

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.

MAR 2023

VOLUME 53, NUMBER 3

Urban Forestry in Billings

Billings counts among its many assets a well-developed park system with over 10,000 trees. Aside from the beauty they add to the landscape, these trees provide residents with important benefits and environmental services. **On March 20th, at 7PM in the monthly Audubon program,** Steve McConnell will challenge the conventional understanding of urban infrastructure as engineered of concrete and steel by discussing the integration of "green infrastructure" into a well-established system of "grey infrastructure" and the impact that may have for how urban forestry is currently practiced in Billings.

He will also cover some new developments such as the nascent Arboretum at Centennial Park, our network of Natural Areas and Billings' participation in the national Forests in Cities group.

The Emerald Ash Borer poses a serious threat to the city's many Ash trees, and Steve will discuss plans for dealing with the insect when and if it should arrive here. He will also provide an update on federal funding being made available for urban forestry work to most cities from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

And he will not fail to mention some parks that offer great bird viewing opportunities!



Steve McConnell has been City Forester since January 2017. Prior to his move to Billings, Steve worked as a Regional Extension Specialist in Forestry for Washington State University. Housed in Spokane, he covered most of NE and SE Washington, and, as most of the population of eastern Washington (84%) lives in cities, it was in that position that Steve began his urban forestry career. Steve's formal education includes a B.S, M.S. and PhD degrees in Forestry.

Steve is a long-time member of the Society of American Foresters where he has held numerous leadership positions and was a persistent advocate for bringing urban forestry into the fold, now an official position of the SAF. He is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture.

Steve has five children between the ages of 16 and 26. Outside of his children, nothing brings Steve more joy than planting trees into an area that lacks them, working with his crew to maintain the trees Billings already has and helping city residents better appreciate their urban forest by communicating to them the benefits trees provide and the ways they improve our quality of life.

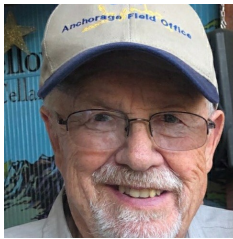
Photo by Steve McConnell



Meet Your YVAS Board of Directors: Acting President Steve Linder

Where are you from and what was/is your profession?

Steve: I'm from Portland Oregon. Before retirement, I held many jobs: Jet fighter mechanic in the USAF; A&P (airframe/powerplant) mechanic for Boeing; salmon hatchery man; refuge maintenance man; biologist; Subaru sales & service; epidemiologist; Italian deli owner; wholesale wine sales; and wine steward.



What bird hooked you into birding?

Steve: All waterfowl. Also, the Marsh Hawk (Northern Harrier).

What is your favorite Montana bird species?

Steve: Hummingbirds.

What is a conservation topic that you are excited about right now?

Steve: Climate change and its impact on the ecological balance of nature.

What is your favorite/funniest/most interesting piece of Wildlife Trivia:

Steve: The acrobatic skills of hummers.

What do you like best about YVAS?

Steve: The tenacious commitment of the YVAS Board members to the success of YVAS by providing educational programs, a monthly newsletter, conservation awareness and offering bird identification trips for the enjoyment of its members.

Submitted by Sue Weinreis

Upcoming Events at the Montana Audubon Center

Submitted by Rebecca Mathis (406) 294-5099

<https://mtaudubon.org/center/>

Owl Prowl: Friday March 17th, from 6:30-8pm
We'll talk about the different species of owls that live in Billings and throughout the state, then we'll go for a hike to look and listen for them.

Suggested donation \$5/Member of MAC, \$10/Non-Member, Free for children <12

Advance registration is required on this website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/owl-prowl-tickets-504823399377>

Bird Stroll: 2nd Saturday of the month. beginning March 11th, 2023, from 8:30 to 10am.

Enjoy a morning stroll by the river and learn a few birds along the way. Great for beginning birders! On this monthly birding adventure, we will cover some birding basics, learn some bird calls/songs for ID by ear and work on our description skills to visually ID the species that we see.
Suggested donation \$10/adults, \$5/students, or free for members of MAC.

Advanced registration requested on this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/monthly-morning-bird-stroll-tickets-437428619777>

YVAS Board Doings and Undoings



So many new changes in YVAS!

Coffee and Cookies are back! Yes!! Come a little early to our monthly Chapter meetings for some "social time" and treats.

Bird Trips officially start April 15, but depending on the weather, March can also be a great month for birding, particularly for waterfowl and raptors. If you get the urge to go to hawking on some windy March day or want to check out the early migrants at Broadview Ponds or Cooney Reservoir, contact Carolyn Jones, our new Bird Field Trip Chair. She will put out an email to other birders interested in impromptu bird trips who may want to join you.

The search for a new President of YVAS continues. Steve Linder has agreed to stay on as Acting President only through May. In order to remain a viable organization, we need a President. Please consider nominating yourself. The future of YVAS depends on it.

It's TAX TIME! don't forget to take your tax deduction for any donations you made to YVAS during 2022. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization.



Submitted by Sue Weinreis

Which bird always gets first place?

A peng win!

Where do penguins keep their savings?

In a snow bank!

Why polar bears and penguins do not get along?

Because they are polar opposites!

What do you call a penguin with no eye?

Pengun!

Why don't you ever see penguins in Great Britain?

Because they're scared of Wales!

How do penguins know when there's something wrong?

It smells a bit fishy!

What do penguins sing on a birthday?

Freeze a jolly good fellow!

What do Penguins like to eat?

Brrrrritos!

What do penguins wear on their heads?

Ice Caps!

What do penguins eat for lunch?

Iceburgers!

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Mar 13, 2023 —The YVAS meeting of the Board of Directors will be held from 4 pm to 6 pm. Board of Directors meetings are held the second Monday of the month. Board meetings are open to all members.

In-Person Program: Mar 20, 2023. Programs will be held on the third Monday of the month at the Mayflower Church on the corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive in Billings. Doors open at 6:30; the program begins at 7:00 pm.

Board of Directors

President (Acting): Steve Linder 406-380-0073 becon1@bresnan.net
 Vice President:
 Secretary: Sue Weinreis 406-855-4181 granpeak47@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Pam Pipal 406-245-4517 ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

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 Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
 Steve McConnell 509-868-8277 mcconnells@billingsmt.gov
 Kristin Neva 406-672-8912 ksneva@gmail.com
 Deb Regele 406-200-7873 debregele@gmail.com
 Bruce Waage 406-698-3126 bruce.waage@outlook.com

Committees and Assignments

Christmas Bird Count: Jerry Dalton 406-656-3656 daltonlj@centurylink.net
 Facebook: Doreen Hartman 406-697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
 Field Trip Chair: Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
 Flyer Editor: Kristin Neva 406-672-8912 yvasflyer@gmail.com
 Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center 406-585-1211

Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources 406-652-7175 wjhbird@yahoo.com
 Membership Data: Peter Cummins 406-248-8684 membership.data@yvaudubon.org
 Mt Bluebird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
 Sue Weinreis 406-855-4181 granpeak47@gmail.com
 Osprey Nest Monitor Coord: Deb Regele 406-200-7873 debregele@gmail.com
 Osprey Research Coord: Marco Restani 460-425-2608 restani@stcloudstate.edu
 Program Committee: YVAS Board of Directors
 Publicity: YVAS Board of Directors
 Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker 406-855-9832 or 918 Ave C, Billings
 Recycling (baling twine): Deb Regele 406-200-7873 debregele@gmail.com
 Doreen Hartman 406-697-0277 rdzlhman@bresnan.net
 Website: Deb Regele 406-200-7873 debregele@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.

- * Mar renewal: Becky & Gregory Gill, Jim & Peggy Good, Lois Gorseth, Claudia Janecek, Robert Mackin, Joan Mckeown
- * Feb outstanding: Larry Newell & Marlene Pirtz

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Application for New & Renewal Membership



Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our federal tax ID number is 51-0206955.

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 _____

Do you want to receive the YVAS 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

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Winter Raptor Survey Project

For many years YVAS members have carried out winter bird surveys that contribute to national databases on bird species. The Christmas Bird Count and the National Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey are two such projects that were detailed in the January Flyer. Yet another winter tracking effort taking place in the Northwest was brought to our attention by an article in Shane Sater's nature blog, [What's going on out there?](https://whatsgoingonblog.org/2023/02/10/helena-winter-raptors/)

The Winter Raptor Survey began 18 years ago in Oregon to track changes in the state's winter raptor populations. Jeff Fleischer originated the survey in the winter of 2004, with 79 routes across Oregon. With the support of the East Cascades Audubon Society, the raptor surveys have expanded to Washington, Idaho, parts of California and recently to Western Montana, for a total of 542 routes.

On each route, volunteer observers do a survey once a month between December and February. Some also do surveys in November and March. Once a route is set up, the observer repeats it in the same way on each survey. This makes it possible to compare raptor numbers between months and years.

To learn more, visit the survey website <https://www.ecaudubon.org/winter-raptor-survey>, contact Jeff Fleischer at raptorrunner97321@yahoo.com, and read Shane Sater's piece on a day of raptor spotting in Helena. The YVAS Board members were very encouraged to learn about this citizen science project and hope it attracts some volunteers among the membership.

Ref: Sater, S. (2023, Feb 10). An abundance of overwintering raptors. What's Going on Out There. <https://whatsgoingonblog.org/2023/02/10/helena-winter-raptors/>



Merlin with Vole in Helena Valley, MT. Photo Shane