

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 48, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 2018

October 15, 2018 Chapter Meeting 7PM

Billings City Parks

Steven McConnell will do a presentation about Billings City Parks. The parks offer open space, beautiful and important trees, shrubs and grass areas for human recreation and for wildlife including a wide variety of birds.

Steven is the City Forester and Natural Resources Supervisor with Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department. He will talk about these priceless aspects of City Parks, a new effort to incorporate planned "natural areas" into the City Park system and will discuss ideas to advance that effort on behalf of people and wildlife. Vegetation Types of proposed Natural Areas in Billings include "pocket" forests with an abundance of trees, areas with dense shrubs, grasslands, high plains sage and wildflower areas and riparian areas, all important to particular species of birds. Specific management plans are being drafted for each area (examples will be provided) and fauna and flora specific to these areas will be identified as part of our focus on citizen education.

The PRPL has a full-time Volunteer Coordinator who will be actively working to engage citizens, including the YVAS to help bring these areas into being and on an ecological trajectory that will increase their value to wildlife and people in the years to come. Come in on the discussion about parks, natural areas and how parks of all kinds fit into the Billings' quality of life. This is the first "informal" roll out of the Natural Area plans and there is no better time to make your input count than before the fledgling has left the nest.

Submitted by Steve Regele, photo courtesy of Steven McConnell.



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, October 8, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

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

The Board invites everyone for cookies and coffee at 6:30pm prior to the Chapter meeting. Please contact Sue Weinreis [the Friday prior to the Chapter meeting](#) if you like to contribute cookies or bars.



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☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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

YVAS Board of Directors Highlights September 14, 2018

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

- YVAS Board agreed to sponsor a family membership to the Montana Audubon Center (MAC).
- The Board approved Steve's recommendation that we lend our CD of the documentary *The Messenger* to the Miles City Outdoor Club.
- After 18 months of fruitless searching for someone to take over publicity for YVAS, Deb and Steve have agreed to provide information on the monthly meetings once a month to the Gazette.
- The Board of Directors will meet the second Monday of the month, August – May, from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at the fellowship room of the Mayflower Congregational Church. Members are welcome to attend.
- The Potluck dinners that have been held in conjunction with our monthly YVAS meeting have been suspended due to low attendance.
- The Board invites everyone to come to the monthly meetings a little early (6:30 p.m.) and enjoy coffee, cookies, and conversation with your fellow birders! Please call or text Sue Weinreis (406-855-4181) if you can bring cookies.

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
 Carolyn Jones: 670-4449, carolyn684@gmail.com
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Marco Restani: 425-2608, restani@stcloudstate.edu
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregele@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, 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
 Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 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
 Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 628-5058,
 dpadanyi@live.com
 Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com
 Publicity: contact any Board Member
 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, 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 Monday 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.

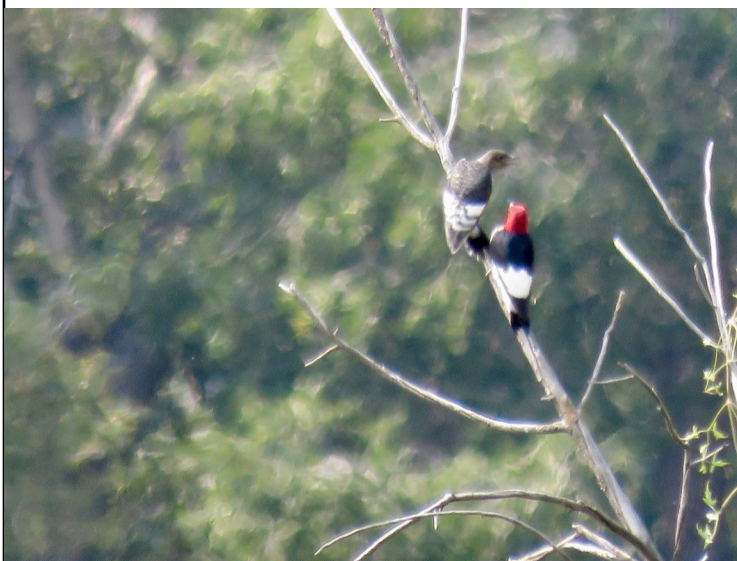
Wednesday, September 5 Riverfront Park*Submitted by Peter Cummins*

Twelve birdwatchers met up with Mike Weber for a walk around Riverfront Park. We had high hopes when we started with 4 Greater Yellowlegs by the lake and shortly after flying over us. Migrants were scarce, Mike reported only hearing 1 Common Yellowthroat chirp. Interest was shown with the sighting of some Spurge Hawk Moth caterpillars (thank you to George Mowat for the identification and photo on back page of this Flyer).

We cut through to the river which provided some Great Blue Herons, Spotted Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs. The Ring-billed Gulls included a single Herring Gull, which decided to make us work to identify. Some of the group, unfortunately, had to leave and the rest of us saw an Osprey fly up the river, followed by a Belted Kingfisher, Common Nighthawks were also observed. Roughly 2 dozen species were observed. Thank you Mike for a very enjoyable walk.

Saturday, September 8 Bridger Creek*Submitted with photos by Starr Stevens*

Twelve enthusiastic birders trekked out to Bridger Creek Road west of Reedpoint. Stan Heath was the trip leader. More than 40 species were sighted including Western Tanager, Evening Grosbeak, Wild Turkey, Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker and Clark's Nutcracker, were a few highlights. The creek was followed and then the route over the hill to Absarokee, MT.

**Saturday, September 15, Pryor Mountains***Submitted by Donn and Dorothy Bartlett*

We went to the Pryor Mountains for a fall birding trip. One group met at RMC and joined up with another group at the Bridger rest area. What started out as a cool, foggy morning soon turned into a beautiful, sunny day. There were four cars with nine participants led by Stan Heath and Ruth Vanderhorst.

One of the highlights of the trip was observing a couple of dozen immature Bobolinks diving in and out of a field of alfalfa. According to very good birders, there was not an adult among them.

Another surprise was a flock of about 50 American Pipits feeding before beginning or continuing their migration.

On the way back from Sage Creek Campground a Brown Thrasher was spotted, low in the bushes along the creek. He/she was not very cooperative, but about half the group got to see it.

In the sparrow group, we identified White-crowned, Vesper and Brewers Sparrows. We saw some immature Wood Ducks, also Mountain Bluebirds, Cassin's Finch and Townsend Solitaires. Overhead there were spectacular Red-tailed Hawks and a Peregrine Falcon.

I'm sure there were more birds, lots of visiting at each stop and a pleasant lunch at the campground. **Townsend's Solitaire** photo by Kathy Williams and a life bird for her that day!



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

11/10/2018 Sat Yellowtail Dam Afterbay

Brian Henderson, leader. Sack Lunch.

12/15/2018 Sat Christmas Bird Count

Jim Court, leader.

01/01/2019 Tues New Year's Day Annual Trip to Yellowtail Dam Afterbay Brian Henderson, leader.

January TBD Annual Eagle Midwinter Survey. Yellowstone River Billings to Columbus

Brian Henderson, leader. Sack Lunch.



An Evening with Sneed Collard: Friday October 19th at 6:30pm

Join The Montana Audubon Center and This House of Books for a presentation and book signing featuring Sneed Collard, Missoula-based author of more than 75 books for both children and adults. In his latest book, *Warblers & Woodpeckers: A Father-Son Big Year of Birding*, the author and his son Braden set out to establish their own personal Big Year bird species count.

Sneed shares the excitement, challenges, perils and insights that come with crisscrossing the country in search of some of Earth's most remarkable creatures. Come meet the author and hear about this remarkable journey from the killer bee infested border region of southeast Arizona to the sultry islands of the Galapagos.

This House of Books, Billings' member-owned bookstore, will have Sneed Collard's books available for purchase at the event, which will be held at the Montana Audubon Center (7026 S. Billings Blvd.)

Family-friendly and free for all!

CONSERVATION NEWS

MOWATS HONORED AT CHAPTER MEETING

It was a highlight of the evening when YVAS President Steve Regele presented the Meritorious Service Award from the National Audubon Society to George and Bernie Mowat at the Chapter meeting on September 17. For more than 40 years, George and Bernie Mowat have personified the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society's mission "to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat".

George originally traveled to Montana from Hawaii, leaving his surfboard, but not the birds behind. He met his match, the lovely Bernie, and together they have been leaders in the environmental community, volunteering their skills with all. They have served YVAS as Officers, Board members, Field Trip Chairmen, contributors to Chapter Programs, collaborators on monitoring Osprey nests along the Yellowstone River, monitors of Bluebird nesting habitat, as well as being an integral part of the Birding Classes program. Together, they have been the most recognized and welcoming hosts and educators, offering friendship and expertise to many hundreds of YVAS members and guests over the years. We are indeed proud and honored to celebrate them.

Submitted by Nancy Wiggins. Photo by Will Crain.



Baling Twine Needs to be Recycled

On September 24, 2018, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks posted the below photo and narrative on their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MontanaFWP.R5>).

“Two rag-horn bull elk got tangled in baling twine, then tangled with each other, then tangled with a juniper tree on a ranch north of Columbus over the weekend. The elk appeared to be on their way toward a sure and uncomfortable death from struggling to free themselves and a lack of water and food. Cutting them free was ruled out because of the danger to anyone approaching them. Tranquilizing them with drugs was ruled out for a number of logistical and veterinary reasons. So FWP game wardens acted quickly Monday to euthanize the animals. They were donated to the Veterans’ Meat Locker in Billings for processing and charitable distribution to needy veterans.”

While YVAS continues to raise funds for the Baling Twine Collection site for recycling, twine continues to wreak havoc on all wildlife. Please see <http://yvaudubon.org/osprey-monitor-project/> for details. Be sure to check out the link for GoFundMe. -*Deb Regele*



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 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.

SEPTEMBER remaining renewals: Bob Stichman, Nic Vermeulen, Lisa & Mikaela Bessasparis, Judy Rich.

OCTOBER renewals: Helen & Peter Cummins, Mary Davis, Robert E. Hill, Robin Manfredi, and Ruth Vanderhorst.

EDITOR CORRECTION: Will Crain corrected the identification of the toad from the September Flyer as the Great Plains Toad, not a Prairie Toad.



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

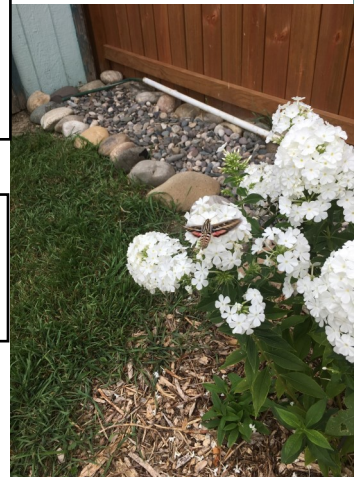
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Spurge Hawk Moth caterpillar, *photo by George Mowat* seen at Riverfront Park during Sept. 5 field trip.

Sphinx Moth, at right, *photo by Joan McKeown*. In her backyard near Joliet, MT this past week.



YVAS Bird of the Month

Cedar Waxwing

This silky, shiny collection of brown, gray and lemon-yellow bird with its rakish black mask and brilliant-red wax droplets on the wing feathers excites birders of all levels. Their high, thin whistles fill the air at all times of the year. Hundreds of them gather and eat berries. Dazzling birders, young and old, new and time tested.

Thank you, Starr Stevens YVAS member for capturing their brilliance during the Sept. 8 field trip to Bridger Creek!

Nesting behaviors are accomplished mostly by females. Twigs, grasses, and cattail down materials make up the bulky cap to harvest 2-6 eggs with 1-2 broods per year. 2,500 individual trips to the nest are made to make that productive nest. Believe it or not, Waxwings steal materials from Eastern Kingbirds nests to save time making their own nests!

