

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.

MARCH 2021

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Art and Opportunity: Barbara Garret Art Sale Proposal

Artist and YVAS member, Barbara Garrett, is currently focusing her work on oil paintings of birds. As many of you may recall, Barbara has been on numerous birding trips photographing birds, critters that looked interesting (i.e. snakes at Pompey's Pillar and camels in the Bull Mountains) and landscapes for which she is well known.

Barbara 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. Her paintings generally sell for \$295.00 to \$595.00. These are her gallery prices. For all YVAS related sales, Barbara will donate 40% to YVAS in lieu of her gallery.

These paintings will be featured in the Flyer. A couple examples of her recent work can be seen below.

If you are interested in seeing her original paintings and also in taking advantage of this opportunity to support YVAS contact Barbara at (406)601-1391 or garrettimpressionart@gmail.com



Submitted by Steve Regele

Horned Lark (oil) 12" x 12" \$295



Black-billed Magpie (oil) 10" x 20" \$295

Birdwatching HQ

Attention Birders and Readers! Do you love books and birds as much as I do? Look what I found at <https://birdwatchinghq.com/best-bird-books/>

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"This list of the 19 best bird watching books was designed to include books about birds that you WANT to read. So let me tell you what is NOT on this list. Field Guides. It's not that I don't appreciate field guides. They are an essential part of any bird watcher's library. But to make it onto this list, I had to be excited to sit down to read at night (and NOT immediately fall asleep)! This list of the BEST bird books offers something for everyone. Humor, fun, adventure, education, etc. I love reading bird books, and it's one of my favorite tips for beginning birders." -Scott, blogger & author of the site

Quick Links: The 19 Best Bird Books All titles are available through Amazon and other booksellers - and some are available to check out through the Billings Public Library!

❖ Education AND Entertainment (4 books)

- ***The Genius of Birds*** by Jennifer Ackerman
- ***The Thing with Feathers*** by Noah Stryker
- ***Gifts of the Crow*** by John Marzluff and Tony Angell (Marco Restani, leader of the YVAS Osprey Monitoring Group, is mentioned on Page 90 and later in the book, also!)
- ***Handbook of Bird Biology*** by Irby Lovette and John Fitzpatrick

❖ Tips and Tricks (3 books)

- ***Bird Watching for Dummies*** by William Thompson III
- ***Sibley's Birding Basics*** by David Allen Sibley
- ***Good Birders Still Don't Wear White*** by Lisa White and Jeff Gordon

❖ Big Years and Listing (5 books)

- ***The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*** by Mark Obmascik
- ***To See Every Bird on Earth*** by Dan Koeppl
- ***Kingbird Highway*** by Kenn Kaufman
- ***Lost Among the Birds*** by Neil Hayward
- ***Birding Without Borders*** by Noah Stryker

❖ "Feel Good" Bird Books (3 books)

- ***Wesley the Owl*** by Stacey O'Brien
- ***The Penguin Lessons*** by Tom Michell
- ***Alex and Me*** by Irene Pepperberg

❖ Biographies of Great Birders (4 books)

- ***Birding on Borrowed Time*** by Phoebe Snetsinger
- ***John James Audubon: The Making of an American*** by Richard Rhodes
- ***Birdwatcher: The Life of Richard Tory Peterson*** by Elizabeth Rosenthal
- ***Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding*** by Scott Weidensaul



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 A lagniappe* for March: **Birdwatching HQ** (a website review by Sue Weinreis)

I found this fun website <http://birdwatchinghq.com> as I was looking for a good book about birds and birding. With over 100 entertaining and factual articles to read, book lists, bird and animal cams to view, tips and tricks, and boundless enthusiasm by the blogger Scott, you will find enough to keep you busy until St. Paddy's Day and long after!

*an extra gift or bonus; "a little extra" | Origin: Louisiana French | Pronunciation: LAHN' YAP

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

Use Amazon Smile to Support YVAS

I find myself ordering everything on line so much more than I ever thought I would. Honestly, I think I will continue to do so if/when we get sprung from our isolated form of living. You all probably know about ordering with Smile, but I'm a bit slow about learning new things on the internet. Long story short, I have learned to order from Amazon by using smile.amazon.com. It takes me right to my Amazon account, I order as I normally would and Amazon donates a small percent of my order to YVAS.

I believe you can do this with other sites you may order from as long as you request the donation to go to a non profit organization.

Please, others, add to this information and spread it to our members. All donations are so very much appreciated by YVAS!

Submitted by Dorothy Bartlett

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.

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

I did "my" part of the Midwinter Waterfowl Survey on January 4, 2021. For this coordinated survey during the week designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all states across the country are counting ducks and geese. By doing it the same week, it minimizes the chance that birds are missed or counted twice. This survey is especially useful for Canada geese, as it provides an annual estimate of the population. For my part, I fly with our pilot in a Piper Supercub along the Yellowstone River from Billings to Miles City, plus the Bighorn River. It's a sunrise to sunset survey, which gets a bit tiring, with my long legs and stiff knees crammed into a small plane for that length of time. This is the 30th year that I have done the survey, the last 11 with the same pilot.

We leave the FWP hanger near the airport just before sunrise so we can find geese still on the river, where they are easier to find and count. This day we got to Forsyth before the geese started flying off the river, after which we needed to find them



in the fields. For the Bighorn River later in the day, just about all of the geese were in fields feeding. There were a lot of geese this time, a new record, in fact! I ended up with an estimate of 91,380. Added to geese counted by other FWP staff downstream from Miles City and below Fort Peck Dam, the total came to just over 250,000, also a new record.

Canada geese arrived at these larger rivers in late October, after the cold, snowy period that froze some other waters. It was an easy fall and early winter for them after that, and they stayed around, with mild weather and plenty of food available. I was concerned for their welfare when the heavy snow and cold temperatures arrived February 5. Would

they migrate that late to Colorado, or would they stick around after their food was covered with snow? I think some did migrate, but I believe most sat next to the river, conserving heat and energy. They carried a lot of fat going into the severe cold spell, and they can survive without eating for a while. I was relieved when the recent warm spell melted the snow, and food was again available for them.

*Submitted by Jim Hansen,
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks*

March 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.

We are taking the following precautions to protect everyone's health and safety. Our adult programs are held entirely outdoors or online. Masks are required for all in-person programs, and social distancing between participants will be maintained. Please stay home if you feel sick or have a fever.

Owl Prowl: Saturday March 6 from 4 - 5:30

Come learn all about owls and the amazing adaptations that allow them to be skilled hunters and denizens of the night. We'll talk about the different species of owls that live in the area, and go for a hike to look and listen for them. Please bring a mask and a flashlight. Suggested donation \$5/ members, \$10/non-member, and free for children under 12

Bird Stroll: March 13 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

Walk with a Naturalist: March 23 from 6 - 7:30pm

Join us to make observations, follow our curiosity, and share naturalist knowledge with each other. We'll meet at the Center and go wherever our curiosity takes us! 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 &
Gaby Morey*



Field Trips

Due to Covid-19, YVAS has decided to SUSPEND our monthly scheduled 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

YVAS Board of Directors Highlights February 8, 2021

- ❖ YVAS received a check from the Seacoast Chapter of the NH Audubon for \$150.00 as a thank you and recognition for Marco Restani's osprey presentation to their chapter.
- ❖ The Adult Resource Alliance /Senior Support and Resources group and YVAS are evaluating a BASIC computer/internet/Zoom program to assist seniors with affordable computers and help using ZOOM.
- ❖ The Board sends KUDOS to Teresa for another excellent Flyer!
- ❖ The deadline for sending articles, notes and photos for publication in the Flyer is the 20th of each month. Please submit your contributions to yvasflyer@gmail.com by March 20 for inclusion in the April Flyer.
- ❖ Marco and Northwestern Energy removed the Osprey nests from four Billings area platforms to discourage geese from occupying nests. Ospreys are master carpenters and can build a nest from scratch in less than a week, but geese will not build a nest or use a bald platform. Will this strategy work? We bet it will!
- ❖ We are excited to welcome Jerry Dalton to the YVAS Board. Jerry is a long-time member of YVAS with a special interest in education. He most recently chaired the 2020 Christmas Bird Count and has agreed to serve on the Bird Trip Committee. Welcome, Jerry!

Guests are always welcome at the Board meetings. The next YVAS Board meeting will be held March 8, 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

Get Your COVID Vaccination and Let's Go Birding!

Since many of our members fit in Category 1B for the COVID vaccination, I urge those of you who qualify, to pursue an appointment for a vaccination. This is taken directly from the 2/19/21 Billings Gazette:

"Appointments for the second week of the free Yellowstone County community COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Cedar Hall at MetraPark are now available online.

To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment, go to mtradyclinic.org and click on the blue button that says: Find a clinic. Scrolling down, there is information on each of next week's clinics scheduled at Cedar Hall. If the clinics are not listed, type "Metra" into the location search. Using an internet browser like Google Chrome or Firefox to access the appointments is best.

The online form has space for insurance information, which there is no need to complete. All COVID-19 vaccinations given at Cedar Hall are free of charge and no insurance is required.

Beginning at 9 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, appointments for the week's clinics also will be available by calling 406-651-6596. Appointment times are being saved for people without the ability to schedule an appointment online.

Appointments are available to Yellowstone County residents who meet Montana's criteria for the 1A or 1B priority group. This includes health care workers, first responders, people age 70 or older, people age 16 to 69 with a serious health condition that puts them at high risk of severe COVID-19 illness, Native Americans and other people of color who may be at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness."

Keep in mind that after vaccination you could still pass the virus to someone else, so COVID protocols will still be in order, but you will have the satisfaction that you did your part to make your world a safer place!

Submitted by Pam Pipal

2021 Birding Season is About to Spring

YVAS 2021 Bird Trips are being finalized. Of course Covid considerations will be expected from all birders - masking up when in close quarters, social distancing, and overall attentiveness to Covid safety for yourself and others. "Safety First" is not a cliché, and YVAS takes safety seriously and asks all birders to keep that in the forefront of enjoying field days together.

Watch for YVAS bird trip news and schedules in the April Flyer, on the YVAS website <http://www.yvaudubon.org/> and

on the YVAS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/yvaudubon/>

MT Fish Wildlife and Parks Region 5 (Billings Office) will soon be looking for volunteers for bird survey assistance. YVAS will publish news about these opportunities as soon as they are available. Here again, watch for news and schedules in the April Flyer, on the YVAS website <http://www.yvaudubon.org/> and on the YVAS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/yvaudubon/>.

Submitted by Steve Regele

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS - September through May

Next Board of Directors Meeting: **March 8, 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.

- ✦ March renewal: Gwen Emmerson; Steven Evans; Becky Gill; Gregory Gill; Jim & Peggy Good; Lois Gorseth; Claudia Janecek; Robert Mackin; Steve & Deb Regele
- ✦ February outstanding: Roger Williams; Gordon Cox

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
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U.S. POSTAGE
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BILLINGS, MT
PERMIT NO. 27

Top right: Submitted by Pat Vandell - Great Horned Owl "Looking for breakfast above our chicken coop"

Below: Submitted by Steve Regele—Golden Eagle north of Bozeman, MT - Feb 2021;
Killdeer west of Columbus, MT - February 2021; Osprey

Bottom right: Submitted by Deb Regele— Chipping Sparrow

