dark, Prairie Horned Lark.

It's all okay, Blue Jay.

Where is the manager, Western Tanager?

He went to dicker, Yellow Flicker.

Come with meeee, Chickadee.

I'm in your debt, Avocet.

Where have you gone, Trumpeter Swan?

To "The Park", Meadowlark, To "The
Park"

Thanks to John James Audubon

And all the folks of Audubon!

Adapted from CU Lator by Ruth Torrence

Blue Jay photo by Will Crain in his backyard on Christmas eve 2016.

