

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 47, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 2017

October 16, 7PM Chapter Meeting Program

Yellowstone River 2011 Oil Spill: Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan

In 2011, the ExxonMobil Pipeline Company Silvertip Pipeline crossing the Yellowstone River broke and spilled approximately 63,000 gallons of oil in the Yellowstone River. The July 1, 2011 oil spill occurred close to Laurel, Montana, near the peak of a 35-year flood event. Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the State of Montana and the U.S. Department of the Interior are Trustees for the restoration of natural resources and public use services that were exposed and/or injured by the oil spill. The Trustees used the natural resource damage assessment process to study the effects of these incidents on wildlife, including birds and fish, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and public use of the resources.



In October 2016, the Trustees settled with ExxonMobil Pipeline Company and issued a restoration plan that identifies restoration project types to address the resource injuries. Project types include conservation easements and fee title land acquisitions, with some acquisitions focusing on habitat requirements for injured birds, channel migration easements, removal of side channel blockages, reactivating old oxbows and backchannels to improve river function and aquatic habitat, fish passage improvement, increasing American White Pelican production by improving breeding and nesting areas, river access improvement, and others. The Trustees are now beginning to implement the restoration plan. Alicia Stickney of the Montana Department of Justice's Natural Resource Damage Program will present an overview of this important plan and project work.

Submitted by Steve Regele, Photo of Alicia Stickney at the project site submitted by Alicia Stickney

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.

Friday, October 13, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, October 16, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting



We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Dorothy Bartlett has generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact her at 252-0757 before Friday, October 13 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/>

Highlights of the September 8 Board of Directors Meeting

YVAS Nametags

Audrey Jurovich has retired from her job as YVAS Hospitality. Thank you Audrey for your many, many years of service - you are truly appreciated!

The Board decided YVAS nametags will not be maintained or distributed for use after December nor will attendance be noted. If a member wants his/her nametag, the individual should take the nametag, and if so desired, use it during future meetings. Otherwise, only the YVAS Board members will routinely wear nametags during all Chapter meetings for easy recognition. Temporary sticky blank nametags will be available during Chapter meetings for those choosing to use them.

Publicity Chair Job Opening

Barbara Garrett is leaving her job in the near future. Thank you Barbara for your great contributions to ensuring widespread YVAS publicity. YVAS members interested in volunteering to fill this position are invited to speak to any Board member.

Future YVAS Monthly Presentations, Programs, Birding Trips and Conservation and Education Projects

The September meeting of the YVAS Board of Directors included productive discussions and plans for future YVAS monthly presentations, program, birding trips and conservation and education projects. Details will be available on the website and in *The Flyer* as they become final.

Who do you call when you find an INJURED bird?

Injured Birds: Details at 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

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

AREA CODE 406

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, smregele@gmail.com

Vice-President: Steve Linder, 380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net

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

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

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com

Dorothy Bartlett, 628-5058, dpadanyi@live.com

Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com

Marco Restani: 425-2608, restani@stcloudstate.edu

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

Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@gmail.com

Nancy Wiggins: 839-4461, 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

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. Greg Gianforte:

email Rep. Gianforte via his website:

<https://gianforte.house.gov/contact/email>

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, debregale@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,
smregele@gmail.com

Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins,
membership.data@yvaudubon.org

Facebook: Nancy Wiggins, 839-4461, nwiggins83@gmail.com

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

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com

Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748

Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757,
dpadanyi@live.com

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

Publicity: Barbara Garrett 652-3180, garrettimprisonart@gmail.com

Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, smregele@gmail.com

Nancy Wiggins, 839-4461, 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 Friday of each month at 4:00pm. 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.

Wednesday, September 6 Riverfront Park, Fall Migrants

While ten of us gathered to start the bird walk, two busy and chattering White-breasted Nuthatches flitted between tree trunks. Soon, a small flock of Barn Swallows noisily chased a Cooper's Hawk onto a cottonwood trunk where it hunkered down, and we all got good looks at this predator. The walk was quiet at first but as we got deeper into thickets numerous Catbirds lurked about. We saw a lone Western Wood-Pewee and a Hairy Woodpecker and I got a very brief look at a Lincoln's Sparrow. In the dead branches overhead, Cedar Waxwings were flycatching. We could hear the call notes of both Common Yellowthroat and Wilson's Warblers, but could not lure them out of the dense thickets.

Near a pond, we got a brief look at a MacGillivray's Warbler and above us, there were many Ring-billed Gulls and migrating flocks of Common Nighthawks. The loud rattle of a Belted Kingfisher call could be heard before it flew overhead. Northern Flickers were observed and a Downy Woodpecker rattling call came from the treetops.

Toward the end of the evening, we winded our way toward the river and found a mixed flock of foraging Black-capped Chickadees, woodpeckers, nuthatches and sparrows. Chipping Sparrows were identified as well as a couple of Dark-eyed Juncos (Pink-sided). Several birders commented it was unusually early in the year to see Juncos. A half-dozen Spotted Sandpipers flushed from along the riverbank. As the sun was setting, we paused several times to watch long strings of gulls flap down river. The gulls were loafing on a gravel bar before taking flight. There were at least a thousand gulls, all Ring-billed Gulls. A couple of Greater Yellowlegs called as they flew nearby unseen.

In the gathering darkness a few lucky birders spotted the last bird of the day, an Osprey. We finished the evening with 34 species.

Submitted by Mike Weber

Saturday, September 30 Hawk Watch Red Lodge Area Field trip notes will be covered in the November Flyer.

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 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com

Nov 4	Sat	Yellowtail Dam After-bay. 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.	Sack lunch. Brian Henderson, leader.
Dec	TBD	Annual Christmas Bird	Jim Court, leader. custertours@gmail.com 259-5099
Jan 1	Fri	New Year's Day Field Trip to Yellowtail Dam After-bay 8:00 am to 6:00 pm	Sack lunch. Brian Henderson, leader.
Jan 13	Sat	Annual Eagle Midwinter Survey in lower 48 states.	Yellowstone River, Billings to Columbus. No host lunch. George Mowat, leader.



SPECIAL 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 him with their contact information to be used in these situations. donnbartlett@msn.com or 252-0757.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Christmas Bird Count

Jim Court, leader for the Christmas Bird Count will be making announcements in the November Flyer regarding date and time for the annual count. If you have any questions please give him a call at 259-5099 or custertours@gmail.com



Be sure to check the Montana Audubon Center website for their upcoming and scheduled events. They are located at 7026 South Billings Blvd, or go to their website mtaudubon.org/center/ or contact director Carolyn Sevier at csevier@mtaudubon.org

Steve Linder passed along some information from the American Birding Association. It is the Code of Birding Ethics and can be found at the link: <http://listing.aba.org/ethics/> He found it valuable information since our Board had just published **Tips and Responsibilities for Birding with a YVAS Group** in the Sept. Flyer. Review the link and you can see that YVAS is on course regarding birding ethics.

American Bird Conservancy's Bird of the Week for Sept 22, 2017 was our famed Sagebrush Sparrow. Though they didn't have the range quite far enough north to include the ones we see on Bear Canyon Road in the Pryor Mountains there is great information and footage of the birds singing at: <http://abcbirds.org/bird/sagebrush-sparrow/>

Dr. Jack Horner's Presentation

World renowned paleontologist Dr. Jack Horner delivered an excellent special presentation about dinosaur-bird science and evolution at the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society's (YVAS) September 18, 2017 meeting. About 75 people attended the thought provoking program. Professor Horner has a wonderful way of reaching people of all ages and made the topic come alive in a very informative and entertaining way. He enticed everyone with the subject and with the many new things developing in "dinosaur bird" research. Many good questions and answers followed the program. We hope for future special presentations from Dr. Horner with updates about "dino-chickens", holographic dinosaurs, and dinosaur coloration and behavior research, discoveries and speculations. Special thanks to the YVAS members and sponsors that supported the YVAS Birdathon and monthly membership meeting dinners that helped make this presentation possible.

Submitted with photo by Steve Regele



"Lifer is a big word for us. It sits alongside words like rarity, extinction, even love. Seeing a lifer is a special moment, an accomplishment, the end of a particular journey and the beginning of the next, a pause in time to wonder and celebrate the diversity and fecundity of life. It is a profound moment, but fleeting."

Excerpt from the book: The Rarest Bird in the World, The Search for the Nechisar Nightjar by Vernon R. L. Head.



Young **Black-headed Grosbeak** August 5, 2017 *photos by Will Crain* in his backyard. The one above fluffing his tail after taking a bath in the water feature Will has available.

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 October. 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 the Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins at membership.data@yvaudubon.org with any questions.

OCTOBER Renewals: Helen & Peter Cummins, Jerry & Lois Dalton, W. A. Demeyer, Rita Harding, Robert E. Hill, Robin Manfredi, Marcia L. Regele, Pat & Teresa Sweeney, and Ruth Vanderhorst.



Little Help!

The Board of Directors is looking for a volunteer to advertise Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society monthly and special events. This would take a couple hours each month and would include distributing YVAS announcements to local media outlets. If you are interested in doing this please contact Steve Regele at 406-962-3115 or at smregele@gmail.com



Now that the YVAS Program season is upon us it time to remember to bring your aluminum cans to Larry Handsaker via a meeting. Just give Larry a call and he will be sure to be at the meeting to collect the cans. It's easy to collect your cans when you know they will be recycled and the cash goes to a good cause: YVAS!

Larry also accepts donations to be left at his home: 918 Ave C, Billings. Or, Helen Carlson gladly accepts recycled aluminum cans at her home: 519 Highland Park Dr., Billings.

Larry is also willing to pick up cans from your home if you give him a call at 406-855-9832.

Please donate your aluminum cans today!

You might have noticed that this months Flyer is shortened by 2 pages. The reason for shortening is lack of contributions to the Flyer. We accept all submissions and will publish them where we see fit. That being said I don't remember a single contribution not making it into the Flyer at some point. Please submit any interesting piece of conservation, personal articles of interest, photographs or findings to yvasflyer@gmail.com Please remember to spell check all your submissions and check your bird names for correctness. All submissions are appreciated in a Word Document, Times New Roman, font size 11. Jpeg photos are easiest to copy into the Flyer. You can call Trenay Hart for questions: 860-1175.

There is still a need to fill some vacancies for hosting pre-Chapter meeting potlucks. The months of February, March and May are needed. The requirements are providing a main dish for approximately 25 persons and accepting RSVP's. If you are interested in hosting a potluck dinner please contact Sue Weinreis at 855-4181 or granpeak47@gmail.com. There are plenty of volunteers that help in the kitchen while you host!

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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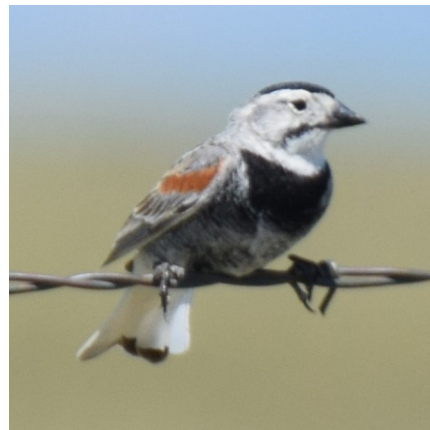
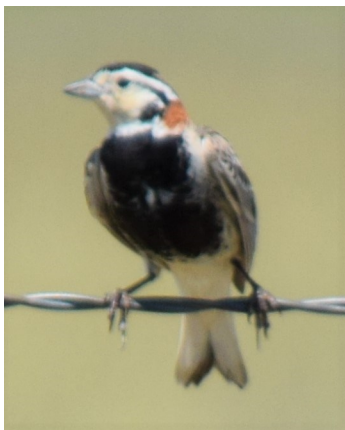
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Immature Bald Eagle. *Submitted by Robert Hill* captured in late June on his trip to Dillingham, Alaska on the Nushagak River.

YVAS Birds of the Month

Chestnut-collared Longspur (left) and McCown's Longspur (right)



This summer Will Crain had the luck to capture on film both these Longspur's in the grasslands just north and west of Billings near Lake Basin. He submitted these photographs to the Flyer having taken both bird's photos on June 4.

The Chestnut-collared Longspur prefers nesting on short-grass plains and prairies as far north as southern Alberta and Saskatchewan and winters in Mexico. Both birds have similar ranges.

The McCown's Longspur have similar habitat but can be identified by characteristic aerial displays they do to establish and maintain their territories, where male birds fly up and sing while floating down.

The elongated claw of the hind toe is the Longspur.

Submitted by Trenay Hart and adapted from All About Birds