

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 2024

VOLUME 54, NUMBER 9

John H Dover Memorial Park: A Flagship Natural Area for Billings Heights



Dover Park Overlook Photo by YRPA

On Monday, October 21st, join us for a presentation from YRPA Executive Director Carolyn Sevier about the organization's plans for John H Dover Memorial Park, a recently expanded 630-acre natural area on the East side of Billings. This park, a portion of which has been open since 2016, contains multi-age cottonwood galleries, sagebrush flats, access to and a beautiful overlook of the Yellowstone River, a complex of ponds and wetlands, and miles of trails, benches, and picnic shelters to better enjoy it all. Spanning a new entrance to Billings created by the Bypass bridge and positioned at a hub of future urban development, this park will provide ever more critical green space and natural habitat as the region continues to grow.

Carolyn Sevier has been involved in conservation, education, and park management for 25 years in the Rocky Mountain West. Prior to her association with YRPA, she worked with the Montana Audubon Center in Billings as a naturalist educator and later as Director of the Center. In August of 2024 she was hired as the Executive Director of the Yellowstone River Parks Association, which works to improve access and use along the Yellowstone River by improving parks and trails.

Submitted by Susan Weinreis

YVAS programs are free and open to the public. They are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Mayflower Church on the corner of Poly and Rehberg Lane. A social with coffee and cookies begins at 6:30 PM; the program begins at 7:00 PM. Join us this October 21st to learn more about the plans for Dover Park.



Carolyn Sevier



Chirps and Tweets



- ◆ The [YVAS Christmas Bird Count](#) is set for Saturday, Dec 14th. This annual event includes recording the number of birds and bird species seen within a designated route in the Billings vicinity. After breakfast at a local diner, YVAS birders head out on their routes to identify and count species. Results are tallied up at the end of the day by the whole group over pizza.

If you are interested in being a part of the longest running wildlife census on record, watch for details in the November Flyer. There is always a need for more birders of all abilities to help count and record. This is a great time for beginning birders to learn the winter species in the Billings area. For more information, contact Jerry Dalton at jerrydalton96@gmail.com.

The results of previous years are posted on the YVAS website at <https://yvaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count-2/>

- ◆ Marie Garsjo hosted a wonderful picnic to wrap up the osprey nest monitoring season in late August.
- ◆ A heavy rainfall washed out the Meeteese Trail Road a couple days before the scheduled Hawk Watch. Unfortunately, the rough road became impassable and the watch was cancelled for this year.
- ◆ Support YVAS and our programs by recycling your aluminum cans with us. See the YVAS website at yvaudubon.org for more information.



Nest Monitor picnic

YVAS Birding Field Trips

Contact Carolyn Jones at carolyn684@gmail.com to be included on the **Bird Trip Notification List**. The people on the Notification List will receive email notification of any impromptu trips or schedule changes such as times, meeting place, or cancellations.

Check the yvaudubon.org website, Facebook page, or the YVAS Flyer for upcoming trips.

Field trips depart by car from Rocky Mountain College parking lot at Billings Studio Theater on Rimrock Road at 8AM, unless noted otherwise in the specific trip description. **DO NOT BRING PETS. PASSENGERS SHARE GAS COSTS WITH THE DRIVER.**

DATE		DESCRIPTION	LEADER
Nov 2	Sat	Yellowtail Dam Afterbay 8am Rocky	Ron Kuhler, leader Sack lunch
Dec 14	Sat	Christmas Bird Count	Jerry Dalton, leader
Jan 1	Wed	Yellowtail Dam Afterbay – Annual New Year’s trip 8am Rocky	Ron Kuhler, leader Sack lunch
Jan 5	Sun	Mid-Winter Eagle Count	Mike Weber, leader Sack lunch

Osprey Nesting Season Ends



Juvenile ospreys near the Yellowstone River
Photo by Ginny Waples 9/9/2024

Empty Nest Syndrome is real for the approximately 40 volunteers who participated in the YVAS Osprey Nest Monitoring Project along the Yellowstone River, Gardiner to Miles City, this season.

From April to August or September, monitors observe nesting sites to record dates of osprey arrivals, mating, egg laying, hatching, and fledging. Deb Regele, Nest Monitor Coordinator, recruits volunteers, assigns nests, and compiles the voluminous data.

This was the 13th summer that ornithologist Marco Restani banded nestlings with a green band that is unique to the Yellowstone River osprey population. After banding 61 nestlings this summer, for a cumulative 13-year total of 920 birds, observations and reports of banded osprey have yielded information about their movements, survival, and reproductive success.

Most Yellowstone River osprey have begun migration by now, headed for a wide variety of wintering locations along the Gulf Coast, Mexico and Central America.

Submitted by Ginny Waples

Montana Audubon Center Events

It's time for spooktacular fun!

Learn more about these and other activities on our website: mtaudubon.org/center

Programs:

Nature Nuts: toddler & me program, Every Tuesday 10 am to 11 am, suggested donation \$5

Montana Native Plant Society -

Plant Press Workshop: October 5th, 2024, 1:00-2:30 pm, Tickets \$30- includes plant press materials.

Join the Montana Native Plant Society to learn proper plant preservation techniques and make your very own plant press to take home!

Morning Bird Stroll: October 12th, 8:30 am-10:00 am, suggested donation \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

Harvest Fest: Oct 12th, 2024, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. Stop by and say hi!

Montana Audubon Center's Member Appreciation

Party: October 18th, 4:00-7:00pm

Bat-Tastic Celebration: Oct 24th, 6:00-8:00pm

Submitted by Emily Chilcoat

Montana Audubon Center Director

Office: (406) 294-5099

7026 South Billings Blvd.

Billings, MT 59101



Montana Audubon Center "fledglings"

A Glimpse of the Dover Park Expansion

Alerted to an impromptu birding opportunity announced by Wild Birds Unlimited, a dozen people assembled in the Dover Park parking lot on a crisp and intensely sunny Saturday September 21st. The early birders racked up some familiar species including Downy Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, House Finch and a Yellow-rumped Warbler as we consolidated vehicles before heading out to the ponds near the new Bypass roundabout. In a brief session by the former gravel ponds, we glassed into the morning sun to view a couple of Great Blue Herons, coots, grebes, mergansers, and canvasbacks, among others.



Dover Ponds Photo by K Neva



Rims on Dover Park Photo by K Neva

Then, piling back into our cars, we began the much-anticipated tour of the undeveloped area flanking the Yellowstone still used by the Sindelar family, descendants of John Dover, who donated their ranch property to YRPA.

We followed a two track curving around a lush cow pasture to pop up beside the rims entering a thick grove of cottonwood trees. As we sampled wild grapes, a kingfisher buzzed over our heads. Further along we entered a gold-tinged understory of

Hemp Dogbane, Reed Canarygrass and thistles. We bushwacked our way on the uneven ground high-stepping fallen branches and trunks. As we approached an irrigation canal that was likely to have waterfowl, Carolyn suggested we spread out and turn to walk abreast for a better glimpse of the ducks as they flushed out. I had high hopes for a Wood Duck, and some were sighted—by others. Carolyn pointed out licorice plants and abandoned heron nests high above. We stopped to admire a yellow garden spider.

A total of 42 species were seen in the all too brief visit to the future expansion to Dover Park. Thanks to Cathy Breeding of Wild Birds Unlimited and Carolyn Sevier of YRPA for arranging this opportunity.

Submitted by Kristin Neva



Wild grape arbor Photo by K Neva



Yellow Garden Spider Photo by Cathy Breeding



Licorice plant Photo by K Neva

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Oct 14, 2024 —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.

In-Person Program: Oct 21, 2024. 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 for coffee and cookies; the program begins at 7:00 pm.

Board of Directors

President: Steve McConnell 509-868-8277 smc571@msn.com
Vice President: Vacant
Secretary: Sue Weinreis 406-855-4181 granpeak47@gmail.com
Treasurer: Pam Pipal 406-245-4517 ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449 carolyn684@gmail.com
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
jerrydalton96@gmail.com
Facebook: Ginny Waples 406-850-1056
waplesv@gmail.com
Field Trip Chair: Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449
carolyn684@gmail.com
Flyer Editor: Kristin Neva 406-672-8912
yvasflyer@gmail.com

(Committees, continued)

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center
406-585-1211
Injured Waterfowl: WJH Bird Resources 406-652-7175
wjhbird@yahoo.com
Membership Data: Deb Regele 406-200-7873
debregele@gmail.com
Mt Bluebird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones 406-670-4449
carolyn684@gmail.com, and
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
Website: Deb Regele 406-200-7873 debregele@gmail.com

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
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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



Wood Duck Photo by Ryan Schain from Macaulay Library ML35998481

***** Membership Updates *****

In an effort to keep our members advised of their membership status, members within the renewal period will be printed at the back of each Flyer. A renewal reminder will also be sent by email or USPS. YVAS now has a 60-day grace period for renewals.



Your memberships help to provide for speakers at YVAS monthly meetings, the YVAS newsletter the *Flyer*, bird studies and conservation efforts. YVAS is affiliated with the National Audubon Society. We do not share your membership information including your address, phone or email address with any other organization.

October reminders: Peter Cummins, Mary Davis, Beth Horn, Robin Manfredi, Raylene Wall, Florence Zundel.

September reminders: Heather & David Gaitonde.

August reminders: Mary & Bob Francis, Steve McConnell.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact the Membership Administrator at YVAS.membership.data@gmail.com or 406-200-7873.