

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.

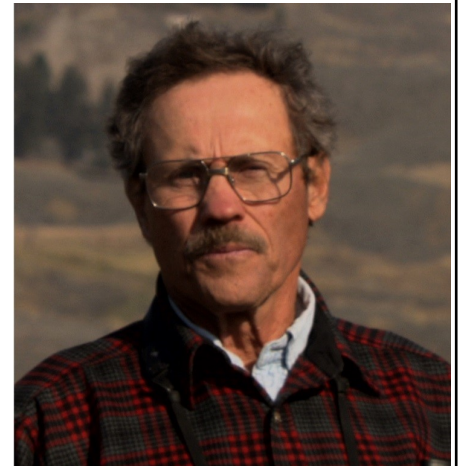
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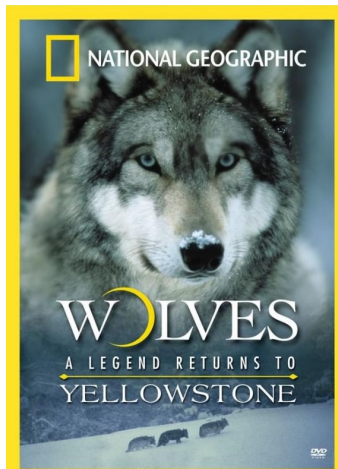
Bob Landis

For the past 50 years Bob Landis has shared his experiences filming wildlife in Denali and Yellowstone annually at Yellowstone Valley Audubon meetings. The tradition continues on December 16 when Landis will show his latest highlights from this past year. The program will include clips from his recently completed raven documentary, as well as a smorgasbord of other wildlife; osprey nesting behavior, a kestrel defending its nest, bison calves at play and adults fighting, swans migrating, pikas hooting, a grizzly family at Blacktail Pond and a few token wolves. This year for the first time, there will be footage of people interacting with wildlife along the road. The program is 45 minutes long and is personally narrated by Landis.

Connie and Bob Landis arrived from Wisconsin in 1968 to teach in the two Billings high schools. For Bob, summers and weekends were spent filming in Denali, Glacier, and most importantly, in Yellowstone. During the years in Billings, the Yellowstone Audubon Society gave opportunity and support to Landis's budding career as a wildlife filmmaker. In 1993 Bob coproduced and filmed a coyote documentary with National Geographic Television.



Bob Landis



In 1995, wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone, and Landis, now living in Gardiner, was at action central for the ensuing historical event. The result was ten more documentaries coproduced with National Geographic, many centered around wolves, some aired on the channel others on PBS's Nature. His favorite: *In The Valley of the Wolves* aired on Nature in 2007. Currently, a new National Geographic production on wolves will air in January.

In recent years, Landis and his partner Dale Johnson, have coproduced several films about wildlife in Yellowstone. They are in the final stages of producing a film about ravens. All of these films can be seen on YouTube.

Submitted by Carolyn Jones

On Dec 16th, the YVAS program social will begin at 6:15pm to allow time to view and bid on the collection of Helen Cummins owl art before the presentation of Bob Landis at 7:00pm. (See page 6 of this Flyer for more about the owl art.)

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.

VISIT THE YVAS WEBSITE YVAUDUBON.ORG OR FACEBOOK.COM/YVAUDUBON



Chirps and Tweets



- The **YVAS Board** has two new members! Ginny Waples and Kris Decker have agreed to serve as directors. An election of officers and directors of YVAS will take place in the Annual Meeting of YVAS in May.
- **Jim Petek's** presentation of stunning bird photographs in the November 18th program meeting drew a large audience of camera buffs and bird lovers.



Jim Petek presentation Photo by Marco Restani

- The annual **Billings Christmas Bird Count** is taking place on Saturday, Dec 14, 2024. If you are thinking about joining this effort, please contact:
Jerry Dalton, Billings CBC Organizer/Compiler, 406 656-3656, jerrydalton96@gmail.com
Lois Dalton, Feeder Watcher Organizer, 406 656-3656, daltonlois921@gmail.com
- **AV Tech Volunteer Needed** . YVAS is looking for a member to help with our program audio equipment. Specifically, we need to buy a new speaker with a hands-free microphone that is fairly basic and easy to use. If you are familiar with this type of equipment and can help, contact Deb at debregele@gmail.com or 406-200-7873.

Montana Audubon Center Events

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

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

4th Annual Holiday Market (Dec 14)- A local favorite for gifts, crafts, and community

*Submitted by Emily Chilcoat
Montana Audubon Center Director
Office: (406) 294-5099*

YVAS Birding Field Trips

DATE		DESCRIPTION	LEADER
Dec 14	Sat	Christmas Bird Count Perkins 7am	Jerry and Lois Dalton
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

Contact Carolyn Jones at carolyn684@gmail.com to be included on the **Bird Trip Notification List** and to 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.**

Jan 20 Program: Montana Moths with Marian Lyman Kirst

The YVAS program on January 20th will feature Marian Lyman Kirst of the Montana Moth Project. Marian is a Billings entomologist who makes bugs fascinating in educational outreach sessions in the field and classrooms in partnership with Montana nonprofit groups when she is not discovering new species of moths.

For additional information on the Montana Moth Project, read Hailey Smalley’s article in the Nov 2024 issue of [Montana Outdoors](#).



Marian Lyman Kirst
Photo by Kristin Neva



Killing of Native Migratory Birds to Save Non-native Fish

Lawsuit Filed by Earthjustice on Behalf of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

On November 14th and on behalf of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Earthjustice filed a complaint against the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). When issuing bird depredation permits to the Miles City Hatchery, USFWS failed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Rather than complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA), the USFWS relinquished this decision to the Department of Agriculture’s Wildlife Services (WS). WS deals with all problematic wildlife including lethal removal. There was no EIS or EA done by the USFWS.



Fledging osprey with adult Photo by Ginny Waples

Depredation permits are intended to be short-term while solutions are found. However, over the last 10 years, hundreds of native migratory birds have been shot at the Miles City Hatchery including Great Blue Herons, Ospreys, Double-crested Cormorants and Canada Geese to protect non-native species of fish.

In 2018, the USFWS began issuing Depredation Permits for Ospreys to the Miles City Hatchery, allowing them to kill native migratory Ospreys that were eating their non-native largemouth bass. In less than two years, the eastern-most breeding population of Ospreys on the Yellowstone River was lethally removed from a 20-mile radius area around the Hatchery, which is managed

by MT Fish Wildlife & Parks (MFWP). There have not been any fledglings produced in this area since 2017.

And yet, FWS continues to allow MFWP’s Miles City Hatchery to shoot and kill native migratory birds in order to protect non-native fish species.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society has been monitoring Osprey nests along the Yellowstone River since 2009. By 2012, nest monitors were assigned from Gardiner to Miles City to watch and record



Great Blue Heron

data at all known nests including occupancy, incubation and brooding females as well as the number of young observed in the nests. The banding of the nestlings by Dr. Marco Restani also began that same year and is still ongoing today. His scientific paper on the elimination of the breeding population of Ospreys in the Miles City area was published in the Journal of Raptor Research.

Related links:

“Conservation Group Sues Feds Over Fish Hatchery Shooting Migratory Birds”, Earthjustice’s press release on November 14, 2024, can be found on their website. <https://earthjustice.org/press/2024/conservation-group-sues-feds-over-fish-hatchery-shooting-migratory-birds>

“Range Contraction of an Osprey Population Following Lethal Control at a State Fish Hatchery in Montana” by Dr. Marco Restani published in the Journal of Raptor Research. <https://earthjustice.org/press/2024/conservation-group-sues-feds-over-fish-hatchery-shooting-migratory-birds>



Three newly banded osprey nestlings
Photo by Marco Restani

More information as well as links to the above documents can be found at the YVAS website. <https://yvaudubon.org/>

Submitted by Deb Regele

Helen's Owl Art Auction

Submitted with photos of the art by Ginny Waples

Among her many avian enthusiasms, Helen Carlson Cummings had a beautiful collection of owl photographs and drawings by Montana artists. Now, her family has generously donated the framed art to YVAS.

Great Horned Owls, Pygmy Owls, Burrowing Owl, Great Gray Owls, Boreal Owls...the eight works are irresistible and available for purchase via silent auction.

Bring your checkbook to the Monday, December 16th YVAS program and you might take home an owl portrait.

The December program, featuring Yellowstone cinematographer Bob Landis, starts at 7:00 pm at Mayflower Church. Come early! Owl Auction bidding begins at 6:15. With Christmas only nine days away, this could be the solution to finishing up your shopping!

About the Artists

Andrew Guttenberg / Colored drawing of a Northern Pygmy Owl.

This drawing was done by the artist especially for Helen.

Andrew states on his website. "I have been watching, studying, and drawing birds since my early childhood in northeast Montana, and these passions continue to thrive and build upon each other. When I'm not exploring around the US or the Neotropics, I can be found somewhere in Gallatin County, binoculars aimed at a flock of sparrows or a pond full of waterbirds."

When still a student at Montana State University, Andrew created the official artwork for the 2013 American Birding Association's Bird of the Year, the Common Nighthawk, which was featured on the cover of the Jan/Feb issue of Birding magazine.

More information about Andrew Guttenberg and his art can be found at his website: <https://www.andrewguttenberg.com/>



Northern Pygmy Owl by Andrew Guttenberg

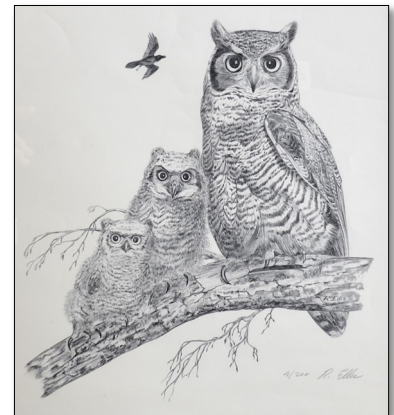
Dick (Richard) Ellis/ Black-and-white drawing of three Great Horned Owls.

In his 34-year career with Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Dick played a crucial role in the acquisition of a great many state parks and fishing access sites across the state. Not only that, he taught himself drawing, oil painting, and sculpture. He did not market his art, wishing "not to associate it with the pressures of business."

There is more about Ellis's life and art at: <https://www.heightsfamilyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Dick-Ellis?obid=28567075>

A.D. Levine/ Burrowing Owl and a pair of juvenile owls.

If you know this photographer, we would love to hear from you. Meanwhile, enjoy the Burrowing Owl and the juvenile owls, possibly Screech Owls.



Great Horned Owls by Dick Ellis



Juvenile Owls by A.D. Levine



Burrowing Owl by A.D. Levine



Three juvenile Great Gray Owls
by Dan and Cindy Hartman



A Northern Pygmy Owl by Dan
and Cindy Hartman



A Boreal Owl by Dan and
Cindy Hartman



Two juvenile Boreal Owls by
Dan and Cindy Hartman

Dan and Cindy Hartman / Four framed photographs of owls: (1) three juvenile Great Gray Owls, (2) a Northern Pygmy Owl in winter, (3) a Boreal Owl, and (4) two juvenile Boreal Owls.

The Hartmans sell their work via the Wildlife Among the Rockies Photo Gallery, Silvergate, where you can find one of these framed owl photos at \$215 and others marked as sold out.

<https://wildlifealongtherockies.homestead.com/Owls.html>

Dan Hartman “is a world-renowned wildlife photographer/expert (his work has appeared in National Geographic and his videos were included in the television series *Earth*).”

<https://www.notquitecountrygirl.com/2021/03/dan-hartmans-wild-critters.html>

Hummingbirds in Montana in November?

Submitted by Susan Hovde

Red Lodge is fortunate to host many of Montana's common species of hummingbirds. In the summer it is not uncommon to see the smallest of North American hummingbirds, the Calliope, protecting its flower patch. The unique trill of a male Broad-tailed hummingbird's wings can be heard much of the season. Later in the summer, migrating Rufous hummers join in the daily rush. The season typically runs from early May until early September. As the flowers fade, the aerial acrobats head south for more blossoms and bugs.

This year held more surprises. September 6th I gave Stan Heath a call. "Black-chinned hummingbird in our yard." Stan bolted over but it was not seen again that day. Then next day it was back. Photos proved it to be a more unique Ruby-throated hummingbird. So much for my quick ID. He was bit further west than typical for his species. Figuring out the species was assisted by experts who used the shape of one of the wing feathers as a definitive identification.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird Photo by Susan Hovde

Early October it was Stan's turn to call me. "Hummer at my flower basket". Once again, we used our quick ID skills. We thought Rufous. Once again, our ID skills were weak as it was a Broad-tailed hummingbird that seemed a bit rustier than typical. As it turned out, it was a state late record Broad-tailed. Humm, as we

called him, appeared nearly daily until November 1st.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird Photo by Susan Hovde

He finally headed south, physically or metaphorically, we will never know. The phone calls didn't stop. My turn this time: "Stan, I have an Anna's at the feeder." This instant ID finally was correct. A first year male Anna's hummingbird has made an appearance daily since October 30th. Experts tell us they are expanding their territory and this would be an example of a trial Eastern expansion. Anna's hummingbirds are hearty and use a hummingbird version of hibernation called torpor to conserve energy each night. His hormones are probably telling him to hang out as long as he has nectar and bugs, and doesn't get too cold. November in Montana what could go wrong?



Anna's Hummingbird Photo by Susan Hovde

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Dec 9, 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: Dec 16, 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

Kris Decker (541) 514-8711 krisdecker4@gmail.com
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
Ginny Waples 406-850-1056 waplesv@gmail.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



Photo: Finnegan returns to the Hellgate Osprey nest with a whitefish for Sum-eh and Antali, Aug. 7, 2024. Photo by Erick Greene, Five Valleys Audubon.

*** 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.

Since the December and January Flyers are combined, January renewals are included below.

January renewals: Stanley Bruce, Jerry & Lois Dalton, Michael Downing, Dan Erikson, Tom Erskine, Catherine Frazer, Larry Handsaker, Jim & Lilian Hartung, Aiko Kawano, William & Bonnie McIntire, Vern Schneider, Mike Weber.

December renewals: Mary Fitzpatrick, Rita Harding, Ron Kuhler, Deb Mattern, Gail McGlothlin, Jerry Moore, David & Nancy Myers, Susan Newell & Dick Walton, Linda Pickard, Sherlene Robison-O'Dea, Jack & Carol Sterling, Dan Struckman, Michael Szczutkowski, Tom & Ruth Towe, Ruth Vanderhorst, Gene Wade.

November renewals: Cathy Breeding.

October renewals: Robin Manfredi, Florence Zundel.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact the Membership Administrator at YVAS.membership.data@gmail.com or 406-780-0810.