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 7 AUGUST 2020

YVAS and Covid-19 Era Update

Submitted by Steve Regele

Like so many organizations, YVAS is alive and well but certainly affected by the Covid--19 pandemic. Our monthly Programs and routinely scheduled birding trips have had to be cancelled "until further notice" due to Covid-19 certainty's and uncertainties. Other YVAS activities and projects have been adversely affected too, as is true for most of the rest of the world. YVAS members have nonetheless been keeping busy with...

- Osprey monitoring and banding (thanks to all the monitors and especially to Marco Restani and Deb Regele for that!):
- Twine Collection and Recycling the project is moving ahead (see updates elsewhere in this issue of the Flyer);
- Inter-organization and conservation work (e.g. field projects, conservation issues, and cooperative efforts with MT Fish Wildlife and Parks, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, MT Audubon Center, etc.);
- Individual and small group improvised birding trips and bird sighting alerts (YVAS Field Trip Chair Donn Bartlett's outlet thank you Donn for keeping that up and running smoothly!);
- YVAS Website, Facebook and Flyer newsletter publications;
- Injured raptor transport assistance to the Montana Raptor Center;
- Arranging for the monthly Public Program Series to begin again in the fall "live" programs as in the past if possible given Covid-19 circumstances, or "remote" recorded Programs if Covid-19 drives us that way.

The YVAS Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings, in August and until further notice, will take place in Covid-conscious locations and respects - possibly in City Parks. These locations will be decided by the YVAS BOD a short time before each monthly meeting. If any YVAS members wish to attend the meetings please contact Steve Regele at 406-962-3115 for updates.

The Flyer is a nice place to keep in touch with your organization and to share with others during this Covid-19 time. YVAS members are encouraged to use your writing skills and submit articles to the Editor of the Flyer ... mini-bird trip adventures, fun bird behavior, etc.! yvasflyer@gmail.com

We all hope that a new normal, more-better than the current Covid-19-driven normal, comes sooner rather than later. In the meantime I and the YVAS Board of Directors encourage all YVAS members to adhere to best Covid protection measures, make the most of the great Montana outdoors, share time and experiences with each other safely, and help keep the "Society" active and productive.

YVAS Public Programs

All **YVAS Public Programs** 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.

Tentative- Monday, Sept 10th, 2020 at 4:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Tentative- Monday, Sept 17, 2020 at 7:00pm: YVAS Public Program Series

The Board invites everyone for cookies and coffee at 6:30pm prior to the Public Program. Please contact Sue Weinreis at 855-4181 the

*We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

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

Freeloaders in the Twine Shed or Legal Residents?

Submitted by Deb Regele

Spring 2020. When we arrived at the Twine Collection & Recycling Site (TCRS) to prep it for spring twine deliveries, we were greeted by the loud raucous warning call of an overhead flying raven. The closer we got to the shed, the closer and more verbally expressive the raven became. Once inside the shed, it was obvious why he had such a "tude". A very large nest of sticks had been built in the rafters. In the middle of the nest sat the she-raven with a "tude" all of her own and no intention of leaving. We quietly retreated to assess the situation. Since there was not a lease agreement involved, it was decided these illegal squatters could stay temporarily.

Round 1 - Ravens.



Four weeks later. After allowing our non-paying tenants some uninterrupted privacy, we paid another visit. This time, both adult ravens appeared out of nowhere expressing their displeasure with our presence. They were not happy to see us but we were armed with a camera! After getting a photo of their three flightless offspring (proof of their "crashing" our twine shed), we again quietly retreated to reassess the situation. Again it was agreed that the vagabond family was there to stay until they were ready to leave. Round 2 - Ravens.

Two weeks later. Maintenance was needed on the gate and the signs near the highway. A good opportunity to check on the freeloaders. At first, all seemed quiet as we worked. Just as I was wondering if the juveniles had fledged, one of them became curious and flew out of the shed making a small circle before landing. Again, the adults appeared out of nowhere but this time their verbal abuse was directed at their delinquent offspring. The problem child attempted another circle of the TCRS only to have both parents hot on his tail feathers. He dove back into the shelter of the shed and not another peep was heard from inside the shed as

we finished up the work. Round 3 - Ravens. But time is running out for these trespassers!

One week later. The interlopers were no longer in the shed or in the area. We were able to legally remove their possessions from the shed and return to the twine recycling business as normal. All that remained were a few skulls and vertebrae tucked neatly into some crevices inside the shed. Round 4 - TCRS.

Fall 2020. S Bar S will be installing two side-by-side doors on the twine shed thanks to donations from our generous supporters in 2019 and 2020. This will help keep unwanted guests out of the twine shed whether they be ravens, cats, rabbits, deer or coyotes!

Twine Collection & Recycling Site- Hours AGAIN Revised Due to Increase in Covid-19

Submitted by Deb Regele

Due to the increasing number of active Covid-19 cases, the arrangements for twine deliveries to the TCRS have been revised. These revised hours will remain in effect through June 2021 and could possibly be permanent after that. Please feel free to call or email if there are any questions.

Deliveries can be made year-round, weather dependent. Small deliveries of twine can be left in the shed or, if available, in the outside bin. Access is through a newly installed red pedestrian gate to the left of the locked vehicle gate. See the photo. For large loads requiring vehicle access or unloading assistance, call in advance and we will meet you. Leave a message at 406-591-8606 and we will return the call to make arrangements.



For further information including a map, visit www.yvaudubon.org or send an email to yvas.twine.recycle@gmail.com. You can also call and leave a message at 406-591-8606.

Who do you call when you find an INJURED bird?

<u>Injured Birds</u>: Details at yvaudubon.org (select the "Projects" tab and then "Injured Birds") or call MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (M-F) 406-247-2940.

<u>Injured Raptors</u>: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, Becky Kean, 406-585-1211.

<u>Injured Waterfowl</u>: 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

Volunteer For YVAS Bear Canyon Trail and Habitat Improvement Day

Submitted by Steve Regele

August 5, 2020 is the date Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and the US Forest Service Beartooth Ranger District have scheduled for another Bear Canyon Trail and Habitat Improvement Day - south slope of the Pryor Mountains.

YVAS together with US FS, US Bureau of Land Management and Carbon County Weed District have done weed control and trail maintenance work in previous years. The Bear Canyon hiking, birding and other non-motorized recreational opportunities are much improved for all that!

We are looking for a dozen or so volunteers to clip and bag weed seed heads, clear some shrub and tree saplings from mid-trail, and do some fairly light duty trail clearing along about 1 ½ miles of the non-motorized part of Bear Canyon.

We will meet at the Cenex Town and Country Supply and gas station in Bridger, MT at 7:30 AM on Wednesday, August 5.

Some volunteers and agency staff might travel to a parking area on the south side of the Pryor Mountains just below the entrance to the non-motorized trail into Bear Canyon prior to the group arrival.

If you have questions or other needs please contact Steve Regele (see below).

YVAS volunteers are permitted by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to do the work. Thanks especially The 2016 Crew to Jane Taylor and Allie Wood, and to Ken Coffin and Jeff Gildehaus of the Custer Gallatin National Forest, Red Lodge for facilitating all this through the Forest Service Office and BLM. Thanks too to the BLM folks in Billings that always lend a hand to make this happen.



While working on the trail of course keep your eyes and ears open for birds and other wildlife, and a special eye out for rattlesnakes and wild flowers.



The 2017 Crew

Please bring your own sack lunch and water, gloves, packsack, a long sleeve shirt (and maybe a spare shirt for after the weed work), hat, and a favorite pair of clippers. Safety glasses are a good idea too. We will have spare clippers and trail hand tools for those that need them. We will supply the bags for the weed seed heads. There will be no chain saw work needed and no weed spraying taking place on this date.

If you want to take part in this field day please contact Steve Regele at 1-406-962-3115 or at smregele@gmail.com

A good, productive and pleasant field day is the norm for these efforts, and a good time with some fine "Covidconsiderate" people is a given!

A Two-Story Bird House

Submitted by Deb Regele

Jean Boone, long-time YVAS member, veteran Osprey nest monitor and twine recycling volunteer, had a special treat this summer. In 2018 she put an open-face nest box under the shelter of her front door. That year, Robins successfully nested on its slanted roof and had two fledglings.



This year however, Say's Phoebes nested inside the box and fledged three young! (See the photos.). In late June after the Phoebes fledged, Robins returned to build another nest on the roof. This year it took them two tries since the first nest slid off the slanted roof as they were building. The phoebes are still in the area and have been spotted playing in Jean's lawn sprinklers. Photos by Jean Boone



Phipps Park Bluebirds

Submitted by Sue Weinreis and Carolyn Jones

SUCCESS! We are excited and happy to report that five nestlings from one nest box at Phipps Park have successfully fledged! We started the season full of hope in April, when we spotted at least 8 pairs of happy, singing bluebirds checking out our nest boxes. But as April ticked by and May approached, the boxes remained empty and we noticed fewer and fewer bluebirds. By the end of May we didn't see any bluebirds at all, and 11 of the 13 boxes were stuffed full of tree swallows. Finally, Carolyn decided to check the two empty boxes one last time and call it quits. However, I was surprised and delighted when she texted me that one box had pair of bluebirds and five eggs! We anxiously checked "the box" every week. The eggs hatched and we could count four heads...or was it five? Each week we would creep to the nest, expecting the worst, gingerly check the nestlings, and creep away. Then came the day that we crept to the nest and found...nothing. SUCCESS!

Caring for Nature

Submitted by Dorothy Bartlett

Sometime in June we were birding along Bridger Creek Road when we pulled over to follow up on a bird we thought we heard. As we wandered around, listening and looking for birds I noticed that Steve Regele (President of YVAS) was walking around a large tree, examining the trunk and looking up. As I joined him, I saw that there was rusted wire encircling the trunk about eight to ten feet above the ground. It was fastened and would obviously dig into the trunk as the tree grew. Not being a naturalist, I was not sure how badly it would damage the tree, but it did not seem good.

I continued to wander around, birding and looked back after some time to realize that Steve was trying to remove the wire. At first from the ground, trying to reach the wire with some implement. Pretty soon he went to his car and came back with more

equipment. Curious, I went back to watch him. He had a machete, some other implement and was trying to stand up on a three-legged, very small camp stool. Yikes! This man is no spring chicken!

He balanced on this tiny camp stool, while I held my breath. After beating on the wire with the machete and trying to pry in away from the trunk with something else, the wire separated and fell to the ground.

Steve nonchalantly picked up his stuff, put it back in the car and wandered off, birding.

This is someone who cares passionately about nature and does not hesitate to right a wrong at any time or place. Thanks, Steve!



Of Birds 'n Such Submitted by Will Crain

Our adventure, in my guess was above 4000'; not sure of count but 79 give or take 1...is about all one could glean from this elevation. We left a few on the table and we hit the willows hard for a Willow Flycatcher in our first leg..... Nichols Cr to Cooke City.

- -Life bird for me: Cassin's Finch.
- -Heard for real/first time: Hermit Thrush. Quite the eerie sound, to be sure.





Mike painted and birded the first AM outside of Cooke City, MT, while I scoured the hill behind our tent for birds to photo. The evening before I had captured an American Dipper! in a River that runs along side of the campground...that was said to be where a Grizzly uhhh did a few campers...Oh well.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES/NOTICES

Chapter members listed below are up for renewal. 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. Contact the Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins at membership.data@yvaudubon.org with any questions. Don't

July Outstanding: Grace Blair, Donna M Lance

August renewals: Donn and Dorothy Bartlett, Darlene Ellis, Steven Linder, Cindy Meccage, Jeanne Olson, Mat Regele, Sherlene Robinson-O'Dea, Bruce Waage

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

Name	
Address	
City	
State	Zip
Email Address	

Do you want to	receive	the Flyer	electronic	ally?
Г	VES	\square NO		

Send this application and your check to: Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1075

Billings, MT 59103-1075

ORGET

Although we are moving to "Phase 2" due to Covid-19, YVAS has decided to SUSPEND all birding trips until further notice. We do, however urge everyone to bird on their own or with others while adhering to the pandemic requirements. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know. Here's to good birding and good weather!

Donn Bartlett 406.812.1008 406.598.3689



BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE/NOTICES

Public Program Series and Board of Directors meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg, Billings, MT.

YVAS Public Programs are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings and programs are open to the public.

Board of Directors meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 4:00pm. Board meetings are open to all members.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

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

Vice-President: Steve Linder, 380-0073,

becon1@bresnan.net

Secretary: Sue Weinreis: 855-4181,

granpeak47@gmail.com

Treasurer: Pam Pipal, 245-4517, ppipal@charter.net

Board of Directors:

Doreen Hartman, 697-0277, <u>rdzlhman@bresnan.net</u> Carolyn Jones: 670-4449, carolyn684@gmail.com

Steve McConnell: 661-0422, mcconnells@ci.billings.mt.us

Sheila McKay: 652-7175, 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com Deb Regele: 962-3115, debregele@gmail.com

Sue Weinreis: 855-4181, granpeak47@gmail.com

(Phone numbers are Area code 406.)

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

 <u>Sen. Steve Daines:</u> U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510 email Sen. Daines via his website: <u>daines.senate.gov</u> Billings: 406-245-6822 Wash. D.C. 202-224-2651

• <u>Sen. Jon Tester:</u> U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510

website: tester.senate.gov email: <u>senator@tester.senate.gov</u> 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: Teresa Henderson, yvasflyer@gmail.com,

337-263-7985

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center, 585-1211 **Injured Waterfowl:** WJH Bird Resources, wjhbird@yahoo.com,

652-7175

Membership Data: Peter Cummins,

membership.data@yvaudubon.org, 248-8684 **Mt Bluebird Habitat Project:** Carolyn Jones, carolyn684@gmail.com, 670-4449 & Sue Weinreis,granpeak47@gmail.com, 855-4181

Osprey Nest Monitor: Deb Regele, debregele@gmail.com,

962-3115

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

2608

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

Publicity: Steve Regele, smregele@gmail.com, 962-3115; Nancy Wiggins, nwiggins83@gmail.com

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

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Annual Report of YVAS Funds July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

	Operating Fund	Aud. Adv. Fund 2/	Ospre y Fund 4/	Yellowstone R. Fund	Gen. Proj. Fund*	Twine Recyc. Proj.	Endow . Fund 3/	BCF Endow. 1/
Bal. 7-1-19	22,096	0	10,695	1,744	11,446	13,022	(98)	70,027
Revenue	4,626	0	13,525	0	1,959	10,762	3,674	3,500
Expenses	(3,658)	0	(5,632)	0	(571)	(3,761)	(3,500)	7,001
Bal. 6-30-20	23,064	0	18,588	1,744	12,834	20,023	76	80,528

TOTAL YVAS FUNDS:

156,857.00

*General Projects Fund includes:

OSPREY PROJECTS		
Osprey Rescue Fund	\$	2,695.30
CONSERVATION PROJECTS	Ψ	2,090.00
Conservation Grant		520.00
Unspecified Conservation Projects		282.00
Endangered Species Donation		332.00
Clark's Fork WMA		295.07
SPECIAL PROGRAMS		
Holiday Fundraiser/Other		1,577.11
Birdathon 2018/2019 - YVAS "party" fund		110.00
EDUCATION		
Rose Sylling Trust		3,139.68
Birdathon 2016 - for Dover Park		•
signs		259.25
Birdathon 2017 - for Dover Park		
signs		1,085.07
Audubon Adventures Repurposed 2/		1,680.61
M and K Fried Community		
Education		500.00
Chapter Dinner 1-16-17,1-15&5-21-18		358.00
Nocturnal Bird Call Recording		
Project		-
TOTAL	\$1	2,834.09

- 1/ Revenue represents deposits by YVAS to the Endow. Fund and Expenses represent net changes to the Fund.
- 2/ Repurposed under General Projects Fund EDUCATION.
- 3/ Expenses represent transfers to BCF Endowment.



YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON FLYER

P.O. Box 1075 Billings, MT 59103-1075

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