

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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APRIL 2017

April 17, 7PM Chapter Meeting Program White Birds Over Montana



The Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS) has invited Michael Schwitters to its April 17 meeting for a presentation about Freezeout Lake and waterfowl. Mike is a seasonal biologist at Freezeout Lake Wildlife Management Area south of Choteau, Montana. He will present a slide show describing the migrations of Tundra Swans, Lesser Snow Geese and Ross's Geese through Montana in springs and falls. The swans and geese migrate north and south, often in large concentrations, (tens of thousands of white geese and thousands of swans) and regularly use Freezeout Lake as a stopover. The presentation will examine the physical nature of the birds, why they choose northcentral Montana to stop for a while, where the white birds nest far to the north, and what routes they take to and from their nesting colonies and wintering grounds. The way the migration routes have been determined by biologists (coded neck bands) will be examined. The presentation will also feature a visit to a far northern nesting Snow Goose colony in north central Arctic Canada.

Mike is a retired Air Force officer and retired manager of a large retirement apartment complex (Skyline Lodge) in Choteau. He is also a vigorous bird watcher and has recorded 800 North American bird species. YVAS routinely taps Mike's insights and up-to-the minute information when planning birding trips to Freezeout Lake.

Submitted by Steve Regele, Photo submitted by Michael Schwitters

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.

Tuesday, April 11 , 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, April 17, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting



We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Lois and Jerry Dalton generously volunteered to coordinate. Please contact them before Friday, April 14 to make reservations and your dish contribution at 406-656-3656.

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/>

Summary of Board Meeting/Action, March 14, 2017*Submitted by Pam Pipal*

- The new Data Base Administrator team is in place, with Peter Cummins updating the data base for new members and renewals, and Joan Eddy doing the various functions involving e-mails.
- Steve Regele gave us a heads-up that a letter is coming from Dick Walton to comment on regarding the Pryors Wilderness.
- After a presentation from Will Crain, the Board OK'd continued work on a project Mike Weber, Jacob Meissner, and he are working on to record migratory birds calls at night. Mike is to finalize an equipment cost estimate before we advance money for the project.
- Participation in Yellowstone Gives, a 'crowd-funding' event for non-profits on May 4, was discussed and we will keep it in mind for participation in next year.
- Sheila provided a status report on Duck Day (March 25), including names of speakers and times of events during the day.
- Steve Regele pointed out the excellent coverage of the importance of non-game wildlife in the latest issue of Montana Outdoors (a publication of Montana FW&P). He asked for any ideas for a vehicle to raise funds for non-game wildlife, as is done on our State tax return, with the box to check for "Nongame Wildlife Program".

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: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Marco Restani: 425-2608, restani@stcloudstate.edu
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregede@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. 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: Deb Regele, debregede@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: Joan Bunke and 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, 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Hospitality: Audrey Jurovich, 656-2748
 Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757,
dpadanyi@live.com
 Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregede@gmail.com
 Publicity: Barbara Garrett 652-3180, garrettimprisonart@gmail.com
 Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.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, debregede@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 Tuesday 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.

Weekend of March 18 & 19, Freezout Lake

Nine YVAS members got together to make a trip up to Freezout Lake this March to see the Snow Geese migration with hopes of seeing Tundra Swans and Ross’s Geese, as well. They had reports from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks rangers that there were 10,000 plus Snow Geese at the area.

It was a little cold but they did get out to observation areas and to the surrounding fields to see the geese “take off” in the early morning hours. Deb Regele said the were up so early the ate 2 breakfasts!

You’ll have to ask Robert Hill if they saw the other desired species as he submitted this information with photos below.



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

April 8	Sat	Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills. 8am to 3pm.	ONE MILE WALK. Sack lunch. Ron Kuhler & George Mowat, leaders.
Mid-Late April	TBD	Pryor Mountains	LEK viewing plus searching for a Sagebrush Sparrow. Stan Heath leader.
May 6	Sat	Meet at Riverfront Park, S Billings Blvd, 1 st parking area on the right. 8 am to noon.	Family Oriented Outing. Leader TBD
May 11	Thurs	Meet at Riverfront Park, S Billings Blvd. 1 st parking lot on the right. 5:30 pm.	Mike Weber, leader
May 13	Sat	Lake Basin. 8:00 am.	Sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader
May 14	Sun.	Pryor Mountains, Bear Canyon Birding/Hiking	Meet at Rocky Mountain College at 6:00 am or at the Bridger Rest Area at 7:30 am, to hike into Bear Canyon at 8:30 am. Sack lunch. Trenay Hart, leader.
May 16	Tues	Stillwater River and Woodbine Area 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.	Sack lunch. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader
May 20	Sat	Pompey’s Pillar and Captain Clark’s FAS. 7:00 am.	Sack lunch. Robert Hill, leader
May 21	Sun	Bear Gulch near Grass Range 5:30 am, all day	WALKING TRIP, bring a picnic lunch, \$20/per person, Group of 20 or more \$15/ person. Carolyn Jones, leader.
May 27-29	Sat-M	Memorial Day Weekend	Will alert Field Trip Birders of any impromptu trips.



2017 Wings Across the Big Sky

This year Wings Across the Big Sky will be held in Great Falls. Besides the regular birding field trips, Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon (UMBA) is offering three pre and post field trips in and around the area. These trips are to the American Prairie Reserve near Malta, a Missouri Float trip near Wolf Creek and a non-birding trip highlighting agriculture around Great Falls.

For more information including registration forms for these additional field trips, go to the UMBA's website at: www.umbaudubon.com and click on the 2017 Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival button. Information on the 2017 Wings Across the Big Sky can also be found there.

BIRDATHON 2017

June 3-4 is designated for the 2017 Birdathon, the competitive birding fund raiser that occurs each spring. It is time for birders to gear up for that weekend and plan for their teams. Both the team strategy for locating as many different species of birds in 24 hours AND the team plans for fund raising to support YVAS sponsored education are important.

For those new to Birdathon, Birdathon is an activity developed by the National Audubon Society some years ago, to raise interest in birding while raising funds for the work of the Society. It involves teams who compete for the greatest number of species identified in a designated 24-hour period. Those teams seek sponsors who pledge donations to the organization. It has been a successful spring activity across the nation for years.

The funds raised during last year's Birdathon were designated for erecting signs in the newly opened Dover Park. Because of park development those signs are not yet designed but will be as the bird population there becomes known to those of us who use the park. This year funds raised will again be directed to the development of educational signs in that park.

The rules for the competition will be published on the website as usual as will forms to use in making donations and to participate in the competition. If any person has suggestions for the Birdathon, please call or email me (245-5118, erv132@charter.net) with your specific suggestions so that we can discuss them.

Members of YVAS are encouraged to contribute to YVAS to support the work of the organization. Of course, we are pleased when do it as a part of this activity. You may designate a team to be credited with your donation or just contribute.

Other announcements will be in the May Flyer.

Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst



©Peter Murray

Golden Eagle photo by
Peter Murray

The National Audubon Society recently presented Deb Regele the *Meritorious Service Award* in recognition of outstanding and sustained leadership to the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society.



The award reads: “Since joining the YVAS Board of Directors in 2007, Deb has spent countless hours serving as webmaster, treasurer, and state chapter representative. Deb has also made untold contributions to the Bird Data, Fundraising, Presentations, and Membership Committees. For the past five summers Deb has also coordinated dozens of Osprey nest monitors. Her commitment and long-lasting achievements epitomize exceptional volunteerism.”

Congratulations, Deb! We are lucky to have you!

Submitted by Marco Restani, Photo of Deb receiving the award presented by Marco was taken by Steve Regele.



PASSING THE TORCH: For the last eight years YVAS has been so fortunate to have Joel Bowers as our Data Base Administrator. Growing up in Great Falls he honed his skills in mechanical engineering at Montana State University and branched out as a consultant with Joel M. Bowers Associates, a digital artist, and a Tai Chi instructor. In 2006 he and wife Lisa went to Costa Rica for a Tai Chi workshop and wound up staying for 15 months. While there, they lived next door to a local professional birding guide, and invited to tag along with him, they became avid birders. Attending a YVAS meeting in 2008 on his return to Billings, Joel was recruited as Membership Secretary, now Data Base Administrator. He brought so many skills to the position, taking us to a new age, and now passes the position on to two YVAS volunteers Joan Bunke and Peter Cummins. Thanks to all our members who take on these important volunteer positions!!

Submitted with photo by Nancy Wiggins

YVAS is developing an informational bird identification sign for the newly established Dover Park in Billings Heights. This privately managed park offers varied habitat including juniper draws, Yellowstone river frontage, cottonwood forest and grasslands. We are asking anyone who makes the trip out to the park to please submit their bird lists to Deb Regele or anyone on the YVAS Board so a comprehensive list is gathered to create the signage. You will not be disappointed in what the new park has to offer for walking trails, bridges and views. Please help YVAS accomplish this goal developing an informational bird identification sign and establishing another great place to see birds in Billings.

Submitted by Trenay Hart

A Nongame Wildlife Focus



Nongame wildlife species are the largest group of wildlife species in Montana and elsewhere. Of course nongame birds are a big part of the nongame ‘group’. Protection and enjoyment of birds and nongame species and their habitats is a major component of the YVAS organization and Mission and that of a large number of other organizations and individuals.

The March-April 2017 Issue of Montana Outdoors Magazine (a publication of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)) included some articles with a nongame species focus. Diligent conservation of nongame species and the habitats that support them is very important.

YVAS participates on the MFWP, Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council. Throughout 2017 YVAS will discuss the values and needs of nongame species and habits in detail with other Council members, MFWP representatives, and many others including the various legislators and individuals that frequent the meetings. One of the points of that discussion will be funding in support of nongame species conservation and habitat. Nongame species receive less focus and funding than do game species. A pretty good summary of why that is and how that came about is included in the Montana Outdoors Magazine, March-April Issue (“My Favorite Tax” - <http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/articles/2017/pittman.htm#.WMIXfvkrLcc>).

Montana Outdoors Magazine, March-April Issue also includes an article focused on nongame species entitled “What About the Others” <http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/articles/2017/nongame.htm#.WMIXKvkrLcc> .

YVAS and friends have been discussing some possibilities for generating more funds specifically in support of nongame species and habitat. This support and habitat also includes support for game species and people. If you have ideas about how to enhance financial and other support for nongame and habitat conservation we would like to hear from you. Please send your thoughts and suggestions to smregele@gmail.com. Your ideas will be shared with the YVAS Board of Directors and we will do our best to convey those to the Region 5 Council and to the government and NGO groups and individual’s that YVAS interacts with.

Visit yvaudubon.org, PUBLICATIONS Tab for additional references and information.

Submitted by Steve Regele

Barn Owl
photograph
submitted by
Jeanie Sells.
Taken in
Saguaro
National Park,
Arizona.



Be like the bird, who,
Pausing in his flight,
On a limb too slight
Feels it give way beneath him,
Yet sings,
Knowing he has wings.

-Victor Hugo
Submitted by Jim Sells

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 April. 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 Administrators: Joan Bunke or Peter Cummins at membership.data@yvaudubon.org, with any questions.

APRIL Renewals:

John Battaglia, Angus & Margie Fulton, Marilyn Lindell, Jonathan Lutz, Colleen Model, Nancy Traeger, and Judy Weddel.



Remember all the wonderful photographs that are submitted to the Flyer can be viewed in full color in the electronic version of the Flyer at yvaudubon.org.



There are only two chapter meetings left this spring for YOU to bring your aluminum cans to Larry Handsaker via a meeting. It's easy to collect your cans when you know they will be recycled and the cash goes to a good cause: YVAS!

Larry 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!

We hope to have a full report on Duck Day from Sheila McKay in next months Flyer.

Reminder to see all the photos in the Flyer in full color on the YVAS website. yvaudubon.org

Photo below of the group at Freezout Lake waiting for the geese to "take off". *Submitted by Robert Hill*



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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Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch captured at Bluewater Fish Hatchery in February by *Will Crain*.

YVAS Bird of the Month Red-winged Blackbird



I was in Missoula March 10th this year when I first heard the tumbling song of the first Red-winged Blackbird of the year. It was a crisp, early morning and I knew the familiar call though it was unexpected. I was quickly reminded that “our” birds are on their way back for a great breeding season. Will Crain slipped this gem into the Flyer inbox and it, along with the unexpected sound of the birds call that March morning inspired me to make the Red-winged Blackbird the Bird of the Month.

Abundant across North America, this boldly colored bird is a familiar sight along roadsides and atop cattails. The males show their scarlet epaulettes or hide them depending on their confidence. Will’s photograph is a great example of this occurring. The subdued, streaky brown females are always a confounding identification upon their return as it often is mistaken for a sparrow.

Submitted by Trenay Hart and adapted from All About Birds