



# 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 48, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2018

**February 19, 2018 Chapter Meeting 7PM**

**Organizational Activism for Success**



## Should Birds of a Feather Flock Together?

**Speaker Nathan Baillet**

Born and raised in Montana, Nathan is an educator/activist with a keen interest in the natural world. Armed with degrees in Philosophy, Economics, History, Management and an MBA, offers Nathan a unique perspective to strengthen conservation clubs and organizations. His contribution to Dr. Lisa Kemmerer's most recent anthology: Animals and the Environment: Advocacy, Activism and The Quest for the Common Ground provides great inspiration to leaders and followers of clubs such as the YVAS. This talk is a must for anyone hoping to work with others to further conservation. We hope you will invite all your friends and followers from many organizations.

*Submitted by Sheila McKay*



Member Karen Heil submitted this **Downy Woodpecker** photo from her yard near Edgar, MT. She captured this little cutie on Jan. 22, 2018. Thanks for reminding us how darling our wintering over birds are when things are quiet on the bird front, Karen.



This **Northern Waterthrush** was in Will Crain's backyard August 24, 2017. He submitted some photos of the bird to the Flyer to remind us of our summer friends since as he says, "There is not much to photograph this time of year." Thanks, Will for always coming up with something to include in the Flyer!

## 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.**

**Friday, Feb. 9, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, Feb. 19, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting**

**We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:30, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. This month is a NO-Host potluck. Please contact Sue Weinreis at 855-4181 before Friday, Feb. 16 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](http://yvaudubon.org)**

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

### YVAS Board of Directors Doings

January 11, 2018 YVAS Board discussions:

- A representative from the Billings Community Fund will address the Board regarding YVAS Endowment Fund investments.
- The Board agreed that we would support the Montana Audubon Center's activities in the Flyer, provided MAC events did not conflict with YVAS birding trips.
- The Board discussed the small attendance at recent chapter meetings, even when special programs are featured. Enhanced advertising, particularly in the digital format, may help to promote special speakers and events.
- The option to pay membership dues with PayPal has been suspended until the website is more user-friendly.

YVAS will hold a NO-HOST potluck dinner at 5:45 p.m. before the February 19 Chapter meeting. Please join us and bring a main dish, salad, side dish, bread, or dessert that will serve 6-12 people. Water and coffee are provided. The dinner donation of \$6.00 per person will be used for YVAS service projects.

Please contact Sue Weinreis at 855-4181 or email [granpeak47@gmail.com](mailto:granpeak47@gmail.com) before Friday, February 16 to make reservations and let her know what you will bring to the potluck.

### Who do you call when you find an INJURED bird?

Injured Birds: Details at [yvaudubon.org](http://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](mailto:smregele@gmail.com)  
**Vice-President:** Steve Linder, 380-0073, [becon1@bresnan.net](mailto:becon1@bresnan.net)  
**Secretary:** Doreen Hartman, 697-0277, [rdzlhman@bresnan.net](mailto:rdzlhman@bresnan.net)  
**Treasurer:** Pam Pival, 245-4517, [ppival@charter.net](mailto:ppival@charter.net)

### Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 628-5058, [donnbartlett@msn.com](mailto:donnbartlett@msn.com)  
 Dorothy Bartlett: 628-5058, [dpadanyi@live.com](mailto:dpadanyi@live.com)  
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 Nancy Wiggins: 839-4461, [nwiggins83@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://tester.senate.gov)

email: [senator@tester.senate.gov](mailto: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](mailto:daltonlj@centurylink.net)  
 Baling Twine Project: Deb Regele, [debregele@gmail.com](mailto:debregele@gmail.com)  
 Bird Questions: George Mowat, 656-7467 [gbmowat@gmail.com](mailto:gbmowat@gmail.com)  
 or Helen Carlson Cummins, 248-8684

Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, [erv132@charter.net](mailto:erv132@charter.net)

Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 259-5099, C: 860-0450,  
[custertours@gmail.com](mailto:custertours@gmail.com)

Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele, 962-3115,  
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Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 628-5058,  
[dpadanyi@live.com](mailto:dpadanyi@live.com)

Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, [debregele@gmail.com](mailto:debregele@gmail.com)

Publicity: Barbara Garrett 652-3180, [garrettimprisonart@gmail.com](mailto:garrettimprisonart@gmail.com)

Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, [smregele@gmail.com](mailto:smregele@gmail.com)

Nancy Wiggins, 839-4461, [nwiggins83@gmail.com](mailto:nwiggins83@gmail.com),

Sheila McKay, 652-7175, [wjhbird@yahoo.com](mailto:wjhbird@yahoo.com)

Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker, 855-9832,  
 918 AVE C, Billings

Website: Deb Regele, 962-3115, [debregele@gmail.com](mailto: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 Friday 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.

Saturday, January 13 Annual Eagle Midwinter Survey

*Submitted by Brian Henderson*

An awesome group came out on January 6 for the annual eagle survey and enjoyed watching 21 Bald Eagles along the Yellowstone river from Billings to Columbus. We also had some great hawk watching, not to mention, a good variety of song birds. Citizen science can be a tough job, but somebody’s gotta do it! Below: **Rough-legged Hawk** photo by Peter Murray somewhere near the Yellowstone river in Paradise Valley. It’s not an Eagle but hey they saw raptors along the way!



Saturday, January 27 New Year’s Day Field Trip to Yellowtail Dam Afterbay

*Submitted by Brian Henderson*

After many delays due to weather this New Year’s Day field trip finally took place on the 27th of January lead by Brain Henderson.

We had another good turnout for the trip to the Yellowtail Afterbay which is always a great day of birding. The Afterbay was loaded with Mallards and Canada Geese as always during the winter, and we found a lot of their cousins scattered around the Afterbay, too– more than a dozen species of waterfowl. Raptors were a big hit as usual and part of the group got a bonus by returning to Billings via Pryor as that route added a pair of Northern Harriers and two pairs of Ferruginous Hawks to the large number of Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks (including a Harlan’s) as well as Bald and Golden Eagles. And to finish it off, 3 Tundra Swans flew along beside us and then right over us! It was a great day for the large birds– they apparently knew how good they looked as they seemed to enjoy flying around showing off for us... Oh, and it was also a day for big numbers as we were awed by a couple of fields with several hundred crows and a field with over 100 Ring-necked Pheasants. See you next time!  
*Photo by Dorothy Bartlett*



**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

4/7/2018	Sat	Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills	Leader TBD. ONE MILE WALK. Sack lunch.
Mid-Late April		Pryor Mountains	LEK Viewing plus additional birding. Leader TBD



## A Tale of Two “Magic” Cities

*Submitted by Marco Restani*

For the past several summers nestling ospreys have been banded along the Yellowstone River under the auspices of the YVAS Osprey Nest Monitoring Project. We are banding ospreys to learn about their survival and local and long-range movements. Mortality of young ospreys can be shockingly high. For example, a long-term study in Michigan estimated that 70% die before reaching sexual maturity at three years old, and much of this mortality occurs during migration.

Ospreys raised on the Yellowstone River migrate in September and have been observed wintering along the US Gulf Coast, in Mexico, and as far south as Costa Rica. One even ventured 2000 miles east to Miami, where it was photographed alive and well in April 2017. Unfortunately, this same bird was found seven months later on a local beach unable to stand and fly.

Ospreys make poor patients – often choosing to go on hunger strikes in captivity – so we were concerned that 19/E would join the majority that die before reaching adulthood even though he had been rescued. However, the skilled staff at the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station and Florida Keys Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center had other ideas and worked in tandem to nurture his recovery. After five weeks, 19/E was successfully released to much fanfare in mid-December, appearing as a feature in the Biscayne Times

(see [http://biscaynetimes.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2872:osprey-without-a-map&catid=50:community-news&Itemid=258](http://biscaynetimes.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2872:osprey-without-a-map&catid=50:community-news&Itemid=258)).

19/E was raised in Billings in 2016. If all goes well, we hope to see him rearing his own young along the Yellowstone River during summer 2019. The cause of 19/E’s debilitation was never determined, but we do know he traveled from one Magic City to another.



*Osprey 19/E near Miami, 3 April 2017. Photo by Robin Diaz used with permission.*

## **To Report or Not to Report – Guidelines for Reporting Sensitive Species**

*Submitted by Pam Pipal*

**Sensitive Species Definition:** From birddata website: “Sensitive species refers to species which are especially vulnerable to adverse impacts caused by damage, commercial exploitation, collecting or disturbance due to their attractiveness, fragility, conservation status, endemism or rarity within the environment.”

After a couple of tantalizing, but vague recent reports of Snowy Owls (not listed as a sensitive species on eBird, but a ‘Climate Threatened’ species per National Audubon) in the area, it became apparent that the observers were practicing some discretion in their reporting of the Owls. The American Birding Association has published a comprehensive Birding Code of Ethics, but for this article I’m drawing on additional ways to protect sensitive species from guidelines on the eBird website:

1. Wait until the sensitive species has left for the season to report. For eBird, you can go back to your checklist and edit in the sensitive species.
2. Do not provide specific details for the sighting. Instead provide the general area, e.g. ‘near Pompey’s Pillar’ (sound familiar, Snowy Owl chasers?).
3. Delay reporting for a week, to keep your report from appearing on ‘eBird Alerts’ (and of course, to allow the bird to finish its business at its location and to make its getaway (!)).
4. Also, for eBird, you can hide your observation after submitting your checklist, by using ‘manage my observations’.

**Sandhill Crane Time Coming Up in Nebraska***Submitted by Jim Hansen, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks*

Some of you have already traveled to Nebraska in a previous spring to witness the concentration of sandhill cranes during their northward migration. The Platte River, near Gibbon and Kearney, Nebraska, is a traditional stopping area for the cranes, as they roost on the river at night and fly out to the surrounding crop fields to feed on waste grain during the day. There are tens of thousands of cranes in the area for almost a month. There are usually good numbers of cranes there from about early March through late March or early April, depending on the weather.

One of the best places to see them is at or near The National Audubon Society's Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon. You can find out about details and opportunities by Googling "Rowe sanctuary." You don't actually have to go there to experience some of the cranes. Once you're on the Rowe Sanctuary site, click on "crane cam," and you can see a section of the river where the cranes typically roost at night. The camera is operational right now, although the river is mostly frozen over and lacking cranes, with occasional eagles, coyotes, or other wildlife to be seen. The direct link to the crane cam is: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/rowe-sanctuary-s-crane-cam>. By going to the sanctuary site, you can get updates on the progress of the migration. If you go there in person, the Iain Nicholson Audubon Center is worth a visit. There is an observation blind along the river on the Rowe Sanctuary, but during the peak crane time, reservations are needed and probably hard to come by unless you plan far ahead.

This is a different population of sandhill cranes than we have nesting in Montana. They are lesser sandhill cranes of the Mid-continent Population and are headed to northern Canada, Alaska, or Siberia to nest. We in central Montana have, as nesters, and as we sometimes see on the Exxon Ponds field trip, greater sandhill cranes of the Rocky Mountain Population.

Save the Date! Montana Audubon announces the dates of their 19th annual "Wings Across Big Sky" birding festival. June 8 - 10, 2018 Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell, MT. The event is co-sponsored by the Flat-head Audubon Society. Visit their website for festival updates: [mtaudubon.org](http://mtaudubon.org)

**RENEWALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The YVAS Board of Directors is trying to find a better way to alert supporting Chapter Members of their renewal dates. The list below consists of those members up for renewal in February. 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](mailto:membership.data@yvaudubon.org) with any questions.

**FEBRUARY Renewals:** Nancy Ballou, Ruth Carrier, Gini Chase, Michelle Ellis, Bonnie Erickson, Catherine Frazer, Jim & Beth Gruba, James Hansen, Susan Ogden & Chuck Hingle, Ronald J. Kuhler, Jeffrey Mosser, Charles W. Paris, Jean & Randy Pearson, Carol Pearson, Donald Seibert, and Neil Wagner.

**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  NOSend 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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**Whooping Crane** photos by Jim Sells. He and his wife Jeanie were fortunate to enjoy these birds at Aransas NWR on the Texas Coast in Jan. at the birds winter home. The birds migrate to Canada to breed each summer. These territorial birds mate for life. Their average speed during migration is 45 mph. Chicks can swim when they hatch and fly within 80 days. Thanks for sharing, Jim!



**YVAS Birds of the Month Pinyon Jay**



This highly social bird of lower mountain slopes in the West specializes in feeding on pine seeds. They store thousands of seeds each year and remember where most of them are hidden.

Will Crain caught this beautiful photograph of a Pinyon Jay at Canyon Cove Grasslands (north of Billings) January 20, 2018. This is a fine example of the color and long beak of the jay.

Interestingly, the oldest Pinyon Jay recorded was in Arizona, a male that was at least 14 years, 7 months old. He had first been captured and banded in 1972 then recaptured and rereleased in 1985.

*Submitted by Trenay Hart and adapted from All About Birds*