



# 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.*

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## March 20, 7PM Chapter Meeting Program

### North American Eagle Survey and other BLM Dillon Field Office Projects, Katie Benzel, Wildlife Biologist

The purpose of the Midwinter Eagle survey is to monitor the status of eagle wintering populations in the contiguous United States by estimating national and regional count trends, overall and by age class. Each January, several hundred individuals count eagles along standard, non-overlapping survey routes. YVAS has participated in this survey for many years. The 2017 YVAS Midwinter Eagle Survey was held January 2017.

Katie Benzel, Wildlife Biologist with BLM Dillon Field Office will talk about the eagle survey history and findings. She will also discuss some other interesting and important projects involving BLM, her work, and interactions with wildlife and wildlife management.



Nationwide counts of eagles were coordinated by the National Wildlife Federation from 1979 until 1992, when the Raptor Research and Technical Assistance Center/US Geological Survey assumed responsibility for overseeing the count. Initial objectives of the survey were to establish an index to the total wintering Bald Eagle population in the lower 48 states, to determine eagle distribution during a standardized survey period, and to identify previously unrecognized areas of important winter habitat.

Beginning in 1984, National Wildlife Federation officials asked participants in each state to count eagles along standard routes to provide data on count trends. Standard survey routes were defined as clearly described areas where eagles had been observed in the past. Katie has been the Montana coordinator for several years and organizes many private volunteers who participate in the survey. Sizes of survey routes vary from single fixed points to 150 miles. The number of states participating each year has ranged from 38 to 49, and the number of standard survey routes per state ranges from 1 to 80.

*Submitted by Steve Regele. Bald Eagle, photo by Dan Casey.*

## 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, March 14, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, March 20, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting**



**We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Nancy Wiggins has generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact her at 839-4461, [before Friday, March 17](#) to make reservations and your dish contribution.**

**THIS FLYER IS PUBLISHED ON Sustainable Forestry Initiative SFI.org CERTIFIED PRODUCT**

**☞ We're on the web! [yvaudubon.org](http://yvaudubon.org)**

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

Summary of Board Meeting/Action, February 14, 2017*Submitted by Doreen Hartman*

- YVAS Conservation Grant reminder: members and their contacts are encouraged to solicit grant applications, see the website for details.
- Good progress is being made by Joel, Peter, Joan and Deb in transitioning the new Data Base Administrator team.
- Updates on actions with in some federal and state agencies and with regard to Berkeley Pit waterfowl crisis were provided. The website has some details.
- Reminder about Duck Day-March 25 at WJH Bird Resources, see the flyer and website for particulars. Volunteers needed.
- After further review and consideration, YVAS will not be applying for membership in Montana Shares.

**Who do you call when you find an INJURED bird?**

Injured Birds: Details at [yvaudubon.org](http://yvaudubon.org) (select the "Projects" tab and then "Injured Birds") or call MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (M-F) 406-247-2940.

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, Becky Kean, 406-585-1211.

Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources, Sheila McKay, 406-652-7175.

Twine Entangled Osprey in Nest: Dr. Marco Restani, 406-425-2608 or Deb Regele, 406-962-3115

**POTLUCK Dinner COORDINATORS needed** for the months of April and May 2017. Please contact: Sue Weinreis at 855-4181 to volunteer. The coordinator provides a main dish for 20 to 25 persons and accepts RSVP calls and dish contributions from attending members. If you would like to partner with someone to coordinate a dinner that is welcomed.

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

**President:** Steve Regele, 962-3115, [smregele@gmail.com](mailto:smregele@gmail.com)

**Vice-President:** Steve Linder, 380-0073, [becon1@bresnan.net](mailto:becon1@bresnan.net)

**Secretary:** Doreen Hartman, 697-0277, [rdzlhman@bresnan.net](mailto:rdzlhman@bresnan.net)

**Treasurer:** Pam Pipal, 245-4517, [ppipal@charter.net](mailto:ppipal@charter.net)

**Board of Directors:**

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, [donnbartlett@msn.com](mailto:donnbartlett@msn.com)

Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, [dpadanyi@live.com](mailto:dpadanyi@live.com)

Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, [wjhbird@yahoo.com](mailto:wjhbird@yahoo.com)

Marco Restani: 425-2608, [restani@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:restani@stcloudstate.edu)

Deb Regele: 962-3115, [debregede@gmail.com](mailto:debregede@gmail.com)

Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, [granpeak47@gmail.com](mailto:granpeak47@gmail.com)

Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, [nwiggins83@gmail.com](mailto:nwiggins83@gmail.com)

**Montana's Congressional Delegation:**

Sen. Steve Daines: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510

email Sen. Daines via his website: [daines.senate.gov](http://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](http://tester.senate.gov)

email: [senator@tester.senate.gov](mailto:senator@tester.senate.gov)

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

Rep. Ryan Zinke:

website: [zinke.house.gov](http://zinke.house.gov)

email [representative@zinke.house.gov](mailto: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](mailto:daltonlj@centurylink.net)

Baling Twine Project: Deb Regele, [debregede@gmail.com](mailto:debregede@gmail.com)

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

Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, [erv132@charter.net](mailto:erv132@charter.net)

Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 259-5099, C: 860-0450,  
[custertours@gmail.com](mailto:custertours@gmail.com)

Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele, 962-3115,  
[smregele@gmail.com](mailto:smregele@gmail.com)

Data Base Administrator: Joan Bunke or Peter Cummins,  
[membership.data@yvaudubon.org](mailto:membership.data@yvaudubon.org)

Facebook: Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, [nwiggins83@gmail.com](mailto:nwiggins83@gmail.com)

Flyer Editor: Trenay Hart, 860-1175, [yvasflyer@gmail.com](mailto:yvasflyer@gmail.com)

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, 252-0757, [donnbartlett@msn.com](mailto:donnbartlett@msn.com)

Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748

Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757,  
[dpadanyi@live.com](mailto:dpadanyi@live.com)

Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, [debregede@gmail.com](mailto:debregede@gmail.com)

Publicity: Barbara Garrett 652-3180, [garrettimprisonart@gmail.com](mailto:garrettimprisonart@gmail.com)

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

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

Website: Deb Regele, 962-3115, [debregede@gmail.com](mailto:debregede@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.

There are no Field Trips in March but as noted below unscheduled outings are encouraged!

### Changes to the May 21st birding trip to Bear Gulch near Grass Range:

**PRICE CHANGE-cost is \$20 per person unless there are more than 20 and then the price is reduce to \$15 per person.**

Please bring cash and lunch and water.

The trip is NOT a rock art trip but you may bird as long as you want.

For those unable to walk (the terrain is sometimes steep and rocky) they will drive you down.

The contact person is Carolyn Jones [406-670-4449](tel:406-670-4449)

## 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](mailto:donnbartlett@msn.com)

April 8	Sat	Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills. 8am to 3pm.	ONE MILE WALK. Sack lunch. Ron Kuhler & George Mowat, leaders.
Mid-Late April	TBD	Pryor Mountains	LEK viewing plus searching for a Sagebrush Sparrow. Stan Heath leader.
May 6	Sat	Meet at Riverfront Park, S Billings Blvd, 1 <sup>st</sup> parking area on the right. 8 am to noon.	Family Oriented Outing. Leader TBD
May 11	Thurs	Meet at Riverfront Park, S Billings Blvd. 1 <sup>st</sup> parking lot on the right. 5:30 pm.	Mike Weber, leader
May 13	Sat	Lake Basin. 8:00 am.	Sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader
May 14	Sun	Pryor Mountains, Bear Canyon Birding/Hiking	Meet at Rocky Mountain College at 6:00 am or at the Bridger Rest Area at 7:30 am, to hike into Bear Canyon at 8:30 am. Sack lunch. Trenay Hart, leader.
May 16	Tues	Stillwater River and Woodbine Area 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.	Sack lunch. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader
May 20	Sat	Pompey's Pillar and Captain Clark's FAS. 7:00 am.	Sack lunch. Robert Hill, leader
May 21	Sun	Bear Gulch near Grass Range 5:30 am, all day	WALKING TRIP, bring a picnic lunch, \$20/per person, Group of 20 or more \$15/ person. Carolyn Jones, leader.
May 27-29	Sat-M	Memorial Day Weekend	Will alert Field Trip Birders of any impromptu trips.

### 2017 and beyond FEATURE:

In order to encourage additional but unscheduled outings, please call or email Donn Bartlett (see below) with the needed information such as time, route, etc. and he will forward it to interested area birders. These birders have provided Donn with their contact information to be used in these situations. If you want to be added to the email list for unscheduled outings let Donn know and you'll be included.

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, [donnbartlett@msn.com](mailto:donnbartlett@msn.com) or 406-252-0757.



# DUCK DAY

Meet at Rocky Mountain College (parking lot off of Rimrock Rd. north of Taylor Hall) at 8:00 am for guidance to WJH, or arrive at WJH at 8:30 am. Please **DO NOT** arrive at the facility before 8:30 am; late arrivals welcome - check in at the green barn. Please dress for the weather and wear closed-toe shoes and clothes that can get dirty or wet.



**March 25th, 2017, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

*Free admission; participants of all ages welcome!*



## WJH BIRD RESOURCES AND YELLOWSTONE VALLEY

WJH Bird Resources  
2753 56th St. W.  
Billings, MT 59102

- ◆ Meet the captive birds at WJH with opportunities to observe some birds up close
- ◆ Games and structured activities for children
- ◆ Opportunity to view the Wagner Marsh south of the property with some history of the wetland project

*Host and Event Guides:*

Sheila McKay - WJH Owner/Proprietor; winner of IWWA Conservation Award

Marcus Hemker - Hemker Park and Zoo

Jeff Brown - Oregon Cranes

Allan Parker - YRPA

Dave Pauli - HSUS Wildlife Innovation and Response

George Mowat - Head of MT rare birds sighting group; YVAS birding trip leader

Will Crain - Billings artist, photographer and birder

Nicholas Godfrey and Kirsten McKenna - WJH Staff

Phone: (406)652-7515  
Email: [wjhbird@yahoo.com](mailto:wjhbird@yahoo.com)

RSVP to [wjhbird@yahoo.com](mailto:wjhbird@yahoo.com) [WJH website address]

Please state "Duck Day" in the subject line

Or call the office at (406)652-7515

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Please contact Sheila McKay at the above listed phone or email to volunteer to help with logistics, etc. during Duck Day.



## YELLOWSTONE VALLEY GIVES

May 4, 2017

Two Board members attended a meeting for nonprofits hosted by Billings Community Foundation (BCF) regarding the upcoming **Yellowstone Valley Gives**. **Yellowstone Valley Gives** is a 24-hour online fund raising event that encourages local support of local nonprofits in the Yellowstone Valley area. Potential donors will be able to go to a website during that period where all participating nonprofits will be listed, along with background information on what they do and the people or communities they serve.

BCF is organizing the event and provides the tools needed to guide nonprofits in their participation. The Board is seeking volunteers from our Chapter Members to lead this effort. Members of the Board will provide assistance as needed. Registration closes on April 4<sup>th</sup>. We see this as a great fundraising opportunity as well as a fun, fulfilling experience.

Information is available on the BCF's [Yellowstone Valley Gives - Bulletin Board](#) as well as on Facebook. There was a very clear, brief article about the fundraiser in the Billings Gazette on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, [Guest Opinion: Montana Nonprofits Gear Up for May 4 Giving Day](#).

Interested Chapter Members may contact any of the following with questions: Steve Regele [smregele@gmail.com](mailto:smregele@gmail.com), Doreen Hartman [rdzlhman@bresnan.net](mailto:rdzlhman@bresnan.net), or Dorothy Bartlett [dpadanyi@live.com](mailto:dpadanyi@live.com). Don't delay – this is a great opportunity to volunteer for - and your efforts will make a difference and be much appreciated. Thank you.

## Osprey Platform

Are you enjoying snow shoveling as much as Steve and I are this winter? A person just can't have enough snow and shovels, right? Wrong! Bring on spring with the return of Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, Tundra Swans and Ospreys!

For the past few weeks, YVAS' Osprey Nest Monitors have been confirming their commitments to monitor Osprey nests this spring and summer with a monitor return rate of 100%!

Two new groups have joined the YVAS Osprey Nest Monitors this year. The Environmental Science class at Absarokee High School will be monitoring the nest at Swinging Bridge on Hwy 78 and a newly formed birding group in Miles City has individuals willing to lend a hand in the Forsyth and Miles City areas. Marco Restani will travel and present an Osprey Orientation Program to each of these new groups.

2016 was a tremendously successful year for the Osprey Nest Monitoring Project. Just for fun, I tallied the total number of Osprey fledglings (young that left the nest) that were reported by the YVAS Osprey Nest Monitors for each of the last five years. The tallies are taken from the data sheets that I submitted to the MT Natural Heritage Program. As you can see, that number has more than doubled.

Please remember though, this is not a scientifically "pure" overview since the number of nest monitors has increased both upstream and downstream giving the project better surveillance of the existing nests. The number of nestlings that Marco has banded each year since 2012 has also steadily increased. I have included a portion of Marco's banding data for each of the five years. This project began in 2009.

2016 - 120 fledglings; 83 banded  
2015 - 111 fledglings; 70 banded  
2014 - 89 fledglings; 58 banded  
2013 - 74 fledglings; 40 banded  
2012 - 53 fledglings; 36 banded

We are still looking for Osprey Nest Monitors in a few of the outlying areas. If you are interested in monitoring or would like more information, email Deb Regele at [debregede@gmail.com](mailto:debregede@gmail.com). You can also go to the 'Projects' tab at the YVAS website ([yvvaudubon.org](http://yvvaudubon.org)) and read more under 'Osprey Nest Monitoring'. Be sure to check out the Osprey Photo Pages under Photos.

*Submitted by Deb Regele*

**Website News***Submitted by Deb Regele*

For those of you wondering what birds your fellow YVAS members are seeing in their backyards, you can now check the new YVAS website Photo Page, 'Backyard Birding'. If you have a photo of a backyard bird species that is not yet on the photo page or one that is exhibiting unusually fun antics, please email it to me at [debregele@gmail.com](mailto:debregele@gmail.com). I am looking for nice quality photos, they do not need to be professional quality. If you are uncertain of the quality, send it anyway and I will be happy to check it out.

**Herring Gull**, *photo by Will Crain* captured Nov. 13, 2016 at Cooney Dam. Note the pink legs, says Will, the gull was a real challenge to identify among a number of Ring-billed Gulls.

**YVAS Reports Uncommon Bird Sightings***Submitted by Barbara Garrett*

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS) reports more than 30 unusual and special interest bird sightings in the Billings and surrounding areas by its members in 2016 including such species as the Tundra Swan and Surf Scoter. The Tundra Swan nests in the tundra and is uncommon and local in the winter in the United States. The Surf Scoter nests in the tundra and winters on coastal waters.

"Some of our members' sightings were rare or only occasionally occurring in Montana, some are of birds that are rare in some locations while common in other locations in Montana, and some sightings seem to be showing up more often in recent years," Steve Regele, YVAS president, said.

While spotting birds is a passion for birdwatchers, spotting birds in places where they are not normally seen can quicken their hearts. This phenomena of birds in unusual places is called vagrancy. According to Audubon experts there are multiple reasons for vagrancy and frequently the vagrancy that is occurring is not clearly understood. A short term drought or habitat change in core areas can cause it. So might global climate change. And it is not uncommon for migrating species to get a little off course ... particularly for young birds. Whatever the reason such sightings can cause quite a stir.

Anyone can report or review reports online with the eBird website that has been launched by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and National Audubon. And a complete list and description of birds found in Montana is available at the Montana Natural Heritage Program Field Guide website where anyone can also report observations. A list of some of the unusual and other bird sightings by YVAS members in 2016 in and around the Billings area is available at [yvaudubon.org](http://yvaudubon.org). The YVAS website also carries information on schedules and opportunities for joining YVAS birding trips, bird classes, and other bird related activities.

**RAIN DANCE**

Hydrogen dancing with positive charge

Oxygen dancing with negative charge

Hydrogen and oxygen dancing tight

Water is born from this dancing

Heated hydrogen atoms fast dancing

Heated oxygen atoms fast dancing

Just dancing to escape gravity

Dancing to become water vapor

Vapors flying higher in sky dance

Dancers gathering to form clouds

Dancing clouds floating higher and higher

Dancing clouds growing colder and colder

Dancing vapors now rapidly condensing

Now dig dancing big raindrops falling

By YVAS Member, David Omen

January 2016

Published in February 17, 2016 Montana State University Billings Retort Newspaper.



Great Blue Heron, photo by Jim Sells

**The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron  
feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Submitted by YVAS member, Jim Sells

**RENEWALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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 March 2017. 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 Administrators: Joan Bunke or Peter Cummins [membership.data@yvaudubon.org](mailto:membership.data@yvaudubon.org), with any questions.

**MARCH Renewals:**

Carol Baumann, Carol Bates, Will Crain, Mary Davis, Dick Forehand, Jim & Peggy Good, Lois Gorseth, Brian Henderson, Shirley McDonald, Steve & Deb Regele, Claudia Reitz, and Sandra Teller.

**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

**Non-Profit Organization  
PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BILLINGS, MT  
PERMIT NO. 27**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Marsh Wren** captured *by Will Crain* in October 2016 while birding with Brian Henderson at Shiloh Conservation Area.

Early in February, YVAS member, Robert Hill submitted these photographs of two injured raptors that he helped transport to the Montana Raptor Center in Bozeman, MT. The Great Horned Owl on the bottom left was from Miles City. Robert reported the lengthy transport and relay of volunteers involved in rescuing the Snowy Owl pictured on the bottom right. The owl was injured in Raymond, MT and was picked up by a volunteer from Glendive on a Thursday and then transported into the town of Glendive. Next the bird was transported on to Miles City making it through another volunteer to Billings at midnight where Robert took the owl on to Reedpoint to rendezvous with the Montana Raptor Center folks from Bozeman.

*Submitted with photographs by Robert Hill*

