

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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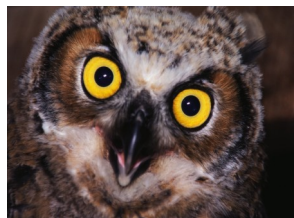
US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 7:15 THREATS TO THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

The greater sage-grouse is a large, rounded-winged, ground-dwelling bird, up to 30 inches long and two feet tall, weighing from two to seven pounds. It has a long, pointed tail with legs feathered to the base of the toes. Females are a mottled brown, black, and white. Males are larger and have a large white ruff around their neck and bright yellow air sacks on their breasts, which they inflate during their mating display. The birds are found at elevations ranging from 4,000 to over 9,000 feet and are highly dependent on sagebrush for cover and food. Currently, greater sage-grouse are found in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, eastern California, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming and the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and occupy approximately 56 percent of their historical range.

The primary threats to the sage-grouse across its range are: habitat loss and fragmentation (including wildfire); invasive plants; energy development; urbanization and agricultural conversion and grazing. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded that the greater sage-grouse warrants protection under the Endangered Species Act. However, the Service has determined that proposing the species for protection is precluded by the need to take action on other species facing more immediate and severe extinction threats.

Bruce Waage, a wildlife biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) who works on sage-grouse issues on private lands in Montana will address these issues with YVAS members. His position is co-funded by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of Bruce's professional career has been in private industry. He has worked for Western Energy Company, a subsidiary of Montana Power as scientific specialist, coordinating reclamation efforts for a large surface coal mine. He has also been employed with the state of Montana as a wildlife biologist in their regulatory division. He is a certified wildlife biologist through The Wildlife Society. He is past chairman of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council (PGTC) and hosted its biannual meeting in Billings, Montana.



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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, September 9, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 16, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the membership meeting. Dinner donation is \$6 per person and a side dish or dessert to share. Dorothy Bartlett has generously volunteered to host. Please contact her at 252-0757 or dpadanyi@live.com before September 13 to make reservations and tell her what side dish you will bring.



We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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**WELCOME
BACK**

YVAS Chapter meetings and presentations start in 'full swing' beginning the third Monday in September. Sheila McKay, YVAS Program Chair, has an always interesting, exciting, and educational suite of presentations in store for the membership again this year.

Over the break Bill DeMeyer decided not to continue on as YVAS President due to time constraints and other commitments. He will remain as a valued member of the Board and we appreciate his valuable leadership over the last two years. Vice-president Steve Regele was voted in as President. The Vice-Presidency is 'open'.

The YVAS Board of Directors has addressed a number of issues. Various committees, projects, and project leadership have been reviewed and revised in order to better carry out YVAS tasks. Members will have great opportunities to participate in these efforts.

There is a lot to look forward to and enjoy as we move into fall birding and other YVAS events. Keep an eye on the YVAS Flyer and web site, yvaudubon.org, and come to the monthly meetings for news and enjoyable times. If you would like to get more information about committee work or projects, contact the folks listed in your Flyer or on the web site under Officers or Committees and Special Assignments.



Chapter Dinners are held before the monthly membership meetings. They are a long tradition at YVAS and have provided extra funding for projects, as well as given the opportunity for members to gather and catch up with old friends. We would like to continue the dinners and are looking for someone to volunteer to organize them. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO COOK!** The host(s) would provide the main course, take reservations, and determine side dishes and desserts.

PLEASE contact a Board Member if you are interested in volunteering to do this.

Jeanette Tasey has volunteered to collect cans for recycle at the monthly meetings. Members are encouraged to bring their recycle to the meeting and deposit it in Jeanette's truck, which will be identified in the parking lot when you arrive. Helen Carlson is continuing to collect cans for recycle at her home, 519 Highland Park Dr., if that is more convenient for members.



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
Vice-President: open
Secretary: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
Treasurer: Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com
Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, battie@bresnan.net
 Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Jeanette Tasey: 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Max Baucus: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 website: <http://baucus.senate.gov>

email: max@baucus.senate.gov

Billings: 657-6790 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-332-6160

Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510

website: <http://tester.senate.gov>

email: senator@tester.senate.gov

Billings: 252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 1-866-554-4403

Rep. Steve Daines: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515

website: www.rdianes.house.gov

email: steve.daines@mail.house.gov

Wash, DC: 202-225-3211

Committees and Special Assignments:

Audubon Adventures.....Jeannette Davis, 656-7618

Birdathon..Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, acrv@bresnan.net

Bird Questions..... George Mowat, 656-7467 or

Helen Carlson, 248-8684

Christmas Bird Count.....open

Conservation Chair...Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com

Editor.....Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Field Trip Chairs... George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467,

gmowat@bresnan.net

Grant Committee...Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com

Hospitality: Phyllis Holt 252-7373, Audrey Jurovich 656-2748

Injured Raptors...Jeanette Tasey 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com

Membership Secretary.....Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,

cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com

Osprey Project..Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com

Publicity...Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com

Program Chair...Shelia McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com

Recycling (aluminum)...Larry Handsaker, 406-855-9832

Website.... Tom Lyman, Tomglyman@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 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to the entire membership.
- General Chapter Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.



Osprey chick exercising
Photo by George Mowat

YVAS OSPREY PROJECT UPDATE

As of mid August, the last osprey chick had fledged. This completes the fourth year that YVAS volunteers have monitored osprey nests. This is the second year that YVAS has worked with and supported the Yellowstone River Research Center (YRRC) at Rocky Mountain College which is also in its second year. Approximately twenty YVAS volunteers and four Paradise Valley volunteers monitored seventy known nests between Gardiner and Miles City. However, many of these nests were used by geese, not used at all, or the osprey pair was simply too young to succeed at laying eggs.

This year an email program called Listserv was set up through Rocky by Renee Seacor, the YRRC/YVAS intern. Not only were monitors able to quickly and easily update everyone on what they were observing, but they were able to stay updated on activity observed at other nesting sites too. There was even a little friendly rivalry to see who would become the first "adoptive grandparent"! All in all, Listserv proved to be a very informative and valuable addition to our summer of monitoring. Dr. Marco Restrani and Prof. Kayhan Ostovar provided information and answered all ques-

tions.

The final statistics and osprey data won't be ready for a few months, but Dr. Restrani has already provided some of that information. There were 31 nests with chicks. 40 chicks were banded from 18 nests for an average of 2.2 young per nest. Last year 36 chicks were banded from 16 nests for an average of 2.3 young per nest. Blood samples were again collected from one chick in each nest.

Mother Nature seems to bring a different challenge each year. 2011 it was the oil spill in Laurel. 2012 chicks were getting tangled in bailing twine. 2013 had an early spring weather system south of Wyoming that delayed the return of many osprey. Then, in July strong winds blew at least 3 nests off their platforms/electrical poles including the 20 year old nest at the Laurel Outpost. YVAS and the YRRC group are working on the placement of nesting poles near power poles occupied by osprey nests to encourage them to nest in safer locations.

A big thank you goes out to all the private land owners, Beartooth Electric Cooperative, Montana-Dakota Utilities; the Big Timber, Columbus, and Livingston offices of NorthWestern Energy; Park Electric Cooperative; Western Sugar; Yellowstone Valley Tree Surgeons and bridge climber Brahms Zepeda for their help in making the banding and blood work possible.

And lastly, thank you so much to the volunteer monitors and to all who donated money for new nesting poles!

Thank you to Deb Regele.

From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology:

Grassland Birds Need the Farm Bill, Says *Washington Post* Op-Ed

"The birds are still singing to us, but they are doing so in greatly reduced numbers. They're telling us that we need to do more, not less...." That's how Cornell Lab director John Fitzpatrick and American Bird Conservancy president George Fenwick opened their call for more conservation funding in this year's Farm Bill, which is currently at risk of having such funding cut completely. Thanks to this year's landmark [State of the Birds](#) report, we know that the Farm Bill has been instrumental in aiding populations of grassland birds on private lands. "Conservation is not a luxury," they say. [Read the full op-ed.](#)



AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

Photo by George Mowat

AUG 10TH SHORE BIRDS FIELD TRIP

We would not have expected a Sprague's Pipit to be the bird of the day on this field trip, but it was! Some new faces along with the regular field trip patrons gathered at Rocky Mountain College at 8AM to see which birds were flying south and gracing southeastern Montana on their way. The entourage of birders amounted to 6 carloads of binocular-ready passengers, seeking the best places to see shore birds, considering our lack of large surface water areas.

Leader Mike Weber set the plan, and being safety conscious, led us north to Broadview Ponds. Roadside ponds along the way yielded a good day's worth of birding at the first stop. Our list included Ruddy Ducks, Redhead Ducks, Semipalmated Plovers, American Avocets and Black Terns.

The Broadview Ponds could not be out done, with the obligatory American White Pelicans visible in the distance and Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpiper, Great Blue Herons, Red and Wilson's Phalaropes on the shore. It was a gorgeous day, not too hot, with ever so slight a breeze and great cloud cover. It seems the wrens had departed early for those who know where they reside round the pond.



Our next destination was west towards the old farm house with a Huge Tree next to the road with a pond and marsh adjacent. While a few small groves of much smaller trees lay across the abandoned driveway from the Huge Tree, there was plenty of wide open space for the Western Wood-Pewee who had a nest with 3 young hungry Pewees in it.

I've come to this spot many times and always get something exciting to photo but not this time; however, while part of the party was led to where Stan predicted an owl would appear when he knocked on the door it did, no kidding, I was picking up a nice piece of worked obsidian while walking to this Great Horned Owl sighting. There's usually so much bird activity around the huge tree I neglect to check out the abandoned house. Thank you to Will Crain

American Bird Conservancy reports:



As many as one billion birds die from collisions with buildings each year. But there's good news: Local governments, architects, and developers are increasingly adopting bird-friendly building design methods as a result of ABC and partner efforts. The state of Minnesota and the city of Oakland, California, are the latest places to approve these bird-saving design requirements. Visit www.abcbirds.org.

Events at the Audubon Conservation Education Center

Fall 2013

7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101 406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org



Sept 7 EVENING UNDER THE BIG SKY, a fundraiser for the Audubon Center with music by Ed Kemmick and Friends. Featuring fine dining, and silent and live auctions. Begins at 6 PM. Tickets \$50 each or \$350 for a table of 8. Call 294 – 5099 to reserve your tickets today.

Sept 13 NATURE NIGHT from 6 – 8 PM for 5 – 10 year olds. Cost is \$15/child or \$12/Friends of the Center. Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Visit www.mtacec.org to register.

Sept 15 WEEKEND WONDERS FAMILY PROGRAM, 1:30 – 3 PM. Open to all ages! Fee is \$2/person or Free for Friends of the Center. Theme this month is canoeing. Learn how to navigate a canoe in our ponds as you search for signs of turtles, muskrats, and frogs. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

Sept 23 AUDUBON ADVENTURES IN NATURE AFTERSCHOOL classes begin this week! Eight-week series of classes for \$65. Programs on Mondays or Wednesday afternoons from 4 – 5:30 for K – 6th grade students. More info on our website: www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

Sept 23 HANDS-ON HOMESCHOOL SCIENCE CLASS 12:30 – 2 PM. Lessons geared to 6 – 12 year olds, \$10/child. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

Sept 23 WEEKLY PRESCHOOL classes start today: Nature Nuts for kids 2 – 5 years old with a parent (9 – 10 AM) and Fledglings preschool for youth one year before kindergarten (10:30 – 11:30 AM). Session runs 8 weeks. Fee is \$45. Visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099 to register.

Sept 24 MONTANA MASTER NATURALIST class 6:30 – 8:30 PM. A workshop for adults who want to deepen their knowledge of the natural world. Cost is \$250/person for 40 hours of instruction (8 weekly meetings and 3 Saturday field trips). Visit www.mtacec.org or call 294.

SEPT 6 – 9, 2013 STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO

Located in Northwest Colorado in Steamboat Springs and Hayden. September is the perfect time to visit this area with beautiful fall weather and hundreds of Greater Sandhill Cranes staging in the Yampa Valley before migrating south. Four days of free events including daily crane viewings, nature and bird walks, expert speakers, films, a month-long art show, workshops, children's and family activities, and more. Keynote Speaker: Michael Forsberg, prestigious wildlife photographer and author of *ON ANCIENT WINGS: THE SANDHILL CRANES OF NORTH AMERICA*. Contact 970-846-5556, coloradocranes@gmail.com. For lodging reservations, contact 877-754-2269. For festival schedule and more information [visit website](#).

October 4-5

Bridger Raptor Festival: a migration celebration is an annual event held in and around Bozeman, Montana. The festival, which is free to the public, centers around this amazing raptor migration count. Other activities include wildlife films, nature walks and talks, and educational programs for people of all ages. Montana Audubon's Steve Hoffman will be the keynote speaker.

It's the 23rd consecutive season of raptor migration monitoring along the Bridger Mountains. Fall raptor migration is monitored 15 miles NE of Bozeman, which is the most important Golden Eagle population monitoring site in the Western US. Montana Audubon began the project, in collaboration with [HawkWatch International](#), in 2009. The long-term data collected enables scientists to learn more about raptor migration patterns as well as regional and continental population trends. The Bridger project is also designed to monitor widespread environmental changes, using these apex predators as valuable barometers of ecological health. For more information, visit Bridgerraptorfest.org.



NESTING MATERIALS

CASCADES RAPTOR CENTER

Let's get birds into the press in a really big way. Cascades Raptor Center in Eugene, Oregon, is competing for a spot in next year's Super Bowl commercial line up. Consider voting for them and see wildlife rehabilitation front and center at one of the United States most watched hours of commercials (yep, we are a bit weird here in the US!). For more information, contact www.eraptors.org

Don't miss: upcoming PBS SERIES EARTHFLIGHT

What would it be like to see the world from a bird's perspective? To experience riding on the backs of bald eagles and snow geese or flying alongside a flock of brown pelicans as they scan and dive for fish in the ocean below? State-of-the-art technology and sophisticated camera techniques have now made it possible to do just that and more as **EARTHFLIGHT, A Nature Special Presentation** takes viewers on a breathtaking aerial adventure over six continents.

It took **EARTHFLIGHT** series producer John Downer and his team four years to film more than 100 bird species in 40 different countries. Using strategically placed cameras, including tiny HD cameras placed on the backs of trained birds, this six-part series captures amazing viewpoints that have never been seen before.

Episode One: **North America** (airs Wednesday, September 4 at 8 p.m.)

Snow geese, pelicans, and bald eagles fly over the Great Plains, the Grand Canyon, Alaska, New York City and the Golden Gate Bridge as they encounter and engage with bears, dolphins, bison, and spawning fish.

Episode Two: **Africa** (airs Wednesday, September 11 at 8 p.m.)

Fly and arrow-dive with cape gannets among sharks, dolphins, whales and the great sardine run. Soar with fish eagles, flamingos, kelp gulls and vultures to see the most animal-packed continent with fresh eyes.

Episode Three: **Europe** (airs Wednesday, September 18 at 8 p.m.)

Cranes and geese rise over Venice, Dover, Edinburgh and the monkey-guarded Rock of Gibraltar. In Rome, the Loire Valley, Holland and Hungary, birds gather by the millions to breed and two by two to raise their families.

Episode Four: **South America** (airs Wednesday, September 25 at 8 p.m.)

Condors and scarlet macaws take us to the Andes and the Amazon. Giant petrels in Patagonia shadow killer whales. Hummingbirds feed at Iguazu Falls, vultures ride the thermals over Rio de Janeiro, and black vultures target turtle eggs in Costa Rica.

Episode Five: **Asia and Australia** (airs Wednesday, October 2 at 8 p.m.)

Japanese cranes dance in the snow, swallows and swifts visit the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, lorikeets, cockatoos and budgies form giant flocks in Australia, pigeons guide us through India, and geese fly miles above the Himalayas.

Episode Six: **Flying High** (airs Wednesday, October 9 at 8 p.m.)

A behind-the-scenes look at how **EARTHFLIGHT** was made, including the extraordinary relationships between people and birds. Microlights, paragliders, drones, and camera-carrying birds and much more helped along the way.

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. 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
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
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 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
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075



WHOOPS!!

Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or renew your chapter membership?

PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR FLYER. IF IT SHOWS "YVAS JAN 12" BELOW YOUR NAME, THEN YOU ARE A SUPPORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A SUPPORTING MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$20, USING THE FORM ON THE RIGHT. YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS FUND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FLYER ALONG WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR CHAPTER.

Membership Information

Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encourage you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for \$20 a year. Use the application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.

1. **Moving???** Let us know as early as possible when you plan to move. The Post Office does charge us a fee for returned flyers. Include your old address as well as your new address so we can track you. You may write, call, or email the information to the Membership Secretary.
2. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society offers Supporting Chapter student memberships for a reduced rate of \$10 a year. If you applying for a new student membership or are renewing a student membership, make sure you indicate your academic affiliation in your application. Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary



YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON FLYER

P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
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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.

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

Sept 5	Thur	MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK at 5 p.m. S Billings Blvd, 1st parking area on right.	Fall Migrants. Mike Weber, leader.
Sept 28	Sat	MEETEETSE SPIRES HAWK WATCH. 8 a.m.	Sack lunch. Jerry Dalton, leader.
Oct 5	Sat	STILLWATER AND COONEY DAM 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. Deb and Steve Regele, leaders.
Nov 9	Sat	YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.
Dec 14	Sat	ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	More details will be in the Nov. FLYER.

