

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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NOV/DEC 2018

November 19, 2018 Chapter Meeting 7PM "A Behind the Scenes Look at ZooMontana"

You have probably visited ZooMontana but at the next YVAS Chapter Meeting, you have an opportunity for a special look into ZooMontana outside the normal daily routine. What does it take to keep the animals and ZooMontana healthy and vibrant? Spend the evening with ZooMontana's Executive Director Jeff Ewelt and enjoy his presentation about ZooMontana including some out-of-the-ordinary things. Of course there will be some emphasis on birds!

The meeting and presentation will be at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg. Cookies and coffee will be served at 6:30 PM and the program will start at 7:00 PM. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Kookaburra at ZooMontana



YVAS Christmas Program: DEC 17, 7PM. *Wild Yellowstone* with Bob Landis. Details page 7.

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, November 12, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, November 19, 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 Doings

October 8, 2018

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

- Nancy Wiggins reported that 2018 was not a good year for bluebirds. The boxes at Phipps Park yielded but one pair of bluebird fledglings, even though predator guards prevented loss of nestlings from bull snakes.
- Volunteers are needed to help maintain and monitor the bluebird boxes at Phipps Park next year.
- The Bird Trip Committee is planning to discontinue the spring lek trip and other trips that have not been well-attended the past couple of years. Instead, the focus will be on ½ day trips and walking trips that do not entail driving, such as birding at Pompey's Pillar, the Waterfowl Management Area, or one of the many "natural" city parks.
- YVAS has been awarded a grant from the Harry L. Willett Foundation for the Baling Twine Recycling Project. With this generous award, we will be able to go ahead with plans for a collection center for twine.
- Volunteers are needed to provide cookies for upcoming meetings. Please contact Sue Weinreis at granpeak47@gmail.com or call or text (406) 855-4181 if you can help out.

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

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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,

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dpadanyi@live.com

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

Publicity: contact any Board Member

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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.

There were no scheduled field trips to report in October. No reported importune trips. Next stop: Yellowtail Dam Afterbay! Saturday, November 10.

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.



CONSERVATION NEWS

YVAS and Bird Education Signs

Submitted by Steve Regele

An important aspect of the YVAS Mission and accomplishing it is education. The YVAS Board of Directors chose to further advance that aspect by creating and installing bird related information signs at appropriate locations. The first of these was installed in early 2016 at the Billings Public Works Shiloh Conservation Area. That sign was funded through a gift of Rose Sylling's estate and per her wishes to contribute to education about birds and conservation.

YVAS installed two more bird information signs at the Yellowstone River Parks Association's (YRPA) Dover Park on October 22. These signs came about as a collaborative effort between YVAS (thanks Ruth Vanderhorst, Carolyn Jones, Deb Regele, Steve Regele, Jim Wiggins, and Tom Holt!), Montana Audubon Center (thanks Emily Chilcoat and Carolyn Sevier!) and Yellowstone River Parks Association (thanks Darryl Wilson, John Spencer, Bob Mackin and Roger Williams!). The signs were financed by funds raised from the YVAS Birdathon (thanks again to Ruth Vanderhorst and all the Birdathoners!). Enjoy Dover Park and be sure to check out the new bird information signs.

Plans are in the works for more such signs to be installed on other City of Billings lands, YRPA parks, and elsewhere. Keep an eye to the YVAS Flyer and web site for information on future efforts. Thanks to all YVAS members and the YVAS Board of Directors for supporting this and all the other YVAS accomplishments!



YVAS' Twine Recycling Project Receives Grants!!*Submitted by Deb Regele*

YVAS' Twine Recycling Project has received a \$25,000 grant from the Harry L. Willett Foundation AND was awarded an \$8,000 Environmental Grant through Patagonia's Outlet Store in Dillon, Montana. In addition, the YVAS Go-FundMe account (<https://www.gofundme.com/ospreys-need-your-help>) has raised \$2,300. The Walmart Foundation (Sam's Club) also provided a \$250 Community Grant for the Twine Recycling Project.

The Twine Collection Site

These funds will enable YVAS to establish and open the Twine Collection Site in the spring or early summer of 2019. This includes a large shed to store collected twine and the equipment needed to prepare the twine for shipping. The 2-acre site is on MT State Trust Land (MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation) located a couple miles north of Laurel. When enough baled twine is collected, a semi-truck will transfer it to an out-of-state recycling facility. Additional donations and funds will be needed on an annual basis to cover the cost of insurance, land lease fees, maintenance, supplies and the rental of loading equipment.

Why Recycle Baling Twine?

Polypropylene twine is a non-renewable resource that should be recycled. It remains in the environment for many, many decades. However, users of baling twine in Montana have not had an environmentally safe method to dispose of twine other than burning, burying, hauling to dump sites, and/or leaving on the ground.

Ospreys, Wildlife, Livestock and Loose Twine Don't Mix

As most of you know, Ospreys are notorious for incorporating loose twine into their nests. Each year, Osprey nestlings and adults become entangled in twine and unless rescued quickly, they die. Twine and mesh entanglement are also a potentially deadly problem for other birds and wildlife such as deer, antelope and this year, elk (See Oct 2018 Flyer). Canada Geese have been known to eat twine. Domestic livestock ingest twine. Twine gets embedded in sheep's wool rendering it useless. It can also cause costly breakdowns for highway equipment and power outages and wildfires at utility poles as it dangles from Osprey nests.

Public Awareness

Since 2009, YVAS volunteers have been actively promoting public awareness to the dangers of loose, unwanted twine and the need to recycle through the use of brochures, articles in newspapers and magazines, presentations, tabling at farmers and gardeners markets and at Montana State University-Billings. In 2016, twenty-five YVAS volunteers worked the Twine Awareness Booth at the three-day Montana Agri-Trade Exposition (MATE) interacting and receiving positive feedback from the attendees.

How You Can Help

For more information on the Twine Recycling Project, please visit the YVAS website at: <http://yvaudubon.org/osprey-monitor-project/>. If you would like to volunteer but are not sure what is needed, contact Deb Regele at debregele@gmail.com. If you would like to donate, it can be done through GoFundMe at <https://www.gofundme.com/ospreys-need-your-help>. You can also mail a donation (but please specify Twine Recycling) to YVAS, PO Box 1075, Billings MT 59103. **YVAS is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.**

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD NESTING HABITAT PROJECT 2018*Submitted by James W. Wiggins*

When Curtis Phipps donated the Diamond X Ranch to the City of Billings, it had in place a number of established Mountain Bluebird nesting boxes. In 1993 George Mowat of YVAS took over maintenance and monitoring of the boxes. While a formal agreement with the City of Billings wasn't enacted until July, 2017, YVAS has undertaken activities to maintain the Bluebird nesting habitat in what has become known as Phipps Park for more than 20 years.

Construction and placement of the nesting boxes have been carried out in accordance with the guidelines published by Mountain Bluebird Trails and the North American Bluebird Society. Over the years boxes have been destroyed by vandals, weather and fire, and replaced and rebuilt by volunteers of YVAS. In 2017 I took over management of this project for YVAS. At that time there were 10 established boxes a fourth of which had successful fledging in recent years. I clean out all boxes and monitor them according to recognized guidelines, starting in early March when the bluebirds typically first appear. I regularly monitor each box approximately every 5 days, beginning in early March until July 15, for success and loss of fledglings. Part of the monitoring involves photographs with iPhone pictures of the nest, eggs and chicks. In 2018 we had 11 boxes, all of which were placed on poles with predator guards. Part of the monitoring involved photographs with iPhone pictures of the nest, eggs and chicks. The Bluebirds were first observed in Phipps Park on April 20, 2018 and nesting began April 24, which was delayed due to heavy snowpack and late run off in the area. Only four adult Bluebirds were observed in the area through spring and early summer. In contrast to 2017, no second broods occurred, but there was no predator loss, presumably due to the predator guards. Of the 11 boxes, two were occupied by Mountain Bluebirds with a total of 11 fledged birds. House Wrens occupied two boxes, with 7 eggs each – all fledged. Tree Swallows successfully nested in 4 boxes.

Because of the challenging terrain in Phipps Park, it is difficult to organize field trips for the public to the site. Between myself and another volunteer, a total of 140 hours of monitoring and maintenance were performed. In addition to that, I have spent approximately 40 hours rebuilding and replacing nesting boxes, removing them from all trees and placing them on predator guard designed posts, as recommended. I added the YVAS website on the guards to identify the boxes in the event that someone would need to contact us. Construction materials to replace boxes, posts and place predator guards were donated by me (materials cost approximately \$200).

Due to increased visitor activity in the park and the presence of a large disc golf course, it is unlikely that we could expand the number of boxes in Phipps Park in the near future. However YVAS is working with other volunteer groups in the city (Montana Audubon Center, Yellowstone River Parks Association in addition to the City of Billings, BLM, Wild Birds Unlimited, and private land owners) to expand Bluebird nesting habitat and perhaps that of additional birds in other areas where feasible. On September 17, 2018 a resource group comprised of the above groups convened at the Montana Audubon Center to hear presentations from Kathy Haigh of Wild Birds Unlimited and Tom Anderson of Mountain Bluebird Trails on the establishment and monitoring of Mountain Bluebird nesting habitat. The group will continue to meet to compare outcomes, exchange information, and offer support to organizations and individuals who are interested.

George and Bernie Mowat appreciate their **2018 National Audubon Society Meritorious Service Award** and YVAS recognition of service and friendship. *Submitted with photo by Steve Regele.*



Homemade Treats for Winter Bird Feeding*Submitted by Pam Pipal***Pine Cone Ornament**

Large pinecones
 Red ribbon
 1 cup lard
 1 cup peanut butter
 1 cup shelled seed
 ¼ cup raisins or chopped up dried apples

Directions: Tie one 12-inch length of ribbon around the pinecone to create a hanger. Mix all ingredients. Stuff the mixture between the scales of the pinecone. Hang on trees.

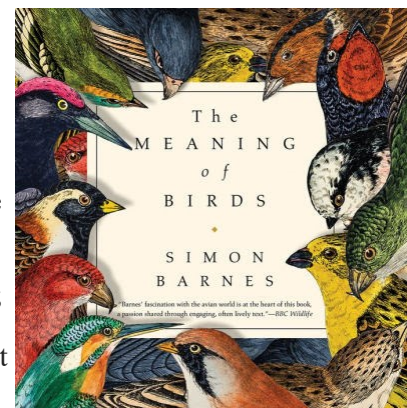
Suet Bags

Beef suet pieces (from a grocer or meat market)
 Mesh onion bag
 Red ribbon

Directions: Place suet pieces in the onion bag. Hang the bag on a tree with the red ribbon.

Suet Cubes

Melt **suet (lard)** in your microwave, and pour into an ice-cube tray to harden. Place in your freezer, but before the suet sets completely, add **peanut bits, raisins, apple bits, or other bird foods**. Return to freezer to harden. Place the hardened cubes where the birds can get at them.

The Meaning of Birds**Author: Simon Barnes***Submitted by Doreen Hartman*

I enjoyed reading this book. The book contains lots of interesting information. Here are snippets about peregrines.

The fastest bird in the world is the peregrine...They are birds that feed on other birds; and birds - since they can fly - are by definition a difficult target. Overcoming that difficulty is the peregrine's specialty, and speed is his solution...A peregrine's flat-out speed in straight and level flight is comparatively modest, around 40 mph (64 kph). Where they excel is in the stoop. This is the move in which they assume the shape of an anchor or the Greek letter *psi* and make a crash-dive at a target some way below. They have been measured at 186 mph (304 kph) in such circumstances, and greater speeds have been claimed: there is a record of 242 mph (390 kph). Slow-motion footage shows that the peregrine continues power-flapping in the stoop to build up yet more speed. Even at the extreme end of its dive it has control over direction. When they make successful contact with the target bird, the shock of the impact will usually kill it outright...Peregrines have a small projecting cone in front of their nostrils to break up the wall of still air, and that allows them to breathe. This leaves them with the problem of dealing with a 200-mph gale inside their own airways. They solve this by means of bony tubercles inside the nostrils that guide the shockwaves. Aircraft designers stole the idea...A further problem for the diving falcon is sight. The bird needs to see if it is to hit the target, and it also needs to look after its eyes in stressful circumstances. The answer is an extra eyelid, which opens and closes horizontally rather than vertically. It's called the nictating membrane and many different creatures have them. It's not necessarily an adaptation for speed, but that's its main function for falcons. A peregrine in a stoop blinks rapidly with its nictating membrane, and this clears the eyes of debris and keeps them moist in the fierce conditions of this headlong dive. A peregrine is built for speed and power and ferocity. As a result, it's been a symbol of male aggression throughout the ages. So best keep quiet about the females. Because they're the really fearsome ones. They're about a third larger than the males. Fascinating stuff – wasn't it?

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 NOVEMBER. 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.

NOVEMBER Renewals: Gordon Cox, Robert & Carolyn Jones, Carl & Virginia Kimmel, David Myers, Susan Weinreis.



HELP WANTED

New! The YVAS mission is “to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat”. Volunteers are essential for YVAS to succeed in that mission. We will publish monthly in the Flyer where volunteers are needed. Please consider helping out..

Publicity Chair Job Opening

Our YVAS Publicity Chair Volunteer Position is open! We are looking for an individual with great communication skills, is an extrovert, enjoys working with the community– and of course, is good at writing and presenting new ideas. Exciting changes and growth are in YVAS’ future– a dynamic and energetic individual is needed for a few hours each month to help us share our news and presentations. YVAS members interested in volunteering to fill this position are invited to speak to any Board member. Volunteer and make a difference!

Pre-Chapter Meeting Cookies

Volunteers are needed to provide cookies for upcoming meetings. Please contact Sue Weinreis at granpeak47@gmail.com or call or text (406) 855-4181 if you can help out.

Articles for the Flyer

Please submit anything you find related to birds or birding to the Flyer for publication. Please remember to put your submissions in a Word or Google Document, Times New Roman Font size 11. Trenay wants to edit not transcribe! Submit to: yvasflyer@gmail.com

Wild Yellowstone YVAS Christmas Celebration: World renowned videographer Bob Landis will wow you with scenes and scenarios of wildlife and life in the wilds of Yellowstone. Come enjoy an evening with Bob at his December 17, 2018 presentation hosted by Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society.

The presentation will be at Mayflower Congregational Church on the corner of Poly and Rehberg. It is free and open to the public but seating is limited. Doors open at 6:30 PM. The show will begin at 7:00 PM with questions, answers and discussion following. Keep an eye on the Billings Gazette, <http://yvaudubon.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/yvaudubon/> for reminders and further information. Don’t miss this opportunity to enjoy a special time with Bob Landis and some of his friends.



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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Steve Linder submitted this photo of the vandalized sign at Shiloh Conservation Area that YVAS paid to have installed.



Harpy Eagle, photos by Barry Zimmer.

YVAS Members, Trenay Hart and Robin Manfredi recently took a week long birding trip to the east side of Panama and had the opportunity to see this Harpy Eagle nesting. They waited 2 hours for the bird to stand up and be seen this well. It was worth the wait!