

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.

APRIL 2021

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 4

Shooting of Piscivorous Birds at the Miles City Hatchery

In late summer 2020, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS) learned that the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) Hatchery in Miles City had been applying for and receiving Federal Migratory Bird Depredation Permits to shoot Ospreys and other piscivorous birds. From 2018 to 2020, 8 Ospreys, 105 Canada Geese, 26 Great Blue Herons, and 16 Double-Crested Cormorants have been shot.

The Miles City Hatchery's 2021 Depredation Permit Application requests authority to shoot up to 4 Ospreys, 15 Double-crested Cormorants, 15 Great Blue Herons, 50 Canada Geese, and new this year, 5 Belted Kingfishers. The US Fish Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulates (issues or denies) the Depredation Permits.

According to MFWP, Ospreys were eating too many of the hatchery fish, specifically largemouth bass, which are an introduced species in Montana. YVAS was told that the number of bass taken by Ospreys was an unacceptable operational and financial loss for the hatchery. The hatchery shot two Ospreys in 2018, five in 2019, and one in 2020.



Miles City is the eastern extent of breeding Ospreys on the Yellowstone River. Data submitted by the Miles City nest monitors shows that the number of fledglings from known nests within a 20-mile radius has declined drastically over the last three years. In fact, no fledglings were produced in 2018, 2019, and 2020. This decline did not go unnoticed by

the local Osprey nest monitors, who began expressing concerns through their posts to the Osprey Google Group in 2019. YVAS learned in August 2020 that Montana-Dakota Utilities reluctantly removed the nesting platforms adjacent to the hatchery at the request of MFWP.

The killing of native wildlife to support an introduced fishery in Montana goes against YVAS philosophy, sound science, and management for good ecological integrity.

This deadly bird management and permitting situation at the Miles City Hatchery is upsetting, inappropriate, and unacceptable to many of us.

YVAS and National Audubon Society representatives are in discussions with USFWS and MFWP to find alternative non-lethal solutions to this conflict although there have been no significant cooperation or results from the agencies since September 2020 when the discussions began.

Sign Yellowstone Valley Audubon

Society/National Audubon Society's Petition to stop the shooting of native birds at the expense of nonnative fish species at the Miles City Hatchery. More progressive and nonlethal solutions are available. They need to be studied and implemented.



Here is the link to read and sign this petition: <https://works.audubon.org/petition/shooting-native-piscivorous-birds-miles-city-montana-fish-hatchery> It can also be found on the YVAS Website and Facebook.

Submitted by Deb Regele



Photo Edie Linneweber

Miles City Bald Eagle Nest Camera

The Bald Eagles are busy at the Miles City nest and the camera is on line and live to prove it!

The camera was installed in February 2014 and the May 2014 Flyer p. 6 announced that the camera was officially "on line" (<https://yvaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MAY2014R.pdf>)

The following excerpt from that 2014 announcement is as relevant today as it was then:

"The nest is approximately eight feet wide and sits ninety eight feet high housed in a cottonwood tree. It has been used consecutively (... since 2009...) by nesting pairs. The eagles are currently on the nest... "We have already learned so much from this opportunity," said Brad Schmitz, Fish Wildlife and Parks, Region 7 Supervisor, "Not only about this pair of eagles in particular, but also this technology that may be used in future projects." FWP expects the resident Bald Eagles have an enormous amount of information to share with the community. This project has ... truly been a community project.... Immediately after beginning to pursue the idea, support and offers to help came out of the woodwork"..."

- ❖ Yellowstone Valley Audubon- Conservation Grant was written by FWP on behalf of ROCKS and YVAS awarded \$1000.00 to the ROCKS program to be used towards the purchase of the camera and for some project costs.
- ❖ ROCKS Program- Approval to tap into power and house the modem. ROCKS has ownership of the camera and allows the camera system to use ROCKS digital access.
- ❖ Technologies Plus- Dean Hanvold donated labor and expertise for camera purchase, installation and maintenance.
- ❖ Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Region 7- Initial project management, staff time and small local, one time purchases.
- ❖ Kiwi Pete's Tree Service- Donating the bucket truck and labor on Installation Date - Truck was 15 feet short on attempted install date of 2/17/14 so...
- ❖ Miles City Fire Department completed the camera installation.
- ❖ City of Miles City- Permission to install the camera on City property.
- ❖ Montana Dept. of Transportation- Traffic Control on Installation day

The camera has been 'down' only infrequently and is routinely up and running, as it is now: <https://53431558b81c6.click2stream.com/>



That 2014 camera is getting old by 'outdoor-4-seasons-in-MT' camera standards, and technology has advanced quite a bit since 2014. YVAS and Technologies Plus of Miles City are discussing possibilities for upgrading that camera to a new generation 'Pan Tilt Zoom Camera'. Such a camera would allow adjusting camera angle and zoom from a remote location, and would extend nest viewing life and options.

The Miles City ROCKS (Raising Our Community Kids Safely) Program says it regularly uses the camera set up for educational programs in Miles City and surrounding areas - the kids and families really enjoy it and learn from it.

YVAS and Technologies Plus, Miles City receive notes from viewers - some from outside the USA - that enjoy the web site and the viewing of real-time Bald Eagle nest activity in Montana.

For further information on the Miles City Eagle Cam and possible upgrade you can contact YVAS through <https://yvaudubon.org/>.

Submitted by Steve Regele



Please submit articles, notes, and photos that you would like to see in a YVAS Flyer newsletter on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of preferred publication. This is your chance to use your writing and reporting skills! All contributions are appreciated.



April Events at the Montana Audubon Center

Advance registration is required for all programs. Visit our website at mtaudubon.org/center for more info or to register. Current members of the Montana Audubon Center receive discounts on all of our programs! Become a member today by visiting our website.

- **Bird Stroll:** *April 10th from 8:30 - 10am*
Enjoy a morning stroll by the river and learn a few birds along the way. Great for beginning birders. Binoculars and guidebooks available to check out. Suggested donation \$10/ adults, \$5/students, or free for members.
- **Outdoor Skills Expo:** *Saturday April 10 from 1-3pm*
Join MSU-Billings' Outdoor Adventure Leadership Program for an afternoon workshop covering many of the skills you'll need to get outside hiking and camping this summer! Sessions will include knot-tying, bear awareness, water purification, leave no trace principles, the essentials to bring on a hike and how to pack them. Free!
- **Walk with a Naturalist:** *April 27 from 6:30 - 8pm*
Each month we'll explore a different natural area in and around Billings. This month we'll meet at Swords Park on E. Airport Rd. (at the parking area by the picnic shelter and vault toilets), and we'll be joined by City Forester Steve McConnell. Wildflowers should be in bloom here on the warm, sun-drenched cliffs!

Please bring a mask and any naturalist tools you like to use (binoculars, field guides, magnifying glasses, journals, etc.). We'll also have some equipment you can borrow. Suggested donation \$5-10/person.

Submitted by Heather Bilden

Hi, Bird Lovers!

Scott from [Bird Watching HQ](#) sent me this email recently. I am excited to share it with you!

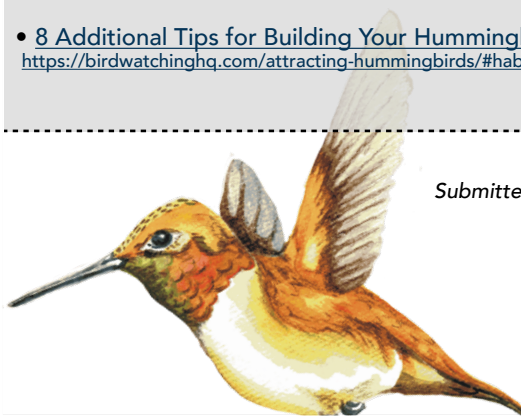
The hummingbirds are coming!

Believe it or not, most hummingbirds have already begun their northward migration back for the summer. In fact, many southern states are already seeing birds!

Regardless of when hummingbirds arrive back to your area, I want you to attract more hummingbirds than you ever have this summer.

Make sure you check out my 2021 guide: [38 Simple Tips for Attracting Hummingbirds!](#)

- [20 Tips for Nectar Feeders](#)
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/attracting-hummingbirds/#feeders>
- [10 Tips for Hummingbird Gardens, Flowers, & Plants](#)
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/attracting-hummingbirds/#garden>
- [8 Additional Tips for Building Your Hummingbird Garden](#)
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/attracting-hummingbirds/#habitat>



Submitted by Sue Weinreis

Calling all citizen scientists!

Montana Audubon and the Audubon Center (MAC) have a couple of good ways to help with scientific studies and remain safe outdoors.

First, National Audubon is conducting a long term study to determine the effects of climate change on certain bird species. After training, it only requires one day in the spring and one in the winter to conduct your Climate Watch survey.

There is a Climate Watch webinar you can watch : <https://nationalaudubon.app.box.com/s/gldp873c53wbgsi49zbvcvryuq8whj68> or you can contact Emily at MAC and she will be glad to help you: echilcoat@mtaudubon.org or 406-294-5099 or 937-510-7568

MAC is looking for people willing to come out and observe nest boxes at the center for the breeding season. This also would be easy and safe to do. Nest Box training will be held at the center on April 14 from 4-5:30. There may be virtual training also. To register for the training please go to this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nest-watch-monitor-training-tickets-146495627365>. You can also call or email Emily.

Let's get out and help the birds while we help ourselves in the fresh air!

Submitted by Carolyn Jones

Wild Birds Unlimited, here in Billings, graciously purchased the last pairs of bino straps remaining of our original 60th Birthday inventory. Thank You Kathy and John!! This is a momentous occasion for us (!) And thanks again to all who purchased the straps over the years from 2013 until now!

Submitted by Pam Pipal



2021 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, BILLINGS, MONTANA

EVERYONE WELCOME: CHECK THE YVAUDUBON.ORG WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, AND THE FLYER FOR ANY SCHEDULE CHANGES INCLUDING TIMES, CANCELLATIONS, NEW TRIPS, ETC.

COVID SAFETY FIRST

IN ORDER FOR YVAS TO SPONSOR BIRDING TRIPS IT IS NECESSARY THAT EACH PARTICIPANT FOLLOW COVID 19 SAFETY MEASURES...WEAR A MASK WHEN PRUDENT, DISTANCE APPROPRIATELY BETWEEN OTHERS, DO NOT SHARE BINOS OR SCOPES.

Field trips depart by car from the Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Rimrock Road next to Billings Studio Theater at 8:00 a.m. unless noted in the specific trip information shown below.

Please DO NOT bring pets.

Passengers will share gas costs with drivers when car-pooling.

Donn Bartlett, Field Trip Chairman, 406-812-1008

Apr 24	Sat	Exxon Ponds and Emerald Hills	ONE MILE WALK, Sack Lunch, Needs a leader.
May 1	Sat	Riverfront Park S Billings Blvd, parking area to the right	8:00 a.m. to noon. FAMILY ORIENTED OUTING. Sue Weinreis, leader
May 9	Sun	Pryor Mountains, Bear Canyon Birding/Hiking	Meet at Rocky at 6:30 a.m. or at Lyons Park in Bridger at 7:30 a.m. to hike into Bear Canyon, Sack Lunch, Trenay Hart, leader
May 13	Thurs	Riverfront Park, S Billings Blvd, parking area to the right near the covered picnic facility.	Needs a leader, 5:30 pm
May 15	Sat	Lake Basin	Needs a leader, Sack Lunch
May 18	Tue	Pompey's Pillar Fishing Access Sites	7:00a.m. Sack Lunch, Robert Hill, leader

May 22	Sat	Bridger Creek	Stan Heath, leader, Sack Lunch Meet at Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus at 8:00 a.m.
May 25	Tue	Stillwater River/Woodbine Area	7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sack Lunch Ruth Vanderhorst, leader
June 8	Tue	Pryor Mountain, Sage Creek	Meet at Rocky at 7:30 a.m. or at 8:30 a.m. at the Bridger Rest Area. Stan Heath, Leader, Sack Lunch
June 12	Sat	Red Lodge Area	Meet at Rocky at 7:00 a.m. or in Red Lodge at 8:15 a.m. at the Town Pump Conoco C-Store. Jerry Dalton & Stan Heath, Leaders, Sack Lunch
June 19	Sat	Yellowstone River WMA State Park	Megan O' Reilly, leader, Sack Lunch

AT PRESENT THERE ARE NO TRIPS SCHEDULED IN JULY. ALERTS WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL OF ANY IMPROMPTU TRIPS. CONTACT DONN BARTLETT IF YOU ARE NOT ON THE FIELD TRIP BIRDERS EMAIL LIST.

Aug 7	Sat	Shorebirds, Hawks, Prairie Birds	Mike Weber, leader; Sack Lunch
Aug 20-22	Sat-Mon	Bowdoin NWR	<u>Needs a leader</u> Make your own reservations for two nights at the Maltana Motel in Malta 406-654-2610.
Sept 4	Sat	Bridger Creek	Stan Heath, leader, sack lunch, Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus
Sept 8	Wed	Riverfront Park	Meet at the parking area on the right once in the park at 5:00 p.m. Mike Weber, leader
Sept 18	Sat	Red Lodge Area Hawk Watch	Marco Restani, leader, Sack Lunch Meet at 8:00a.m. In Red Lodge at the Town Pump Conoco C-Store.
Nov 6	Sat	Yellowstone Dam Afterbay	Brian Henderson, leader, Sack Lunch
Dec	Sat	Christmas Bird Count	Jerry Dalton, leader

1-1-2022	Sat	New Year's Day	Annual Trip to Yellowtail Dam Afterbay, Brian Henderson, leader, Sack Lunch

TO ENCOURAGE ADDITIONAL OUTINGS, PLEASE CONTACT DONN BARTLETT AT DONNBARTLETT@MSN.COM OR 406-812-1008. DONN WILL THEN FORWARD THE INFORMATION TO ALL AREA BIRDERS HE HAS ON EMAIL.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT YVAUDUBON.ORG FOR ADDITIONAL SITES IN AND AROUND THE BILLINGS AREA AND CHECK OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR INFORMATION.

YVAS Board of Directors Highlights March, 2021

- ❖ Mike Ruggles, Manager of Fisheries for FWP Region 5 was present to explain the improvements planned for Lake Elmo. Phase I includes bringing fill in to extend the shoreline, establishing foundations, and a connecting cement trail. Future plans include the creation of natural areas, expansion of the dog park and Russian Olive removal. Draining the lake to rid it of Asian clams and prevention of shoreline erosion are also goals.
- ❖ A little birdie told me that Bird Trips have started again! Check elsewhere in the Flyer for the Bird Trip Schedule. And a BIG thanks to Donn Bartlett and the Bird Trip Committee for making bird trips COVID-safe and available.
- ❖ Deb Regele reports that Osprey Nest Monitors are in place for the 2021 spring breeding season. Twine continues to be dropped off at the Twine Collection and Recycling Site as well as the Public Auction Yards.
- ❖ Treasurer Pam Pipal renewed the annual Liability Insurance with RV Nuccio & Associates.
- ❖ VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO MONITOR RED-TAILED HAWK nests, SWAN Nests and LOON Nests in YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK during June and July. Contact Sue Weinreis at 406-855-4181 (text or phone) or email granpeak47@gmail.com for details about PROJECT NEST.

Guests are always welcome at the Board meetings. The next YVAS Board meeting will be held April 12, 2021, at 4:00 pm via ZOOM. Please notify [Sue Weinreis](#) if you would like to be included and she will send you an invitation to ZOOM with the Board.

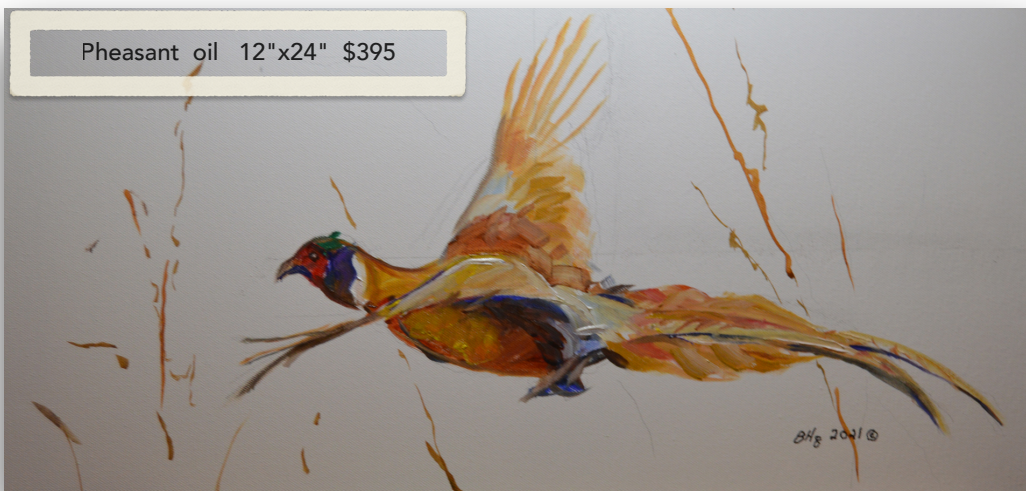
Submitted by Sue Weinreis

Art and Opportunity: Barbara Garret Art Sale Proposal

Artist and YVAS member, Barbara Garrett, has generously offered to donate a portion of the sale of her paintings to YVAS supporters in a way that benefits the patron and YVAS. For all YVAS related sales, Barbara will donate 40% to YVAS in lieu of her gallery. If you are interested in seeing her original paintings and also in taking advantage of this opportunity to support YVAS contact Barbara: (406)601-1391 or garrettimpressionart@gmail.com



Western Meadowlark oil 12"x12" \$295



Pheasant oil 12"x24" \$395

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS - September through May

Next Board of Directors Meeting: **April 12, 2021** —The YVAS meeting of the Board of Directors will be held from 4pm to 6pm. The Meeting will be held virtually by Zoom conference. Please notify Sue Weinreis if you would like to be included and she will send you an invitation to ZOOM with the Board.

Board of Directors meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 4:00pm. Board meetings are open to all members. YVAS Public Programs are suspended until further notice.

Board of Directors

President: Steve Regele 406-962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Vice President: Steve Linder 406-380-0073 becon1@bresnan.net
Secretary: Sue Weinreis 406-855-4181 granpeak47@gmail.com
Treasurer: Pam Pipal 406-245-4517 pppipal@charter.net

Board Members

Jerry Dalton 656-3656 daltonlj@centurylink.net
Doreen Hartman 406-697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Robert Hill 406-252-4447 rehill49@gmail.com
Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn648@gmail.com
Steve McConnell 406-661-0422 mcconnells@ci.billings.mt.us
Sheila McKay 406-652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
Deb Regele 406-962-3115 debregele@gmail.com

Committees and Chairs

Bird Questions: Any Board of Directors or member
Birdathon: Ruth Vanderhorst 245-5118 erv132@charter.net
Christmas Bird Count: Jerry Dalton 656-3656 daltonlj@centurylink.net
Conservation Advisor: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Facebook: Nancy Wiggins 839-4461 nwiggin83@gmail.com
Field Trip Chair: Donn Bartlett 812-1008 donnbartlett@msn.com
Flyer Editor: Teresa Henderson 337-263-7985 yvasflyer@gmail.com
Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center 406-585-1211
Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources: 652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
Membership Data Admin: Peter Cummins 248-8684 membership.data@yvaudubon.org
Mt Blue Bird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones 670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
Sue Weinreis 855-4182 granpeak47@gmail.com
Osprey Project Nest Monitor Coordinator: Deb Regele 962-3115 debregele@gmail.com
Osprey Project Research Coordinator: Marco Restani 425-2608 restani@stcloudstate.edu
Twine Recycling Project: Deb Regele: 962-3115 debregele@gmail.com
Doreen Hartman 697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Program Committee: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Publicity: Steve Regele 962-3115 smregele@gmail.com
Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker 855-9832918 Avenue C, Billings
Recycling (baling twine): Deb Regele 962-3115 debregele@gmail.com
Doreen Hartman 697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Website: Deb Regele 962-3115 debregele@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation to the US Congress:

Senator Steve Daines
www.daines.senate.gov
Billings: 406-245-6822 Wash DC: 202-224-2651

Senator Jon Tester
www.testersenate.gov
Billings: 406-252-0550 Wash DC: 202-224-2644

Representative Matt Rosendale
https://rosendale.house.gov/contact
Billings: 406-413-6720 Wash DC: 202-225-3211

Membership Updates

Chapter members listed below are up for renewal. Please use the application form below (include your email address) and submit, along with a check, to any Board Member or mail it to the address on the application.

- ⇨ April renewal: Kristie Decker, Gordon & Susan Hills, Judi Knapp, Judy Weddel
- ⇨ March outstanding: Gwen Emmerson, Steven Evans, Robert Mackin

Contact the Data Base Administrator: Peter Cummins at membership.data@yvaudubon.org with any questions.

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 electronically?
 YES NO

Send 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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BILLINGS, MT
PERMIT NO. 27

Top right: Black Rosy-Finch- March 2021
Below: Common Redpoll- March 2021
Bottom right: Steller's Jay- March 2021
Photos: Brian Henderson

