



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.

VOLUME 46, NUMBER 3

MARCH 2016

News from our 2015 YVAS Conservation Grant Recipients

March 21, 2016 Meeting Presentation Summary, 7PM

Jay Sumner and Trinity Pierce were recipients of 2015 YVAS Conservation Grants. Jay Sumner is Executive Director of the Montana Peregrine Institute and Trinity Pierce is the Land Stewardship Coordinator for the Montana Audubon Center. They will present an overview of the important work they do at their respective institutions as well as the results of their efforts with respect to the YVAS Conservation Grant.

Jay will discuss findings of his 2015 field work, his sixteenth year of intensive Peregrine Falcon population studies. The Institute has been in charge of surveying and monitoring Peregrine population populations in collaboration with the MFWP, US Forest Service, USFWS, BLM and all the tribal reservations located in Montana. These studies provide baseline population and reproductive data about the Peregrine Falcon since the species delisting in 1999.

Trinity will showcase her “*Living Fences of Urban Shrubbery*” project. She will discuss how the planting of certain shrubs provide protective corridors, foraging and nesting locations for many of our native bird species. This project affords people the opportunity to become restorers in their own yards, creating links in a crucial urban habitat corridor.



MT Peregrine Falcon, at left, **Montana Audubon Center**, at right from their respective web-sites. *Submitted by Steve Regele*



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

Monday, March 21, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Nancy Traeger generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact her at 406-252-5236 before Friday, March 18 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

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

HELP!!! HOSTS ARE NEEDED FOR THE APRIL 18th AND MAY 16th POTLUCKS! Contact Sue Weinreis at 406-855-4181 or e-mail granpeak47@gmail.com if you are willing to host one of the potlucks. Volunteers help with the setup, serving, and cleanup, so all you have to do is provide the main dish for 2 dozen people.



Come join us for Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by Five Valleys Audubon in cooperation with Bitterroot Audubon, June 3-5, 2016, at the Holiday Inn Downtown in Missoula.

See Montana Audubon website for more information: www.mtaudubon.org

Jim Court reported the Roundup, MT Christmas Bird Count results from December 2015. The total number of species was 44 with the most abundant bird being the European Starling. Rose and Marc Blum reported seeing the most number of species for the day, 27. They observed both Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings. Jim would like to thank all those who participated in the Roundup CBC and encourage more to get involved next year.

Free SHOWING open to the public. **THE MESSENGER**, Sunday, March 6, 3PM at MSU-B Petro Hall Theater. Be transfixed by this new documentary. Doors open at 2:30PM, seating is limited, no reservations.

Please join Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society for a free, exclusive one-time showing of The Messenger.



The results of the YVAS Christmas Bird Count for 2013, 2014, and 2015 can be found on the YVAS website yvaudubon.org. From the Home Page go to Birding and select Christmas Bird Count. Scroll down if necessary to find the links for the years 1973 through 2015.

Submitted by Deb Regele

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

AREA CODE 406

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com

Vice-President: OPEN

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

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

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
 Steve Linder: 380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com
 Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Steve Daines: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
 website: daines.senate.gov

email: senator@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. Ryan Zinke:

website: zinke.house.gov

email 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

Baling Twine Project: Lisa Bessasparis, ospreybtc@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, sregele@juno.com

Data Base Administrator: Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,

C: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com

Facebook: Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@gmail.com

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

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com

Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, 406-585-1211; Raptor Transport Jeanette Tasey 669-3169,
jtasey@gmail.com

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

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

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

Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com,

Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, 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 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 were no official Field Trips guided by YVAS in February this year, perhaps next year we can recruit the Avian Rangers (Mike Weber, Will Crain, Robert Hill and Brian Henderson) to lead a trip as they reported an excellent day of birding around the Bluewater Fish Hatchery February 21. Evening Grosbeak and Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were some highlights.
Photo below of Gray-crowned Rosy Finches by Will Crain



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

March 19	Sat	DUCK DAY: LEARN YOUR WATERFOWL AT WJH. 8am to noon.	Meet at Rocky Mountain College at 8am for guidance to WJH (2753 S 56 th St. W) or at WJH between 8AM and 8:30AM. Sheila McKay and George Mowat, leaders.
April 9	Sat	EXXON PONDS AND EMERALD HILLS. 8am to 3pm.	Sack lunch; ONE MILE WALK , Ron Kuhler and George Mowat leaders.



7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT 59101

www.mtaudubon.org



- Every Sunday, 2-4 PM—**OPEN HOUSE.**
- (Tuesday’s) March 8 through April 26, 9-10AM —**Nature Nuts** an adult & preschooler program.
- (Tuesday’s) March 8 through April 26, 11-12:30AM or 1-2:30PM—**Hands-on Homeschool Science Program.**
- March 12, 6-8PM—**Nighthawk Adventures**, family program, theme: Montana’s Changing Seasons.
- March 18, 6-9PM—**Nature Nights**, program for kids.
- March 25, 8:30-4:30PM—**Break Camp**
- March 28, 8:30-4:30PM—**Break Camp**

For more information: www.mtaudubon.org/education or call 294-5099

Duck Day at WJH Bird Resources YVAS and WJH will host an open house featuring waterfowl education.

Saturday March 19, 2016 at 2753 South 56th Street West, Billings Mt. 652-7175 Meet at Rocky Mountain College parking lot at 8am on Rimrock Road adjacent to Billings Studio Theater to carpool, and follow a leader to WJH, or come to directly to WJH.

Structured activities start at 8:30a .m and 10:00a.m. preschool activity at 10:30am. Please wear closed toe shoes and clothes that can get dirty or wet. All ages are welcome. This is a fun outing for bird loving families.

There will be children's photo and bird feeder contests. See below for more information.



Duck Day Contests YVAS and WJH Bird Resources will cosponsor three contests on Duck Day.

Contest 1. Bird identification -Judged by George Mowat

This activity will be a bird photograph/picture identification contest. We will have a number of bird photographs. The person entering will submit a list of what birds are in the photo without referring to a bird guide. One entry per person allowed. There will be an adult and a student category.

Contest 2. Bird photography-Judged by Will Crain

This activity is a bird photograph contest with three parts and one award for each category. The bird must be named by species; a common name is fine. If there is more than one bird in the picture you can name them all or one main bird e.g. Mallard drake with friends. A few words about the picture or the bird are optional.

Category 1. The subject of this photograph is any pet bird or a bird that lives in an enclosure at a zoo, a WJH bird, a commercial game farm bird, canary, birds in a rehabilitation facility, Fuddrucker ducks, or backyard domestics/mallard/chicken.

Category 2. Birds that you have photographed at a bird feeder or lured into a set of decoys.

Category 3. Wild Birds. This is a bird in its natural habitat.

Rules: Contestants must be from age 2 to 18. All photos must show a live bird or live birds. The photo should be taken after January 1,2015. Submit your photo digitally to williamcrain@earthlink.net or wjhbird@yahoo.com by Thursday March 17 noon-with your name and age, or print your photo on an 8x10 piece of paper and bring it to WJH before 4pm on Thursday or Friday.

Contest 3. The Bird Feeder Contest. Judged by Bernie Mowat. Entries will consist of bird feeders. They will be judged on creativity and crafting skill. Submit your feeder with your name and age by 9a.m. on Saturday, March 18. Anyone who built their feeder gets two votes- all others get one vote.

Property of the contestant:

All feeders or photographs will be returned to its owner around noon on Duck Day after the prizes are announced. Photos are considered the property of the contestant. With the owner's permission and credit given to the photographer, YVAS would like to post the winning wild bird or feeder photograph or photographs on their website. WJH could/would put the cute pet bird on its Facebook page, however permission to post will not affect your chance of winning a prize. *Duck Day information and photo submitted by Sheila McKay. Come to Duck Day to learn the duck species in the photo.*

YVAS Bird Trip Data Recording and Management Session with Steve Regele, Marco Restani, Dan Casey, and Brian Henderson. Learn how to submit birding data to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and eBird.

Thursday, March 10, 2016 from 5-8:30PM at the Billings Public Library computer training/meeting room, 2nd floor. RSVP Steve Regele, 962-3115 or sregele@junco.com if you would like to attend as space is extremely limited.

2016 Osprey Orientation Meeting and Program If you are interested in monitoring Osprey nests with Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, now is the time to sign up. Nest monitors are needed all along the Yellowstone River - as far east as Miles City.

The 2016 YVAS Osprey Orientation Meeting will be Monday, April 4, 2016, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. It will be held at the Billings Public Library in the Community Room on the first floor. It is requested that all returning Osprey nest monitors attend and is required for all new nest monitors.

Dr. Marco Restani will be discussing Osprey behavior, natural history and biology. The recording of Osprey data will also be reviewed along with answers to your questions. This program is free and everyone is invited, even if you are not monitoring an Osprey nest. Reservations are needed.

Contact Deb Regele at debregele@gmail.com or 406-962-3115 to reserve your chair or if you are interested in being a nest monitor or if you have any questions.

Submitted by Deb Regele

Birdathon Time Competitive birding to raise funds for YVAS programs will be coming on May 28-29. It is time now for teams to begin forming and preparing for the 24 hours of intensive birding.

Teams must have two or more birders and complete the application form that will be available, along with other forms and rules on the YVAS website yvadubon.org and in the April Flyer.

Last year, seven teams brought in over \$2000 as they identified over 140 bird species and had a good time. Start planning now! If you have any questions contact Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118.

Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is planning some exciting field work for this summer. Spring is coming and our avian friends are starting to trickle back to the neighborhood! Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will have multiple opportunities to help us learn more about several species this summer. Many of you are familiar with the North American Breeding Bird Survey initiated in 1966 to track the status and trends of North American bird populations. The survey continues to provide a valuable long-term look at avian trends on a large scale. There are several vacant routes that require just one day a year to run and we need expert birders to help! I am currently aware of two routes in our neck of the woods that could use dedicated observers. The first is about 15 miles east of Melville, MT (lat-46.1032917, long-109.6664819) and the second is near St. Xavier, MT south of Hardin (lat-45.4319207, long-107.7207419). Observers must have great birding skills and plan on taking the route on for more than one year. If you would like more information contact Megan O'Reilly (moreilly@mt.gov, 406-247-2966) or visit the BBS website at <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/index.cfm>

Perhaps you have come across Black Rosy-Finches at your backyard feeder over the winter or feeding on the edge of snowfields high in the Beartooths in the summer months. Little is known about the distribution of this species in Montana. During the breeding season they nest in cliffy, alpine areas making them hard to observe. We have not yet put forth efforts to focus specifically on this alpine species. This summer we are planning to take single or multi-day backpacking trips in the Beartooths and numerous mountain ranges in southwest Montana to look for this species. We will likely be following trails and ridges looking for Black Rosy-Finches feeding on and around snowfields. We will need volunteers to help us in this endeavor. We are currently working out the details, but if you are interested in finding out more as we develop our plan email Megan O'Reilly at moreilly@mt.gov or call her at 406-247-2966.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is interested in increasing our Golden Eagle survey efforts and plans to add some survey flights this spring/summer to try to locate additional territories and check up on some historic territories. We know there are likely some we will miss. If you know of a Golden Eagle nest and are willing to monitor it with any level of effort from once during a season or up to fledging we would love to hear about it and share these data with the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Please send nest location and other details to Megan at moreilly@mt.gov or call her at 406-247-2966.

Submitted by Megan O'Reilly



Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

Please nominate a deserving person for Montana Audubon's annual awards! This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award. To nominate your candidate, visit our website at <mtaudubon.org/about/award/>. To be considered for this year's award, nominations must be submitted no later than **May 19, 2016**. Nominations can be submitted by email (jellis@mtaudubon.org) or mailed to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or <jellis@mtaudubon.org>

Miles City Eagle Cam A Miles City/ROCKS eagle nest camera became an active internet web site in the spring of 2014. The camera has allowed real time viewing of an active Bald Eagle nest located on the west edge of Miles City Montana. The nest and camera are located on property managed by the Miles City ROCKS (Raising Our Community Kids Safely) Program. The Bald Eagles at this nest have successfully raised young each year since the camera went live as well as for a number of years prior to the installation of the camera.

Together with a number of other entities YVAS was able to support the start up the Bald Eagle nest camera at the ROCKS Program website.

The website is visited for recreational and educational purposes by many Montana viewers as well as by viewers from around the USA and some folks outside the US.

ROCKS had to temporarily disconnect the camera to conduct routine ROCKS business. It will remain down for an undetermined time, but hope is to have it up and active in time for arrival of the Bald Eagles.

The ROCKS Program and Technologies Plus (Miles City Company that installed the camera), as well as the Miles City community are evaluating some new approaches to keep this very popular and valuable website alive. YVAS has offered to assist in that effort if requested and as possible.

Keep an eye on <http://53431558b81c6.click2stream.com/> and on yvaudubon.org and our Facebook page for updates about this camera and the Bald Eagle nest viewing opportunity!

Submitted by Steve Re-

THE CREATIVE CORNER

MY BIRD HOUSE EATING RULES:

Identification Card Rules: Chickadees never need to have an identification card to eat because they look exactly like pictures in my bird books. Any bird that really looks like the pictures in my bird books, does not need to have an identification card to eat. All little brown birds that look alike and little gray birds that look alike are required to show identity cards before eating. All birds that do not look like pictures in my bird books are required to have identification cards for eating. Birds that failed to get their pictures in my bird books must show identification cards to get to eat.

Eating Order Rules: Any rarely seen bird that rarely comes gets to eat first. Chickadees eat second being the most loyal birds to come. Little brown birds eat third because they will eat cornmeal. Little gray birds eat fourth because they're not that loyal to come.

Other Eating Rules: Birds must eat all the time because I do not think the birds otherwise eat all 25 pounds of bird food I purchased for birds. Due to safety considerations, only one bird should eat at a time. I can't have birds falling out of my bird feeder. Birds need to find a stray dog to live with us. This might be needed because my neighbor's cat might not be as stupid as it looks. *By David Omen, Member*



Cooper's Hawk above photo by Will Crain captured in his bird sanctuary in Billings this February.

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”

Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson quote submitted by Jim Sells.

White-breasted Nuthatch below photographed by Nick Wells in his Roundup backyard.



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 2016. 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 Administrator Joel M. Bowers at 406-534-3672 or jmba@jmba.com, with any questions.



MARCH 2016 Renewals:

William Crain, Sandra Teller, Jim & Peggy Good, Carole Baumann, Lois Gorseth, Pat & Scott Vandell, Adrienne Baker, Shirley McDonald, Linda Wham, Barbara & Noel Minder, John Scheuering, Garry Bunke, and Joan Eddy.



Baling Twine Committee Wishes to thank all the volunteers who helped at the informational booth they offered at the MATE show in February. Lisa Bessasparis wants to forward a special thanks to her mother, Janet Bessasparis, for donating her crafts and all the proceeds from the sales to the Osprey Rescue Fund. Her donation added up to be nearly \$400.

There seems to have been a significant amount of information put forth by various people about gathering and recycling twine. The NILE office (which owns the MATE show) will have attendance figures available later.

The Red-tailed Hawk picture, donated by Jean Boone, was won by Mikaela Bessasparis. The quilt, donated by Mary Mullen, was won by Ashley Ray of Laurel. *Submitted by BTC w/photo*

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 (electronically), 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
 P.O. Box 1075
 Billings, MT 59103-1075

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**

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Northern Flicker eating shelled peanuts *photo by John Haigh in his yard in Blue Creek.*

Northern Saw-whet Owl *photographed by Amy Seaman* of Montana Audubon. She captured this photo while on the CBC in Dec. near Helena. She states this was the 2nd year in a row that she saw the cuties!



YVAS Bird of the Month

Evening Grosbeak



This heavysset winter visitor of the finch family adds a splash of color to bird feeders. Will Crain offers a perfect example of that in the photo he submitted from a recent birding trip near Bluewater Creek in February. This northern breeder migrates to our region erratically in the winter months. This bird feeds on seeds, buds and berries in the winter and insects in the summer. *Adapted from ABA*