

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 50, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2020

YVAS Program February 17, 2020, 7:00 PM

Yellowstone River Parks Association - Trails, Parks and People Connectivity

Darryl Wilson, Yellowstone River Parks Association (YRPA) president, will talk about YRPA accomplishments and why he and their Board of Directors, volunteers and partners have been and remain so committed to and excited about the Association, its work and products. Page 4 of this Flyer has more information regarding YRPA.

YRPA continually provides exceptional recreational opportunities for the Billings community and visitors, and for wild-life and their habitats. Some of the best birding in the Billings area is associated with YRPA efforts. Learn about those existing special areas and plans for future outdoor recreation access and treasures. *Photos below submitted by Steve Regele, Joel's Pond, on the left and Dover Park, on the right.*



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, February 10, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

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

The Board invites everyone for cookies and coffee at 6:30pm prior to the Chapter meeting. Please contact Lois Dalton at 656-3656 [the Friday prior to the Chapter meeting](#) if you would like to contribute cookies or bars.



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☞We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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

YVAS Board Highlights January 13, 2020*Submitted by Sue Weinreis*

- Carolyn Sevier, Director of the Montana Audubon Center, was a guest. Billings will host Wings Across the Big Sky in June, 2021. We discussed various ways that the YVAS Board would be willing to assist MAC with the festival. YVAS members are free to help with the festival as well.
- YVAS received \$400 from Northwestern Energy's Employee Volunteer Program for hours put in by employee Marco Restani. The money will go to the Special Programs Fund.
- YVAS board members learned that YVAS member Bruce Waage's grandchildren, and grandchildren's cousin, will present a check in the amount of \$80.00 to YVAS at the January Chapter Meeting. They made wooden name plaques for a \$5.00 donation to YVAS.
- The Board voted to sign the Pryor Mountains Op-Ed drafted by Aubrey Bertram, MWA. Steve & Deb Regele., Back Country Horsemen, and John Simmons (Our MT) provided input to the draft.

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

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Donn Bartlett: 812-1008, donnbartlett@msn.com

Dorothy Bartlett: 812-1008, dpadanyi@live.com

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Sheila McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com

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

Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@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

Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst, erv132@charter.net, 245-5118

Christmas Bird Count: James Court, custertours@gmail.com, 860-0450

Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele, smregele@gmail.com, 962-3115

Facebook: Nancy Wiggins, nwiggins83@gmail.com, 839-4461

Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, donnbartlett@msn.com, 812-1008

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

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Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources, wjhbird@yahoo.com, 652-7175

Membership Data Admin: Peter Cummins, membership.data@yvaudubon.org, 248-8684

Mt Bluebird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones, carolyn684@gmail.com, 670-4449 & Sue Weinreis, granpeak47@gmail.com, 855-4182

Osprey Nest Monitor Coord: Deb Regele, debregele@gmail.com, 962-3115

Osprey Research Coord: Marco Restani, restani@stcloudstate.edu, 425-2608

Program Committee: Steve Regele, smregele@gmail.com, 962-3115

Publicity: Steve Regele, smregele@gmail.com, 962-3115

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

Recycling (baling twine): Deb Regele, debregele@gmail.com, 962-3115

& Doreen Hartman, rdzlhman@bresnan.net, 697-0277

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

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.

Wednesday, January 1 Yellowtail Afterbay*Submitted by Brian Henderson*

The new year started off with fairly mild temperatures and no snow on the ground. Unfortunately, it was very windy! Still, the scenery was nice, the roads were clear, and the wind *ain't* so bad inside the car... So nine birders started the year off right. Bald Eagles, Rough-legged and Red-tail Hawks kept us company along the way with an American Kestrel and an out-of-place Ferruginous Hawk as a bonus.

As we arrived at the Afterbay we could see waves with whitecaps and were reminded birding there was going to be tough. Barb Pitman played with a handheld anemometer and measured nearly 30 mph winds – pretty much as forecast! And the Afterbay did in fact have fewer species of ducks and geese than we had hoped and at times it seemed like we might have been at the coast, watching the ducks rise and fall on the waves. Still, there were lots of Mallards, Canada Geese and Common Goldeneye plus with quite a few American Wigeon, but only a few Gadwalls, Ring-necked Ducks, and Cackling Geese and no surprise guests. We tried really hard to find a Barrow's Goldeneye and maybe sorta kinda, I dunno...

By far, most of the geese we saw were out in the fields along Hwy 313 rather than at the Afterbay. Maybe some of the missing ducks were still out and about as well. In fact, Bird-of-the-Day was out there, too – one little white goose was discovered early in the day amongst a flock of Canada Geese. Even with our spotting scopes shaking in the wind we were able to enjoy this little Ross's Goose which carried us through the day! Total species count was 30 and 9 participants. *Photo by Brian Henderson of Ross's Goose, through the scope with 30 MPH winds!*

**Saturday, January 11 Annual Eagle Midwinter Survey***Submitted by Brian Henderson*

Brian Henderson lead this trip along the Yellowstone River with 11 participants who tallied 45 Bald Eagles that day from Billings to Columbus. The group enjoyed a no-host lunch at Beartooth Grill in Laurel, a short reprieve from the light wind and 32 degree temperatures. Roads were clear and sighting was good. Thanks to all who helped in this annual count.

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 812-1008, donnbartlett@msn.com

Feb. 29, 2020	Sat.	NEW TRIP-winter birding around Billings.	Carolyn Jones, leader 9:00 AM to noon. *TIME CHANGE*
Apr. 25, 2020	Sat.	Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills	Brian Henderson, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch. ONE MILE WALK.
May 2, 2020	Sat.	Riverfront Park. S Billings Blvd; 1st parking area on the right.	Sue Weinreis leader. 8:00 AM to Noon. FAMILY ORIENTED OUTOING.
May 10, 2020	Sun.	Pryor Mountains, Bear Canyon Birding/Hiking.	Trenay Hart, leader. Meet at Rocky at 6:00 AM or at Lions Park in Bridger at 7:30 AM to hike into Bear Canyon. Bring a Sack Lunch.
May 14, 2020	Thurs	Riverfront Park, S. Billings Blvd.;	Mike Weber, leader. Meet at Riverfront Park at 5:30 PM (parking area on the right near the covered picnic facility).

Note: space is limited, there are more field trips in May. Please refer to the website or the green sheet enclosed in the Jan. Flyer. As time grows closer they will be listed in the current Flyers.



Montana Audubon Center, Nature Trivia Night: Thursday, February 6 at 7PM

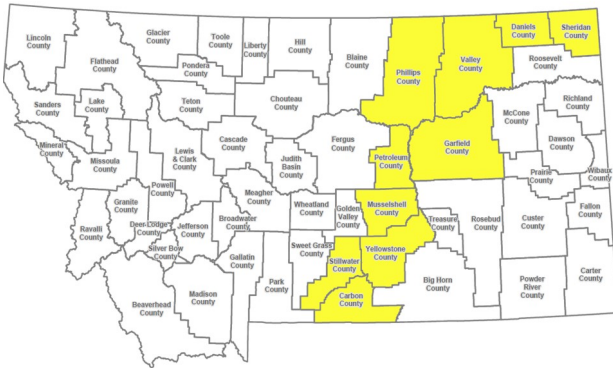
Spend a fun evening competing in the inaugural **Nature Trivia Night** at the Montana Audubon Center (7026 S. Billings Blvd). Test your knowledge and learn more about Montana's plants, animals, and geology. Meet other naturalists and join a team when you arrive, or bring some friends. We'll have four rounds of questions to keep you on your toes. Bring your own beverages and snacks. \$5.00 suggested donation or FREE for MAC members. Advance registration is not required. Questions? Call us at 406-294-5099

Submitted by Heather Bilden, MAC

MT Fish Wildlife and Parks Need Your Help

Submitted by Megan O'Reilly

We need your help! With the expectation that white-nose syndrome will soon arrive in Montana (if it hasn't already) efforts are underway for multiple agencies to increase sampling in the spring of 2020. It is difficult to find new areas to sample. If you know of any barns, bat boxes, bridges or houses in the counties highlighted in yellow below, where we might find 15+ bats in May or June and the landowner would be willing to allow us to sample, please contact Megan O'Reilly with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at moreilly@mt.gov.



Yellowstone River Parks Association

Submitted by Steve Regele

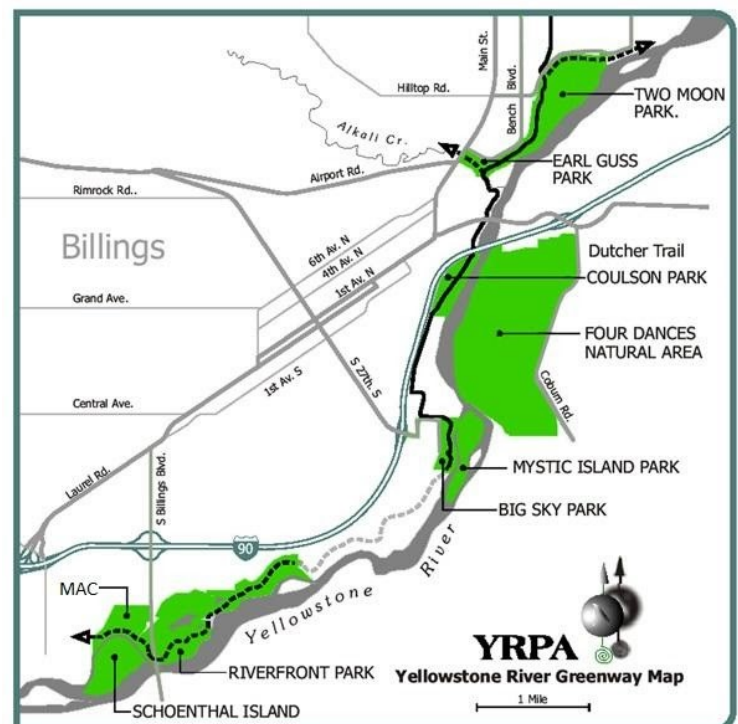
Twenty-Nine years ago Yellowstone River Parks Association (YRPA) was founded on the idea that Billings needed to pay more attention to two principal physical features: the Yellowstone River and the Rims. YRPA realized that access to the recreation along the Yellowstone was vital to our community's way of life.

In the past three decades YRPA has developed and maintained:

- Joel's Pond - an 8 acre park with 12 acres of pond near Shiloh Road;
- The new 15-acre Blue Creek fishing/Boat Access in partnership with the Montana Departments of Justice and Fish Wildlife and Parks;
- The Montana Audubon Education Center;
- Norm's Island, associated trails and two new vaulted bathrooms at the parking area.
- The caretaker facility at USDI BLM Four Dances Recreational site which was built by YRPA. YRPA continues to pay the caretakers wages - a great example of partnership with the BLM.

YRPA volunteers continue to maintain Two Moon Park even though the park is owned by Yellowstone County. One of their greatest accomplishments is John H. Dover Memorial Park and its 145 acres of Five Mile Creek bottom fronting along the Yellowstone River. This spectacular park provides vistas, unique bridges, picnic shelters and bathrooms.

All of these accomplishments were because of a vision, work by volunteers, and donations. YRPA has no paid employees and



has spent millions of dollars in developing these treasures for future generations.

A real nice evening!*Submitted by Steve Regele*

The YVAS January Program presented by Brian Martin, Nature Conservancy's Montana Grasslands Conservation Director was excellent, appreciated and enjoyed by all. Thank you Brian for doing that. Many of us look forward to visits to the Nature Conservancy's Matador Ranch and to other areas in eastern Montana to bird the areas and opportunities described by Brian. Some real tremendous things are going on out there.

A brief and special prelude to Brian's presentation was given by three young fans of things in line with the YVAS Mission. Isaac Augustine (10 years), Julia Augustine (7 years), and Ethan McPherson (7 years) - of their own invention and incentive - decided to approach people in city parks etc. offering to carve the donor's name in a stick in exchange for a donation to YVAS. The three have attended YVAS Programs and wanted to do something for birds and YVAS! They did a fine job of explaining their project, results and reasons for undertaking it. They did a nice job on the carving too and presented a log engraved "Audubon" to our Society along with a much appreciated check for \$205.00 that included a match donation from their granddad. They want the money to go into YVAS efforts on behalf of endangered species. YVAS awarded each of them a Certificate of Appreciation - see photo below (Ethan on left, Isaac center, Julia on right). We will keep them in the know as to where their donation is put to use.

**2020 Spring Birding is Fast Approaching***Submitted by Deb Regele*

It is only February but spring birding and bird migrations are just a hop, skip and jump away! The number of YVAS hosted birding trips will increase in April, May and June as birds begin to migrate, establish territories and build nests. It is the ideal time to see and hear breeding birds including some of the less common ones. You can find YVAS' 2020-2021 Birding Trips, Tips for Birding with a Group and the 2019 American Bird Association's Code of Ethics on the YVAS website at: <https://yvaudubon.org/birding/>. Now is a good time to review these especially if you are like me and haven't reviewed them recently. Many of our members, including trip leaders, depend on bird songs and calls to help locate and identify those birds we all want to see and hear. If you are in a vehicle caravan that pulls over to look and listen for birds, please turn your vehicles off unless you are away from the group even in the winter. May you all find life birds and enjoy your 2020 birding!

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 with any questions.

FEBRUARY Renewals: Lottie Eaton & Curt Starr, James Hansen, and Charles W. Paris

JANUARY (outstanding) Renewals: Adrienne Baker, Erin Baker, and Linda Pickard.



Unfortunately, the **GREEN Field Trip Schedule for 2020-21** went to press before we had Donn Bartlett's phone number change. Therefore, the phone number listed on page one of the schedule is incorrect. Please take out your Sharpie Markers and change his number to 406-812-1008!

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



PayPal option is also available for renewing or joining YVAS. It can be found on the YVAS Website under Memberships.



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Bohemian Rhapsody! Photos by Will Crain. Excellent examples of this beautiful winter visitor.

YVAS Bird of the Month

Bohemian Waxwing

From the Avian Rangers, Will Crane and Mike Weber, they report a fallout of Bohemian Waxwings in Two Moon Park on Jan. 1, 2020. They counted 60 in a flock with only one Cedar Waxwing in the mix.

Will reports dodging the birds as they were flying back and forth to an open waterhole to the Hawthorn berries, Acerola berries and Chokecherry's.

Submitted by Will Crain with photographs.

