



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.

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Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Program, March 16, 2020, 7:00 PM

Avian Protection at NorthWestern Energy with Dr. Marco Restani

Power companies, wildlife agencies, and conservation organizations have collaborated for decades to reduce bird electrocutions and collisions with power lines. Borne from these efforts was the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). Today APLIC counts among its members over 50 utilities, the Edison Electric Institute, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Electrocutions and collisions can cause power outages, equipment damage, and even wildfires. APLIC's mission is to lead the electric utility industry in protecting avian resources while enhancing reliable energy delivery. APLIC funds research, develops management options, and publishes educational materials. For example, in 2005 APLIC and the US Fish and Wildlife Service released *Avian Protection Plan (APP) Guidelines*. An APP is a company-specific program designed and implemented to reduce avian risks with electrical systems.

NorthWestern Energy is an active member of APLIC and implements an APP across its entire operations but focuses on power lines because they pose the greatest risk to birds. New power lines are constructed following bird-friendly standards and existing lines are retrofitted with bird protection devices where electrocutions or collisions have occurred. This presentation will review the legislation protecting birds, the biology and engineering driving bird-power line interactions, and management to reduce conflicts. Examples ranging from Common Ravens roosting on transmission line towers to Ospreys nesting on distribution poles will illustrate the diversity of challenges experienced in Montana.

Marco Restani is a Biologist at NorthWestern Energy responsible for developing and implementing the avian protection program. Formerly Professor of Wildlife Ecology at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, he has studied raptors for over 30 years and returned to Montana in 2015. Marco also coordinates the research component of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Osprey Nest Monitoring Project.



At right, Common Ravens roosting on transmission line towers.

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 9, 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, March 16, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting



The Board invites everyone for cookies and coffee at 6:30pm prior to the Chapter meeting. Please contact Sue Weinreis @ 855-4181 [the Friday prior to the Chapter meeting](#) if you would like to contribute cookies or bars.

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 Highlights February 10, 2020*Submitted by Dorothy Bartlett*

- Our terrific Flyer Editor, Trenay Hart is resigning from that role after 6 years of service. Happily, Teresa Henderson will be training with Trenay and taking over the position of Editor by June 2020. We will do a formal introduction of Teresa in the near future.
- The Board discussed the possibility of re-naming our monthly General Meetings. We think that publicizing them as programs rather than a meeting may create more interest and seem more inviting to the community. Again, we will keep you updated, and please send any thoughts to Dorothy Bartlett at dpadanyi@live.com
- There will be a collection bin for baling twine to be recycled at PAYS (Public Auction Yard Sales) located on 1st AV South in Billings, MT.
- In a discussion about e-Bikes, and the BLM Pryor Mountains travel plan, there was clarification that ultimately only the MT Wilderness Association and YVAS signed the Op-Ed that was published in the Billings Gazette.
- There was much conversation about conservation possibilities. The board is pursuing a grant for clearing Russian Olive trees and replacing them with native plants in birding areas such as around the Clarks Fork Wildlife Management Area (near Bridger, MT) and possibly, Lake Elmo or elsewhere.

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: 812-1008, donnbartlett@msn.com
 Dorothy Bartlett: 812-1008, dpadanyi@live.com
 Carolyn Jones: 670-4449, carolyn684@gmail.com
 Steve McConnell: 661-0422, mconnells@ci.billings.mt.us
 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
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 Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett, donnbartlett@msn.com, 812-1008
 Flyer Editor: Trenay Hart, yvasflyer@gmail.com, 860-1175
 Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, 1-406-585-1211
 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.

There were no field trips to report at the time of the Flyer publication for the month of Feb.

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

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 River- front Park at 5:30 PM (parking area on the right near the covered picnic facility).
May 16, 2020	Sat.	Lake Basin	Mike Weber, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.
May 23, 2020	Sat.	Bridger Creek	Stan Heath, leader. Meet at Itch-Kep- Pe Park in Columbus at 8:00 AM. Bring a Sack Lunch
May 24, 2020	Sun.	Gritty Stone Fishing Access Site, Pompey's Pillar.	Robert Hill, leader. Bring a Sack Lunch.



CONSERVATION NEWS

Osprey Platform

Submitted by Deb Regele

Dr. Marco Restani will be hosting the annual Osprey Orientation Program in Livingston this year. It will be held Saturday, April 18, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Livingston-Park County Public Library (228 W Callender St.). It is required for new monitors and very highly recommended for returning monitors. The program is free for anyone interested in learning more about the Osprey's behavior, biology and ecology. If you plan on attending, please send an RSVP to assure enough seating.

Osprey nest monitors are needed in Forsyth, Columbus and in the lower Paradise Valley.

To register for the Osprey Orientation Program or to inquire about monitoring nests in Forsyth, Columbus or the Paradise Valley, contact Deb Regele at 406-962-3115 or debregle@gmail.com. Additional information can be found on the YVAS website under Projects.

The Twine Collection & Recycling Site (TCRS) will be gearing up for its second year of collecting clean unwanted twine. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the TCRS, go to the YVAS website or contact Deb Regele.

Northwestern Energy customers, be sure to read the NWE March newsletter that is enclosed with the March billing statement. This month will include an article on Ospreys, utility poles, twine and the TCRS. The MT Department of Agriculture's *Certified Forage Tidbits* newsletter that was published and distributed in January 2020 included an article on the TCRS as well.

Monitoring the Majestic Heron: A call for citizens to help keep count!

Though easy to spot and not uncommon to see, the iconic Great Blue Heron is actually a Species of Concern in Montana. Their concern status is a result of a 2.2% annual population decline measured by Breeding Bird Surveys from 1966 – 2010. Additional concern exists for colonial nesting species like the Great Blue Heron, because they rely on intact river and streamside habitat to establish their nesting colonies, or rookeries, and because impacts to one breeding site can impact many individual birds at once.

While many rookery sites are active across the state, and many of us have seen a large and conspicuous heron rookery, many of their nesting locations around the state are quite challenging to find. In some cases, it's easy to overlook nests even when actively searching for them. Some can be small and well-hidden in dense vegetation, some can be located in hard-to-access areas with limited roads and trails, and some are in rough terrain. Despite this difficulty, a trend shared by many of our state species of concern, standardized surveys and rookery counts are key to conserving the majestic wader.

That's why we have partnered with the Montana Natural Heritage Program to ensure better state-wide coverage of annual heron rookery surveys. Most surveys around the state are conducted by aircraft, an unfortunately expensive and logistically challenging method. There are thousands of miles of waterways in our state with historic records of rookeries along them. To fly over all of them in a single year would be unrealistic, and to carry out such surveys in regular intervals, every year or two, would be just about impossible. While many of our partner organizations and agencies contribute to annual Great Blue Heron Monitoring, there are major gaps in our state-wide coverage.

This winter we put time into an experimental monitoring project where we "flew" our states waterways looking for rookeries using Google Earth's aerial photography and satellite imagery. Believe it or not we found 94% of historic rookeries along five sections of major Montana waterways using this remote survey technique! And while finding these rookeries from the comfort of your own desk does provide some conveniences, we only managed to cover a small portion of the state, so we need to get out in the field to confirm our findings!

In addition to helping confirm potentially new rookeries, boots on the ground are needed state-wide if we want to understand populations, conservations opportunities and threats here in Montana. That's why, this spring, starting in April of 2020, we are piloting a new citizen science project to help monitor Montana's Great Blue Heron rookeries.

And that's where you come in! Your efforts have already helped provide hundreds of records for state species of concern like the Long-billed Curlew, Chimney Swift, and Black Swift. As with these great projects, we also need to build a network of volunteers eager to watch the nests and nesting behavior of the iconic Great Blue Heron. In addition to contributing important biological information about herons, there is some great news about this project!

- Because it is statewide, we need help *everywhere*, so you are sure to be near a site of interest.
- Data collection is simple and uses the Survey 123 platform available on any smart device!
- Everything you need to survey and ID Great Blue Herons can be found at montanabirdsurveys.com
- **We are hosting a survey training April 11th, at our Montana Audubon Education Center in Billings! (time TBD – with more locations likely to be announced)**

Signing up is easy! For more information or to receive project outreach materials, contact Carmen Borchelt: cborchelt@mtaudubon.org; 406-443-3949 or Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org; 406.210.9449

CITIZEN SCIENCE NOTE: Over the past 7 years we have collected outstanding Long-billed curlew data in the Mission, Helena, and Blackfoot Valleys. While those surveys are available on an ongoing basis, the Great Blue Heron surveys will occur during a similar time-frame and will be prioritized this year. For those of you out there regularly participating in the Long-billed Curlew project, the rookery surveys could be a great alternative!

8 STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR PLASTIC USE

If there's one material we can't seem to live without, it's plastic. It's cheap, durable, and lightweight, making it perfect for everything from iPhones to eyewear.

But what makes plastic so useful for humans is exactly what makes it an environmental contaminate—it spreads easily and takes forever to degrade, finding its way to our lands and oceans where it wreaks havoc on wildlife. To date, at least 700 species of marine animals, including shorebirds, have been entangled by plastic or mistaken it for food. The result is often suffocation or starvation. Since the 1950s, we've generated 8.3 billion metric tons of the stuff, of which a scant nine percent has been recycled. And by 2050, scientists predict the oceans will stock more plastic than fish. And some claim it NEVER goes away, but just breaks down into nano particles and who knows what havoc those will cause.

1. Cut Out Plastic Cutlery—Especially When Ordering In

Have you ever tried to cut a piece of broccoli with a plastic fork? Yeah, not fun. And yet Americans use 100 million plastic utensils every day, much of which comes wrapped in even *more* plastic.

2. Party Plastic-Free

Whether you're hosting a dinner party or bridal shower, one great way to reduce plastic waste is to simply use real tableware. If you don't have enough, ask friends to bring extras (people tend to care more about food than whether or not the plates match).

3. Say Good-bye to Balloons

"We see this all of the time," says Steve Kress, executive director of Audubon Project Puffin. "One time, I found a ribbon tangled around a puffin in its burrow. It said on the balloon, 'Angry Birds.'"

4. Take Advantage of Tap Water

In most parts of the world with public, potable water, tap is just as safe to drink as the stuff that comes in plastic.

5. Skip the Plastic Straws

Ridding straws from your life is no easy feat. Americans alone use 500 million of them **each** day. Most of the time they are provided without our consent and thrown out thoughtlessly.

6. Buy Bulk Foods

Food and packaging containers account for nearly half of all trash in landfills, according to the EPA, and buying bulk can help stem that stream.

7. Get Better at Recycling

"Recycle" is easier said than done now that China stopped accepting our recycling. Try to avoid buying plastics numbered 3-7.

8. Actually Remember Your Reusable Bag

Here's your solve: Store one in everything you take with you—your purse, backpack, gym bag—and if you drive to the store, in your car.

Make a New Year's Resolution Take It to the Next Level

If you've already mastered these tips, it might be time to up your plastic-free game. Don't stop with personal actions and choices. If your favorite restaurant gives out single-use plastics, for example, ask them to switch to sustainable alternatives. If that doesn't work, try circulating a petition in your community. The next step is to engage at the civil level to put local laws on the books that reduce plastic waste.

Recycled from Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, with permission and (taken in large part from National Audubon's "8 ways to Reduce Plastic") For more: [https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/ Practice the 4 "R's"](https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/Practice%20the%204%20R's) – **REFUSE-REDUCE-REUSE-RECYCLE**

Submitted by Nancy Wiggins and adapted by Trenay Hart to accommodate the space.

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 MARCH . 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.

MARCH Renewals: Carole Baumann, Gwen Emerson, Steven Evans, Jim & Peggy Good, Lois Gorseth, Claudia Janecek, Audrey Jurovich, Robert Mackin, Joan McKeown, and Steve & Deb Regele.

FEBRUARY (outstanding) Renewals: Lottie Eaton & Curt Starr.



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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YVAS member Beth Horn and her neighbor Lamar Hervey had a special visitor in January. The **Eastern Screech-Owl** was very photogenic! Thanks to Beth and Lamar for sharing the sighting and to Lamar for the great photo.

YVAS Bird of the Month

Eastern Screech-Owl

As the breeding season for this adorable raptors closes in we know that these owls are monogamous and remain together for life. This pleases all of you anthropomorphizing birders. That aside, there are a lot of fascinating things to know about these sweet swindlers.

The oldest Eastern Screech-Owl known in the wild was 14 yrs., 6 months found in Ontario where it had been banded in 1955.

A rufous morph occurs mostly in the eastern range for this bird occurring only 15% of the time on the western range.

Adapted from All About Birds and submitted by Trenay Hart.