

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.

OCTOBER 2021

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 9

Banding Mourning Doves

I missed the August 7th field trip to Big Lake, although I hated to. I had told a couple of you the reason. No, I wasn't out of town. No, the dog didn't eat my vehicle keys. I was checking my dove traps on the Yellowstone River Wildlife Management Area and banding mourning doves that morning! Maybe you'll forgive my absence, since I was at least doing "bird stuff." Why do we band mourning doves? It's the best way to get estimates on the numbers and population trends of doves so that biologists know the population is doing all right and so that appropriate hunting regulations can be set. Hunters who shoot a banded dove are to report that to the Bird Banding Lab, mostly over the internet, and the ratio of doves banded and doves shot can be used to calculate population size.



Mourning Dove. Note the large eye and prominent eye ring.

Until about 18 years ago, dove population trends were estimated by means of May Call-Count Surveys done across the country. Those doing the surveys recorded mourning doves seen and heard along the same 20-mile route, with stops every mile. There were 26 such routes in Montana, with the routes originally set up in the 1960's. However, a couple of problems arose with these surveys. For one thing, the habitat along the routes and at some of the stops changed drastically, with cities and houses spreading into the country along many of the routes. Another issue was that as people age, their hearing isn't as good as it was 30 years earlier. (Yes, I can relate to that!)

So, now we trap and band mourning doves in July and August. A potential banding site would have bare ground, some perches, and water nearby. Oh, and if you see doves hanging around on the perches or on the ground, that's a really good sign! The traps are small, welded wire traps 24 inches square and 9 inches high, with two funnels on them, so that a dove can find its way in, but not out. A potential banding site is baited with



Jim Hansen holding a beautiful adult male mourning dove. We know it's an adult by the wing feathers, and we know it's a male because of the flattened, bluish crown and the rose and bluish feathers around the neck. This may be a common species, but they are still beautiful!





Cora Selden, Summer 2021 Intern holding a banded dove.

white proso millet for a few days. If doves are cleaning up the millet, some traps are put next to it, upside down. Then if the doves have gotten accustomed to the traps, you're ready to set (turn right side up) the traps. I set and bait the traps just before sunset and check them fairly early the next day, before it gets hot. There is a door on the top of the trap so I can just reach in, grab each dove, and put it in an old pillow case to hold it for banding.

In addition to mourning doves, I have trapped an occasional prairie dog. The adult prairie dogs don't need help getting out of the trap, as they dig their way out. The 2/3-grown prairie dog I got this year wasn't very happy at all until I released it. (Even then I don't know how happy it was. It's hard to tell when a prairie dog is happy!) For other nontarget bird species, this year I got more lark sparrows than anything else, but I also got a couple of red-winged blackbirds and several meadowlarks. I didn't think that meadowlarks would be attracted to millet, but apparently they are. Three years ago I had 12 pinyon jays crowded into one trap. I guess birds of a feather do flock together!

There are about 16 Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks staff who band doves each year. They are eager to help, even though they are all busy, because getting to handle cute, little critters like mourning doves is probably one of the reasons they went into this field. Allison Begley, who many of you know, has kindly entered and submitted the dove banding data to the Bird Banding Lab the last few years.

Submitted by Jim Hansen

Osprey Nest Monitoring and Banding

After providing Osprey Nest Monitors with hours of ooh's and aah's, smiles and chuckles, oh no's and nail biting moments, 2021's newly fledged Ospreys are now heading to warmer climates to join other snowbirds for a few months.

On behalf of nest monitors and YVAS, I want to extend a special thank you to Northwestern Energy (4 trucks), Beartooth Electric (1 truck) and Park Electric (1 truck) for providing bucket trucks to assist Marco in the rescue of six entangled Ospreys.

The photo below is of the lone fledgling at the nest along I-90 near Laurel two days after being rescued from twine that had him tightly anchored to one spot. Note the amount of twine and the heavy smoke of summer 2021!



Submitted by Deb Regele

Miles City Fish Hatchery

Four YVAS representatives met via Zoom with two National Audubon Society's (NAS) officers to discuss our objectives in regards to the shooting of piscivorous birds at the Miles City Fish Hatchery. Further action by YVAS and NAS and interaction with State and Federal Agencies will continue in 2021 and until a reasonable and legitimate outcome is arrived at.

Submitted by Deb Regele

TWO WAYS TO HANDLE A WILDLIFE PROBLEM

A Right Way: Park High School - Livingston MT

On September 3 when Park High's Rangers hosted fall's opening football game against the defending state champions, Laurel Locomotives, there were unusual spectators in the audience. On one of the four light poles was an Osprey nest with five Ospreys (two adults, two recently fledged juveniles and one nestling). The lights on three of the poles were on. The lights on the pole occupied by the Ospreys were not on. In its place was a portable 30-foot light pole.

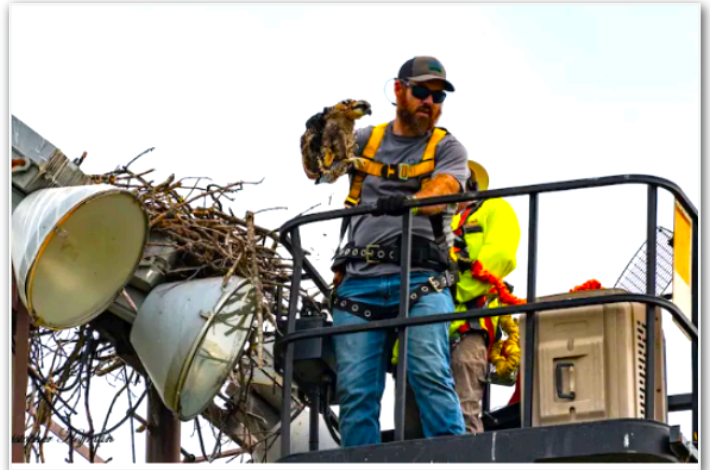
Earlier this summer, strong winds blew down the long-standing Osprey nest near Park High School's football field that contained three eggs. The determined birds then built a second nest with a clutch of three eggs only this time it was on one of the very tall light poles within Park High School's football field. This is typically late for Ospreys in Montana. So late in fact, that the young Ospreys were still at the nest when the time came for the first home football game in early September. If the lights on the occupied pole were turned on, the nestlings would likely have perished due to the heat. In addition, the stick nest could have caught fire. If the nest had been removed, the remaining nestling may have perished.

Park High School's solution to this dilemma is noteworthy and commendable! The school contacted T&E Cat Rentals in Bozeman and T&E donated the portable 30-foot light. Eight days after the Rangers' opening game, the last nestling fledged and the nest was removed just prior to the second home football game. Due to the late nesting of this pair, their young fledged later than in previous years. You can read the complete story that was published in the Livingston Enterprise on the YVAS website at: <https://yvaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Osprey-Lights-Livingston-Enterprise-082721.pdf>



A Wrong Way: Cove Point Park - Lusby MD

In a similar situation to Livingston's Park High School football field, Cove Point Park in Lusby, Maryland, also had lights on tall poles that needed maintenance. However, Calvert County did not wait for these nestlings to fledge even though they were healthy and approaching fledging age. Their solution was to call the USDA Wildlife Services which often kills wildlife. Wildlife Services is a branch of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service under the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Neither Calvert County nor the Wildlife Services bothered to contact any local wildlife sanctuaries or federally permitted rehabilitation facilities that would have relocated or taken them.



Workers remove the ospreys from their nest at Cove Point Park. (Chris Hoffman)

Instead, on July 26, 2021, the two Osprey nestlings were taken from their nest and euthanized by USDA Wildlife Services. This caused outrage and a backlash from the local wildlife enthusiasts and birders. For further details, here are the links.

https://www.annapoliscreative.com/two-juvenile-ospreys-euthanized-for-maintenance-of-calvert-county-ball-park-lights/?fbclid=IwAR18CpTXEX1iBnIHJjh24SrYXLq-zDqbLw6Jcl_Ltj-av76sfkUksM1n-Y8

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/08/20/two-young-osprey-were-removed-their-nest-euthanized-so-workers-could-replace-light-southern-maryland-park/>

Submitted by Deb Regele

PBS Nature program on Ospreys- October 27th, 2021

Season of the Osprey Premiere:

A veteran pair of ospreys return home to a Connecticut saltmarsh. Over one summer they must battle their enemies, withstand the elements, and hunt hundreds of fish, all to raise the next generation of these consummate sea hawks.

Submitted by Steve Linder

YVAS' New Matching Fund Grant Program

The Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society's Board of Directors (Board) created and approved a Matching Fund Grant Program (Program) on August 9, 2021. This is a new opportunity for YVAS to 'promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education and conservation'.

The Program is intended to assist individuals, families or small groups with limited incomes or opportunities to attend classes or events consistent with the YVAS Mission and available through educational program sponsors and facilities (ex. MT Audubon Center/Billings; Zoo MT/Billings; MT Fish Wildlife and Parks/Billings, Miles City; virtual programs from National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, etc.).

The YVAS grants may also be used to fund transportation to and from the classes or events. Additionally the applicant may use the funds to purchase such things as relevant books (e.g. field guides) or field tools (e.g. binoculars). Through the applicants, YVAS aims to provide bird and natural world education and related recreation opportunities for youth and adults that might not otherwise be able to afford or access such opportunity, with special attention on underprivileged and minority youth and/or families.

Organizations established to assist individuals, families or small groups as noted above would be likely candidates to facilitate the Program and manage the grants.

The primary outreach area would be within the Yellowstone River Basin - i.e. from Yellowstone River headwaters to the confluence with the Missouri and from near Roundup to the Montana/Wyoming line. This is roughly the area that YVAS encompasses in our affiliation with the National Audubon Society. Other applicants from within Montana may be considered too.

Some "sideboards" with this YVAS Matching Grant Fund follow:

- ❖ YVAS will work with one organization/Program at a time until further notice.
- ❖ The grant period would be Sept 1 to Aug 31.
- ❖ Once the YVAS match grant is awarded for a given year, YVAS can accept and save donations designated for future Matching Grant awards.
- ❖ A given application and a YVAS grant approval letter taken together constitute the agreement between YVAS and the grant recipient.
- ❖ The entire amount of the grant is to be spent on youth and others in advancing their natural world education and opportunity through the recipients programs and staff in line with the YVAS 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.)."
- ❖ The grant recipient will submit a short written summary to YVAS at the close of the grant year. The recipient would be invited to attend and give a short presentation at one of YVAS's monthly meetings about the grant outcomes.

YVAS members or others may donate to this Program and YVAS will match 25% of any donation - up to a maximum donation of \$4,000.00 per year by donors - that is, no more than \$1,000.00 per year match by YVAS.

Applicants for the Program grants may submit a proposal to the YVAS Board of Directors. The Board will review those and decide whether or not to grant funds based on application merit and logistics, consistency with the YVAS Mission, and availability of funds.

If you would like to donate to the YVAS Matching Grant Fund please send that to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (Attn. Pam Pipal)
PO Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103

If you would like more information about the YVAS Matching Grant Fund Program, please contact any YVAS Board Member (yvaudubon.org/board-of-directors/) or see yvaudubon.org/conservation

Submitted by Steve Regele

Upcoming Birding Field Trips:

Nov 6 Sat: Yellowstone Dam Afterbay Brian Henderson, leader, Sack Lunch

December: Christmas Bird Count Jerry Dalton, Organizer

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

Please check for updated/correct times and meeting places prior to field trip: Donn Bartlett donnbartlett@msn.com

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.

YVAS Matching Fund Grant 2021

Good timing, inspiration and discussions between a couple YVAS members and Board members led to the new YVAS Matching Fund Grant Program and process. That led directly to a Program donation by two YVAS members. And that led coincidentally (almost simultaneously) to a grant application from Montana's Youth Dynamics (YD) organization. A better kick off to a new Program is hard to conjure up.

The YVAS BOD is very pleased to announce that YD (youthdynamics.org) received a \$2,500.00 YVAS Matching Fund Program Grant on September 9, 2021.

As YD explained in their application:

Youth Dynamics is committed to providing comprehensive and progressive trauma sensitive behavioral health services to meet the ever-changing needs of youth and families in Montana. We are a Montana based non-profit children's mental health agency, since 1981. Youth Dynamics has 31 locations across the state and directly serve hundreds of rural and frontier communities through these offices and group homes. Our services include therapy, case management, family education and support, foster and respite care, mentoring, therapeutic youth home care, equine-assisted therapy, substance abuse treatment, and independent living skills. ...

The majority of the families we serve fall below the poverty line and cannot afford things like good hiking shoes, binoculars or field guides. With your support, these youth can incorporate growing and healing in a natural environment.

Youth Dynamics Quick Facts:

- Provided over 6,000 services to over 2,600 Montana youth in 2020
- 31 offices in 19 cities
- 547 Employees across Montana
- 95% percent of our clients are Medicaid eligible, we support kids in Montana's under-resourced families. ...

If awarded, this grant will fund learning and fun activities for youth in our Eastern Montana services, falling under the area of YVAS. This would benefit approximately 1,300 youth.

Children in our mentoring service and in our Therapeutic Youth Group Homes may benefit the most. Staff in both services are in need of activities within our community that will help with a child's treatment. Funding for these activities is limited and only philanthropically supported. Funds can also be used to purchase educational material for our group homes and therapy areas. ...

Thank you, immensely, for exploring support of our organization and ultimately, support of our next generation of Montanans.

Grant funds will be used by YD for such things as field trips, series of classes, education materials, and guest speaker or summer programming for students as arranged by YD (and for YD educators and mentors) providing them with an opportunity to study and appreciate the natural world, conservation, birds and other wildlife.

We look forward to mutually rewarding outcomes in putting this grant into action.

Submitted by Steve Regele

Twine Recycling

In mid-September, the Flying D Ranch made their annual delivery of used and unwanted baling twine to the Twine Collection & Recycling Site (TCRS). The crew included Todd and Garret from Flying D and YVAS's Steve Regele, Jerry Dalton, Robert Hill, Steve Linder and Deb Regele. They unloaded and emptied 14 large big bags full of twine weighing in at 400 to 600 pounds each. To watch a short video showing this process, go to the YVAS Facebook and scroll down to September 15. <https://www.facebook.com/yvaudubon/>

Thanks to the generous grant from Turner Enterprises, advertisements for baling twine recycling at the TCRS have been placed in three issues of Raised in the West magazine including September, November and April's. Six advertisements have been placed in six issues of the Montana Newspaper Association's Statewide Display Ad Program (SDAP). It includes 63 Montana newspapers from the Dillon Tribune to the Miles City Star, including Yellowstone County News, Laurel Outlook, Carbon County News and Stillwater County News.

Submitted by Deb Regele

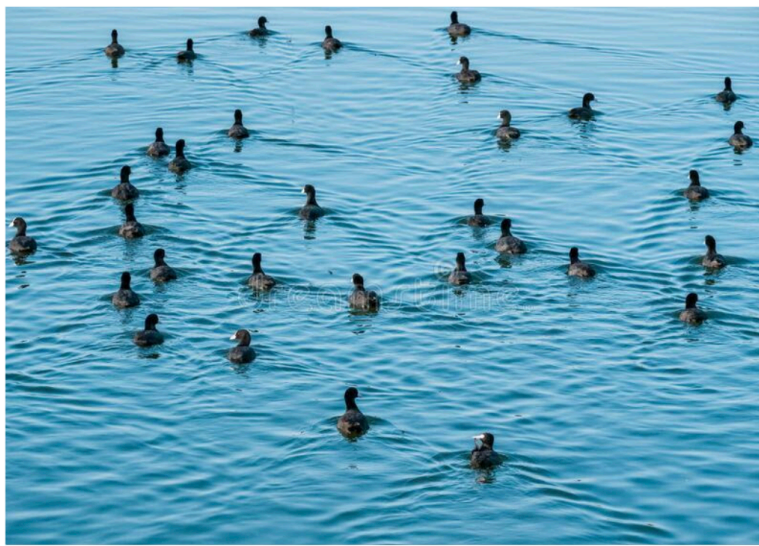
WISH LIST: The loan of a 4-horse trailer in decent condition with a bumper hitch, safe tires and tail lights that can be parked at a local livestock feed lot for collecting used and unwanted twine is needed. When full, it will be towed to the Twine Collection & Recycling Site for emptying once or twice a year. For inquiries or information, call Steve or Deb at 406-962-3115.

A Berkeley Pit and American Coot Note

It has been nearly five years since thousands of Snow Geese died by landing in the toxic water of the Berkeley Pit at Butte, Montana. Since that event there has been a concentrated effort to better manage the Pit with respect to birds.

Dr. Stella Capoccia is Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, Montana Tech in Butte, MT. She is also the Chairwoman of the Berkeley Pit (superfund site) waterfowl impact mitigation team and effort. Representatives from industry, government, academia and other organizations (including Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society) participate in that team effort. The team was formed in response to that fatal landing of thousands of Snow Geese in toxic Berkeley Pit water in late November 2016. Many other bird species are fatally drawn to the Berkeley Pit water. The team has been meeting and working diligently since 2016 to minimize the risk of bird fatalities from the toxic water.

As part of those efforts Dr. Capoccia sends out regular reports about bird monitoring and management at the Berkeley Pit. The team effort is having some positive effect on deterring migratory and other bird visits to the Pit water.



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society hopes to bring Dr. Capoccia to Billings for a Program about all that. We want it to be an 'in person' presentation so are monitoring the Covid-19 situation carefully to make that Program happen when it is 'Covid-prudent' to do so.

In the meantime, Dr. Capoccia's September 16, 2021 Report included a situation update about the Berkeley Pit



and waterfowl that are known to visit the area, and an insightful write-up showcasing American Coots. With her permission that report is available on the YVAS website at yvaudubon.org/publications/

The Report is a good example of work that she and the Berkeley Pit area team are and have been engaged in. And as Dr. Capoccia says about the American Coot profile "By examining this species in detail, the hope is to bring clarity to an often-overlooked bird".

In that Report bird species names are abbreviated. Bird names are often and conventionally abbreviated into specific "Alpha Codes". Some of the Alpha Codes in the September 16 Report are: AMCO (American Coot), COLO (Common Loon), AMAV (American Avocet), WFIB (White-faced Ibis) and RNPH (Red-necked Phalarope). You can make your best bet about the full name associated with the other acronyms in the Report and check that against the "Alpha Code" lists at the YVAS website yvaudubon.org/publications/

We plan to have YVAS 'live' Programs become the norm again as soon as Covid and good sense allows. In the meantime, the Flyer is doing its best to provide good and insightful 'reads'.

Submitted by Steve Regele

Do Your Litter Bit! Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society continues to collect and recycle aluminum cans, a project begun some decades ago. YVAS member Larry Handsaker has been accepting the cans from YVAS-ers and others for many of those years. He reminds us all that he is glad to take your deliveries or even arrange to pick up your aluminum. You can deliver your aluminum to Larry at 918 Ave. C, Billings or call him at 406-855-9832 for assistance in getting your aluminum to him. **Recycle! It's the right thing to do!**



YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: October 11, 2021 —The YVAS meeting of the Board of Directors will be held from 4pm to 6pm. Board of Directors meetings are held the second Monday of the month. Board meetings are open to all members.

Next Public Program: No scheduled program for October. YVAS Public Programs are held the third Monday of the month, September through May. Doors open at 6:30pm; program begins at 7pm.

All meetings are held at the Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings, MT.

YVAS Board Highlights September 2021

The Board discussed three new, interesting activities and hikes for YVAS members and friends...or anyone!

- ❖ The next time you **go birding at the Clark's Fork Waterfowl Production Area**, look for the new sign on the shed recognizing the three organizations that contributed to the work done there: MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Services, and.... TaDAAA.... our very own YVAS.
- ❖ **WALKABOUT WHAT?** Are we in Australia then, Mate? Walkabout DNRC Site is a new, fun area to explore. It is located on DNRC land Southwest of the Yellowstone River Bridge with access via Blue Creek Road to Stratton Road. Folks are encouraged to **explore Walkabout DNRC Site and make suggestions to any YVAS Board member** about possible routes for a trail going from the parking lot to the Yellowstone River.
- ❖ Carolyn Jones and I were asked to help Doreen Hartman and Nancy Wiggins find and post interesting articles on our Facebook page. I did a quick reconnoiter and WOW!!! **Check out the YVAS Facebook page!** FIFTEEN new articles, videos, and photos in the last two days, including, "Amazing Facts About Hummingbirds," "2021 Migration Celebration," and a video of YVAS volunteers unloading 14 bags of twine, each weighing 400-600 pounds, delivered by Flying D Ranch! (That's our YVAS President Steve Regele driving the tractor and YVAS member Jerry Dalton at the twine trailer.)

YVAS ON FACEBOOK: [FACEBOOK.COM/YVAUDUBON](https://www.facebook.com/yvaudubon)

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 ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

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 mconnells@ci.billings.mt.us
 Sheila McKay 406-652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Deb Regele 406-962-3115 debregle@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

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: Doreen Hartman 406-697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
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
debregle@gmail.com
Osprey Project Research Coordinator: Marco Restani 425-2608
restani@stcloudstate.edu
Twine Recycling Project: Deb Regele: 962-3115 debregle@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 debregle@gmail.com
 Doreen Hartman 697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
Website: Deb Regele 962-3115 debregle@gmail.com

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

- ❖ October renewal: Mary Davis, Robin Manfredi, Ruth Vanderhorst, Raylene Wall
- ❖ August outstanding: Shari & Robert Dayton, Kristin Neva, Gail McGlothlin



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Sept 4, 2021 Bridger Creek Birding Trip

Top: Kingfisher

Right: Bear sighted on the road. He scrambled up the side of some cliffs and observed us.

Bottom right: Marco and a pickup full of "chicks."

Photos by Dorothy Bartlett

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

