

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 49, NUMBER 5

MAY 2019

May 20, YVAS Chapter Meeting 7PM Professor Avian Guano, Bir.D.

Presents

Professor Avian Guano's Favorite Bird-Brained Stories (Ages 10 – adult)

“Avian” means “of the birds.” “Guano” means, well, you will have to look that up. After he “drops in,” this eccentric German professor of ornithology proves he has been studying birds a little too long. His bird-brained views on birds and his legendary mimicry of bird songs shows his intimacy with our feathered friends. The good prof’s bones are probably hollow, but beneath his wacky exterior is a solid knowledge of bird lore. Professor Avian Guano, aka Doc Wild, is just one of the many altar-egos of Denny Olson, who for more than 30 years, has been a student and teacher of the natural world. Well-known nationally for his theatrical performances and speeches, he has performed his humorous altar-egos (Doc Wild’s Unhuggables, Wolfman, The Grizz, Dr. Death, Dr. Loonacy, The Lost Voyageur) over 3000 times in 49 states for over 2 million people, including 80 conferences, 50+ national park presentations, 30+ universities, as well as programs in zoos and classrooms.

Denny Olson’s formal training as a biologist and geologist, as well as teaching nature for over 20 years in the north woods and mountain west, has given him expertise in many disciplines. He has done research on beavers, hares, and loons and received his M.S. (magna cum laude) from the University of Minnesota. He has forged an unlikely union of science, humor, and drama and established a national reputation as an innovative performer and educator. Denny has written books on cougars, deer, “place-based” education and Native American stories. He teaches and practices the art of storytelling. He leads canoe trips in Canada, the Arctic, and the U.S. His avocation, crafting stained glass pieces, is inspired by the smooth, curving lines and secrets of nature. Check out his many other accomplishments and view photos from his ‘backyard’ at www.crittermansworld.com.

YVAS invites you to meet Dr. Avian Guano and enjoy “an artful form of educational entertainment.” Come prepared to learn a lot and laugh a lot. As one unsuspecting victim of Denny’s performances put it, “I didn’t realize I learned so much until it was too late!” *Submitted by Sue Weinreis, Photo courtesy of Denny Olson*



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, May 13, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, May 20, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting



The Board invites everyone for a no-host potluck dinner at 5:45 pm prior to the Chapter meeting. Please bring a main dish, salad, side dish, bread or dessert sufficient to serve 6-12 people. There is no charge for the dinner. Contact Sue Weinreis 855-4181 the [Friday prior to the Chapter meeting](#) if you plan to attend.

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/>

YVAS Board of Director Highlights April 8, 2019

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

- Kudos and a BIG THANK YOU to Marco Restani for teaching the Osprey Orientation Programs in Billings, Livingston, and Miles City. Deb Regele reported that she heard many good comments, including one man who asked (in a good way) how much we had had to pay for a speaker of “that quality.”
- 199 windmills are to be placed in the Pryor Mountain area. Steve Regele will write a letter to the Carbon County Commissioners, with Board approval, asking them for information about accountability for monitoring and resolving any problems caused to birds or other wildlife.
- We say a reluctant “good-bye” to Jim and Nancy Wiggins as they begin a new chapter in their lives in sunny southern California. Jim and Nancy have been maintaining and monitoring the Bluebird Nesting Boxes at Phipps Park for the last several years. Nancy has served on the YVAS Board of Directors and is a past editor of *The YVAS Flyer*. Thank you to both for many years of service to YVAS.
- Carolyn Jones and Sue Weinreis have officially taken over monitoring the Bluebird Boxes at Phipps Park. They have been up to the top of Phipps Park four times already, twice with Jim Wiggins, his brother-in-law, Nancy’s brother Tom, and Willow, the dog. They saw a few bluebirds, some sitting on the boxes, but found nest material in only one box (out of 13). The extreme cold and snow this winter may have discouraged nesting and contributed to a dearth of insects. Nancy and Jim noted that the 2017-18 winter was also a hard winter, and as a result, only two boxes had successful fledglings last year.

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 Pival, 245-4517, ppival@charter.net

Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 628-5058, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett: 628-5058, dpadanyi@live.com
 Carolyn Jones: 670-4449, carolyn684@gmail.com
 Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Marco Restani: 425-2608, restani@stcloudstate.edu
 Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregele@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. 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

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,
smregele@gmail.com
 Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins,
membership.data@yvaudubon.org
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 Membership Committee Chair: Dorothy Bartlett, 628-5058,
dpadanyi@live.com
 Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com
 Publicity: contact any Board Member
 Program Committee: Steve Regele, 962-3115, smregele@gmail.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, 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.

Easter weekend Will Crain reports a recon tour of Broadview pond, Spidel WMA, Big Lake and Wheat Basin areas by the Avian Rangers (Mike Weber, Robert Hill, Brian Henderson and Will Crain). Below are a few photos Will submitted. At left, 2 **Northern Harriers** near Big Lake/Wheat Basin, at right **Ring-billed Gull** at Spidel WMA, below Mike Weber channeling *something* near Wheat Basin.



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



May 4, 2019	Sat	Riverfront Park. S Billings Blvd, 1st parking area on the right.	8:00 AM to Noon. FAMILY ORIENTED OUTOING. Sue Weinreis leader.
May 12, 2019	Sun	Pryor Mountains, Bear Canyon Birding/Hiking	Meet at Rocky at 6:00 a.m. or at Lions Park in Bridger at 7:30 a.m. to hike into Bear Canyon. Trenay Hart, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.
May 16, 2018	Thurs	Riverfront Park. S Billings Blvd, parking area on the right near the covered picnic facility.	Mike Weber, leader 5:30PM
May 18, 2019	Sat	Lake Basin	Mike Weber, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.
May 21, 2019	Tues	Pompey's Pillar, Fishing Access Sites	7:00 a.m. Robert Hill, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.
May 25, 2019	Sat	Bridger Creek	Meet at Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus at 8:00 a.m. Stan Heath, leader.
May 28, 2019	Tues	Stillwater River and Woodbine Area	7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.
June 1&2, 2019	Sat & Sun	Birdathon	Contact Ruth Vanderhorst 406-245-5118.
June 4, 2019	Tues	Bluewater Creek and Bridger MT Area	Steve Regele, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.

BIRDATHON 2019

Submitted by Ruth Vanderhorst

Birdathon 2019 will occur Saturday, June 1 at 5 pm through Sunday, June 2 at 5 pm. Birdathon is a 24- hour competition to find and identify the most species. Teams of birders are formed by interested birders who design their own plan for achieving the highest count, using the rules for Birdathon, published on the YVAS website yvaudubon.org. Last year the combined teams identified 165 species, an event record. It is now time for teams to form and to register for this year's Birdathon. Registration must be done by May 20 to enable planning and preparation. Registration forms are available at yvaudubon.org. A \$5.00 fee per participant is required to pay for expenses. A gathering of the participants will occur at Mayflower Church at 5pm to share lists of species identified and establish the collective list. A light meal will be served. Participants are to provide their own nonalcoholic beverages and bring some food, chips, salad or dessert, to share.

Birdathon teams require an experienced birder though new birders may be team members. It is lots of fun and requires as many of those 24 hours that the team wishes to bird. Any questions call Ruth Vanderhorst at 245-5118 or email erv132@charter.net. We hope some new teams will form to challenge some of the more experienced teams. Let us try to exceed the 2018 number if even by one.

Osprey Monitoring

Submitted by Deb Regele

The annual Osprey Orientation Programs were held last month for Osprey nest monitors. The free program was open to all those interested in learning more about Ospreys and the banding project. Of the 70 people attending, half were monitors and half weren't. Dr. Marco Restani gave excellent presentations with an amazing amount of material crammed into a two-hour program.



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 MAY. 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.

MAY Renewals: Louise Cenatiempo, Mike Griffin, Gerrie Mooney, Marco Restani, and Janet Weisz

April (outstanding) Renewals: Bill Morgan & Kris Decker



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 \$25. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$15 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



Local Wetland Conditions*Submitted by Jim Hansen*

At Big Lake, on Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' Big Lake Wildlife Management Area between Molt and Rapelje, water levels are as high as I have seen in my 28 years here. That's great to see, as in some years it has been totally dry. This year it, and the uplands, will have a variety of birds throughout the year. One place right next to Big Lake that is worth checking for shorebirds is an area of mudflats along the road on the northwest side of the lake where the water runs in, just south of the former town of Wheat Basin. Some of you may not know that Big Lake now has two hard surface access roads. The one on the northeast side got "rocked" a few years ago, and FWP just completed putting rock on the access road from the west in September of 2018.

I hope some of you have already enjoyed the drive from Billings to Broadview, including Broadview Pond, to check on wetland birds. With the heavy snow the last two winters and the rains in 2018, there is an impressive amount of water between Acton and Broadview. "Lake Broadview" (a.k.a. "Comanche Basin") has probably 2,000 acres of water, and there is water in all the depressions, borrow pits, and road ditches. About all of these have a variety of ducks, and there will be some shorebirds as well. Some ducks may still be doing their courtship displays, either on the water or in the air. If you go there to enjoy the birds, be sure to drive and park safely along this busy highway. It's not a good place for a caravan of vehicles.

YVAS Members Name Tags*Submitted by Jim Hansen*

We were all given our colorful name tags to take home with us a couple of years ago. (The ones with the bird stickers on them.) I suggest that we try to wear them (if we can still find them!) to the next meeting. It would help us to remember who we are and would also help visitors to get acquainted with us. (I think I can still find mine.)

Bird Garden Updates*Submitted by Carolyn Sevier*

Nearly one year in from the dedication of the Helen Carlson Cummins Bird Garden and Thoughtful Bird Feeding Station, this dedicated space has become a keystone in our programs. Fledglings Nature Preschool students start each day noticing who is at the feeders. The nearly 2,000 participants in our winter school field trip season learned binocular use and basic bird identification by watching the chickadees, finches, and juncos. All observations were submitted by the kids into the ebird database. And the task of filling the feeders has been enthusiastically taken on by our weekly volunteer groups of students and adults with disabilities.

Our next steps with the garden? First, to secure long-term sustainable funding for maintenance and bird seed through a "Join the Flock" feeder adoption program. Interested? Contact Carolyn, csevier@mtaudubon.org. Second, we'd love to replace the double-doors in our front classroom with glass to enable year-round viewing from a comfy chair inside.

Thank you to all who have helped in this project, especially [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) and the [Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society](#).

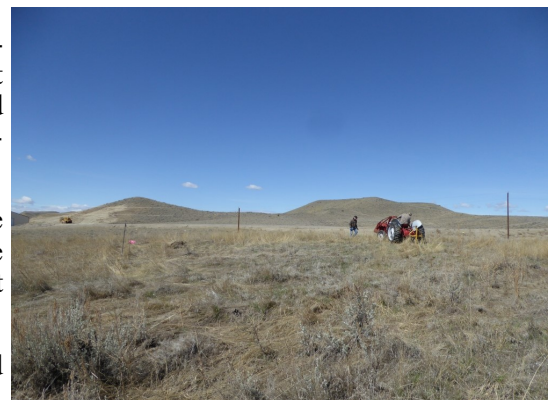
Twine Collection & Recycling Site Update*Submitted by Deb Regele*

Ground at the Twine Collection & Recycling Site was broken on April 13. With four volunteers on scene working to clear and level the ground for the twine storage shed, the newly purchased 1949 Ford 8N tractor came through like the Little Engine That Could! A few days later, four truckloads of gravel were delivered and leveled over the shed site and the delivery pad at the front of the shed. By the time this article is published, S Bar S will have completed the construction on the shed.

Fourteen people attended the Twine Collection & Recycling Project meeting on April 15 to discuss the logistics of the project including the best way to use volunteers' time, twine management, public awareness and marketing, and the scheduling of hours for the Twine Collection & Recycling Site.

If all goes as planned, the Twine Collection & Recycling Site will be ready to open in June 2019 and we will begin accepting recyclable twine that is 90 - 95% clean. Mesh will not be accepted since most mesh is not recyclable and impossible to clean.

Watch for updates in the June/July Flyer, Facebook, YVAS website, and GoFundMe.





**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

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American Crow, from *Will Crain* photographed in his Billings back yard.

Trifecta of photos, **American Robins**, submitted by *Will Crain* from his backyard this past February.

