

# YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

- FROM THE PRAIRIES TO THE PEAKS.

*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.*

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 5

MAY 2011

### New This Issue

- ELECTIONS
- BYLAWS AMMENDMENTS
- APF BIOBLITZ
- BP OIL SPILL UPDATE



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## YVAS CHAPTER MEETING, MONDAY MAY 16TH

This is the final Chapter meeting of the 2010- 2011 year. It is an important business meeting that includes the election of Officers and Board members. Our next meeting will be August 15, 2011.

The program includes a special presentation of outstanding bird and wildlife photography by YVAS member John Carlson who is a wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Land Management. John will speak about 'Life With Birds': the way birds are a part of our lives and how they have influenced John's life in particular, beginning with his early involvement with the Yellowstone Valley Audubon. This will be a wide-ranging talk, encouraging audience participation, where John will touch on how all of us interact with birds on a daily basis, from art to science.



## YVAS MEETINGS

**All YVAS Meetings are at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings, MT unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome, there is no admission fee and ample free parking is available.**

**Monday, May 9, 6:00pm: Board Meeting**

**Monday, May 16, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting**

**We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the membership meeting. Dinner donation : \$6. It will be hosted by Jeannette Davis. Please call her to contribute to dinner and/or make reservations at 656-7618.**



☞ We're on the web! [yvaudubon.org](http://yvaudubon.org)

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## NOTICE OF ELECTION



**Officers and Directors for Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society to be voted on at the Annual Meeting on May 16, 2011.**

**Candidates presented are:**

- **President -- Bill DeMeyer**
- **Vice-President -- Steve Regele**
- **Secretary -- Mary Schvetz**
- **Treasurer -- Deb Regele**
- **Past President -- Kayhan Ostovar**
- **Directors -- Jeanette Tasey, Nancy Wiggins, Rita Harding**

## NOTICE OF BYLAWS AMENDMENT

**The Bylaws of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society have been thoroughly reviewed by the Board of Directors during March and April, 2011, for purposes of updating and making minor changes.**



*(Continued on page 3)*

**Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:**

**President:** Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, acrv@bresnan.net  
**Vice-President:** Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com  
**Secretary:** Mary Schvetz, 720-935-2504, mary.schvetz@rocky.edu  
**Treasurer:** Deb Regele: 962-3115, dregele@juno.com  
**Past-President:** Kayhan Ostovar, 256-7481, kayhan@q.com

**Board of Directors:**

Rita Harding: 259-7586, mtroses22@bresnan.net  
 Robert Lubbers: 245-2970, rslubbers@q.com  
 Monty Sullins: 656-5242, ssullins@bresnan.net  
 Jeanette Tasey, 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com  
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggin83@gmail.com

**Montana's Congressional Delegation:**

Sen. Max Baucus: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510  
 website: <http://baucus.senate.gov>  
 email: [max@baucus.senate.gov](mailto:max@baucus.senate.gov)  
 Billings: 657-6790 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-332-6160  
Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510  
 website: <http://tester.senate.gov>  
 email: [senator@tester.senate.gov](mailto:senator@tester.senate.gov)  
 Billings: 252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 1-866-554-4403  
Rep. Dennis Rehberg: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515  
 website: [www.rehberg.house.gov](http://www.rehberg.house.gov)  
 email: [denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov](mailto:denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov)  
 Billings: 256-1019 Wash. D.C.: 202-225-3211

**Committees and Special Assignments:**

Archives and History.....open  
 Audubon Adventures.....Jeannette Davis 656-7618  
 Bird Questions.....George Mowat 656-7467 or  
 Helen Carlson 248-8684  
 Christmas Bird Count.....Helen Carlson 248-8684  
 or Billie Hicks 962-3798  
 Conservation Chair...Kayhan Ostovar 256-7481,  
 kayhan@q.com  
 Editor.....Nancy Wiggins, nancyhwiggins@hotmail.com  
 Greeters.....Phyllis Holt 252-7373  
 Audrey Jurovich 656-2748  
 Injured Raptors.....Jeanette Tasey 669-3169  
 Membership Secretary.....Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,  
 cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com  
 Program Chair.....Robert Lubbers 245-2970  
 Recycling (aluminum).....Tom Davis 656-7618  
 Website: Tom Lyman, Tomglyman@gmail.com

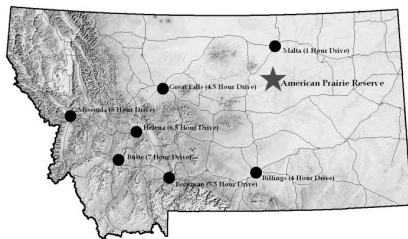
**Meetings** are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg:

- Board Meetings held second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to entire membership.
- General Chapter Meetings are held third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.

**NOTICE OF BYLAWS AMENDMENT** (cont'd)

- Throughout the document, amendments appear that denote the chapter as Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society instead of "Corporation".
- The membership category, Supporting Chapter Membership, its dues and renewal is added.
- May is designated as the time of the Annual Meeting.
- Use of email in addition to US mail is allowed for meeting notices.
- Articles on Officers includes the following changes:
  - deletes the President-elect expectation from the Vice President's role.
  - adds sending notices to the President's duties and deletes it from the Secretary's duties;
  - adds the duty of maintaining and preserving minutes and correspondence to the Secretary's duties.
  - adds the receipt and acknowledgement of all donations along with their deposit in the appropriate accounts to the Treasurer's duties.
  - requires only the Treasurer's signature on all checks drafted *Note: A policy requiring Treasurer to report and consult with the President and Board is in place.*
- An Article on Qualifications of Officers and Directors requires they all be members in good standing, supportive of the organization and recuse themselves from any and all matters where there is potential conflict of interest.

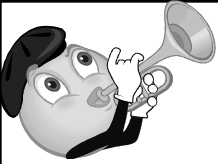
**A complete copy of the Bylaws with recommended amendments is available on the website, [www.yvaudubon.org](http://www.yvaudubon.org) Some copies to share will be available at the May 16, 2011 Chapter meeting when members will be asked to vote on these amendments. If you wish a personal copy of the amendments, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to P.O. Box 30324, Billings, MT 59107**



## American Prairie Foundation Recruiting Scientists for BioBlitz in North Central Montana

The American Prairie Foundation will hold a BioBlitz June 23–25, 2011 on American Prairie Reserve (50 miles south of Malta). A BioBlitz is a 24 hour event in which a team of scientists and volunteers conducts an intensive biological inventory of all species in a

given area. The event is an important opportunity to capture baseline data as American Prairie Foundation works to assemble a large-scale grassland wildlife reserve. American Prairie Reserve will be working with Rocky Mountain College as a lead coordinator, and many other scientists from across Montana and the nation to conduct the biological inventory. This will be only the fourth BioBlitz in Montana. American Prairie Foundation is currently accepting applications from scientists interested in leading or joining a taxonomic specialty team to survey for animals or plants. Citizen Scientists with some field experience are also encouraged to apply for a limited number of assistant positions. They especially encourage science school teachers to apply for this rare opportunity to work along side scientists from all across the country. Applications for other volunteer positions will be accepted later this spring. On June 25, the event will be open to the public at the American Prairie Reserve campground from 12--3:00 PM for children, families and others interested in the project. Visit [bioblitz.americanprairie.org](http://bioblitz.americanprairie.org).



## YVAS SPRING CHECK LIST

- MAY 5 , 12 & 19 BIRDING CLASSES**. Call Helen Carlson to sign up: 248-8684. \$25 to benefit Audubon Adventures
- JUNE 3-5 WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY BIRD FESTIVAL** in Glasgow, sponsored by Montana Audubon. Register at [mtaudubon.org](http://mtaudubon.org) or call 406-443-3949.
- JUNE 11-12 BIRD-A-THON** sponsored by YVAS and the Audubon Center. Contact Darcie Vallant at 406-294-5099 or visit [yvaudubon.org](http://yvaudubon.org) or [mtacec.org](http://mtacec.org)
- JUNE 23-26 BIOBLITZ** [bioblitz.americanprairie.org](http://bioblitz.americanprairie.org).
- VOLUNTEER** to help survey the Osprey nests. Call Monty Sullins 652-3615 or 861-2442.
- CHECK THE MAILING LABEL** on your Flyer to see if you are a current supporting YVAS Chapter Member. Do you need to join up or renew?



## FIELD TRIP NOTES

### SPRING BIRDING HOLIDAY – EXXON PONDS / EMERALD HILLS 04.23.2011

Departing the RMC rendezvous point at 8 AM, led by the indefatigable George Mowat, we met our Exxon biologist guide, Ron Kuhler, and our full complement of 12 YVAS birders at the Exxon Ponds. The ponds were formerly a commercial gravel site and are now a rich mix of riparian wetland habitats 20 minutes east of Billings along the Yellowstone River, surrounded by walking trails and old roads owned by Exxon.

Long-time birder Jim Henson, pointed out the “3 bird flight” territorial phenomena amongst the Mallard duck population and brought our attention to the Redwing Blackbirds, all males at this time, establishing their territories, anticipating the arrival of the female species. Spotting scopes provided by members gave close-up views of Sandhill Cranes, ducks on the far side of the pond, and a pair of Bald Eagles in the nest – replete with eaglets. We got a good look at Northern Shovelers, Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeons, and Double-crested Cormorants; the Black-crowned Night-Heron with a crappie filled the scope nicely too.

We then headed to Emerald Hills via Old Hardin Rd for lunch and a round of birding in the foothills east of Lockwood, where sighting a Say's Phoebe was the highlight of my visit. The spotting scopes came out again defining the gorgeous blue of the Mountain Bluebirds and the red of the Red Crossbills. Our birding holiday came to a close with a total of 43 different birds, ducks and raptor species; along with a bunch of White Tail and Mule deer and 1 fox; and a grand time was had by all. Thanks to Will Crain

## One year later...

A review by Robert Lubbers,

The anniversary of the catastrophic BP Deep Horizon blowout did not go unnoticed by the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society at the Chapter meeting on April 18. More than 50 members braved a typical Montana spring storm to get a handle on how National Audubon Society views what has turned out to be the worst oil spill in US History, viewing a 24 minute DVD video 'Restoring America's Delta' prepared by the National Audubon Society. YVAS members were not denied. The video and commentary, combined with extraordinary photography provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology--birds, landscapes, pristine marshlands, sea views and beaches, before and after the spill--led to a brief discussion with conclusions that it probably could have been prevented, another spill could happen again (in the Gulf or anywhere oil wells are located under or on the sea) and the ramifications of the under-sea oil gusher will be felt for years to come with yet to be understood consequences to the Gulf ecosystem.

In case a refresher is needed, on April 20, 2010 and for 88 more days, BP's Deep Horizon oil well in the Gulf of Mexico poured hundreds of millions of gallons into the Gulf's fragile ecosystem.

BP's perhaps inexcusable catastrophe--what safeguards, equipment and systems did BP have in place to prevent or at least control a blowout from occurring--have not yet been fully explained by BP and has also left question marks on what is or will be the remaining net effect to the Gulf.

**Let's back up.** First, the Gulf wetlands support 100 million birds of 325 species and countless fish, turtles, plants and a lot of humans. Second, the wetlands serve as nurseries for important maritime organisms, commercial seafood species--oysters, shrimp-- and for human's food, energy, transportation, recreation and protection from hurricanes and flooding. Third, that BP's as yet unproven legal negligence--how did the explosion at the 5,000 foot deep sea level occur and why, is still not completely understood but its results are still being unraveled: the spill had catastrophic consequences for birds, wildlife, the coast itself and vital irreplaceable wetland habitat. Worse yet, the oil washed ashore at the height of the breeding season.

And then there is this---the Gulf's rich and productive ecosystem was hovering on the edge of a kind of collapse even before oil spewed uncontrolled and unstopped from BP's busted well.

Since the 1930's more than 2,300 sq. miles of vital Gulf marshland has disappeared through natural causes from storms and hurricanes, sea-caused natural erosion and through man-made changes to accommodate the real business of the Gulf: the exploration for and refining of oil to fuel the country's insistent need for transportation fuel.

The hidden issues of the Gulf highlighted by the BP oil spill are these: the disaster stands as the latest assault on a region suffering decades of environmental degradation, and scientific studies bring into focus that for decades, the Gulf's wetlands and the economic and ecosystem resources they represent are vanishing.

Chapter members--several of whom have made birding trips to view the Gulf's teeming birdlife--agreed with the NAS assumptions that critical safeguards must be developed to prevent future disasters and that the US Congress should establish a strong Gulf restoration authority with the as yet to be determined BP penalty money (according to news reports now worth nearly \$21 billion) dedicated toward Gulf ecosystem restoration.

The White House and President Obama have created a long term Gulf coast Recovery Plan that recommends Congress dedicate a significant amount of any Clean Water Act penalties--the \$21 billion penalty money--to the Gulf's recovery. The penalty is an assessment based on the number of barrels spilled and comes under the Clean Water Act. BP and other responsible parties (for causing the spill) will be required to pay fines for damages to the environment.

All of the above is kind of a prelude---all that is really known to this point is that even though the oil has stopped flowing, its impacts could be lasting with its ramifications revealed only over time, and finally, the Gulf and its recovery will be a long term, closely watched process. Will it ever be restored to a pristine pre-spill haven for birds and wildlife? There may be no answers to that one for even a longer time. # You can learn more about National Audubon's response to the spill at <http://gulfoilspill.audubon.org> and what Audubon's Coastal Initiative includes at <http://conservation.audubon.org/Louisiana-coastal-initiative> #

## Events at the Audubon Conservation Education Center (ACEC) 7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101 406-294-5099 [www.mtacec.org](http://www.mtacec.org)

**APRIL 25** Registration opens for our summer break camps for kids 4 – 13! Visit our website for complete camp descriptions and registration details.

**MAY 6** School break camp for 1st – 6th graders: Wetland Wonders - Wade into the water to look for life in the ponds, and learn how to navigate the waters in canoes. Camp runs from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM; cost is \$40. Register by calling the Parks and Recreation office at 657 - 8371 or online at [www.prpl.info](http://www.prpl.info).

**MAY 21** Free family program from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Weed Pulling Contest - We'll learn about several noxious weeds and then split into teams for a friendly competition to see who can pull the most weeds by weight. Prizes will be awarded to the winning teams! Pre-register by calling 294-5099.

**MAY 22** Free family program from 1:30 – 3 PM: Wonderful Wildflowers - Learn to identify some of the local flowers and shrubs as we walk in search of the beauty of spring. Pre-register by calling 294-5099.

**MAY 24** Free evening lecture at 7 – 8 PM: Tips for Identifying Spring Wildflowers, presented by Dr. Jennifer Lyman. This slide lecture will provide tips and methods for identifying the spring wildflowers. Participants will also have an opportunity to practice applying the methods for identifying flowers during the talk.

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

The Audubon Center is hiring Summer Naturalists in Training (NiTs)! Learn to be a Teacher Naturalist in this internship program for students ages 16–19. NiTs will learn about natural history of the Yellowstone River Valley as they help teach nature camp during the summer months. Training will take place during the week of June 13–17, 2011. NiTs will then select four of the eight weeks of camp that they would like to work. Schedule for most weeks is 7:30 AM – 1:30 PM (~25 hours/week). NiTs are paid \$7.30/hour. For more information on our camps or the NiTs program, visit [www.mtacec.org](http://www.mtacec.org). The center is also hiring a Lands Stewardship Coordinator.

## **'NESTING MATERIALS' FOR THE SOUL**

Olivia Bouler publishes "Olivia's Birds: Saving the Gulf"

About a year ago, the National Audubon Society received a handwritten letter adorned with an illustration of a cardinal in red plumage. The sender had just learned about the tragic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and wanted to do her part to help. Her idea? Sell her own avian artwork and donate the proceeds to Audubon. She was 10. Now pushing 12, that young artist-philanthropist—Olivia Bouler—has become something of an international celebrity, painting hundreds of original bird pieces, making headlines, and raising upwards of \$200,000. She's not just artistic, however. A self-professed bird-lover, Olivia aspires to attend Cornell University to study ornithology. It seems only natural, then, that she come out with her own field guide of sorts: Olivia's Birds: Saving the Gulf (Sterling Children's Books), released in time for the one-year anniversary of the oil spill. Visit [audubonmagazine.org](http://audubonmagazine.org) for more information.





**YOU DO  
NOT WANT  
TO FORGET  
TO BE-  
COME A**

**MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR  
CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP!**

**Membership Information**

Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encourage you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for \$20 a year. Use the bottom application form on the right to join as Supporting Chapter Members or to renew your chapter member.

1. An application for *initial* membership in the National Audubon Society (NAS) is included in YVAS Flyer (see form on top right). If you are NOT a member of the NAS and wish to be, please use this form to join and send it, with the fee, to the address provided. Our chapter will then receive payment for recruiting a new member.
2. **Moving???** Let us know as early as possible when you plan to move. The Post Office does charge us a fee for returned flyers. Include your old address as well as your new address so we can track you. You may write, call, or email the information to the Membership Secretary.
3. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society offers Supporting Chapter student memberships for a reduced rate of \$10 a year. If you applying for a new student membership or are renewing a student membership, make sure you indicate your academic affiliation in your application . Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary

National Audubon Society  
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z  
Application for New Membership

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society. I understand that I will receive the Audubon Magazine and Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Flyer. Make check payable to **National Audubon Society**. \*Renewals will be sent to you through National Audubon.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

One Year Membership

\$20 One year new membership

Send this application and your check made out to **National Audubon Society** to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society  
Attention: Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 1075  
Billings, MT 59103-1075

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society  
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z  
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 Chapter benefits. Make check payable to **Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society** for \$20. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$10 and indicate academic affiliation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send this application and your check to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society  
Attention: Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 1075  
Billings, MT 59103-1075



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY  
AUDUBON FLYER**

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Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Field Trip Calendar:

*All field trips depart from Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Rimrock Road, adjacent to Billings Studio Theater, unless otherwise noted, and will be by car. All field trips are open to the public. Passengers will share gas costs with driver when car-pooling. Do make sure you check all field trips with listing in flyer each month for any changes.*

- **May 7 (Sat) LAKE BASIN (WEST AND NORTHWEST OF Molt) 8 a.m.** Sack Lunch. George Mowat, leader.
- **May 14 (Sat) MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK at 8 a.m.** Ruth Vanderhorst, leader.
- **May 19 (Thur) MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK at 5:30 p.m.** Mike Weber, leader.
- **May 21 (Sat) STILLWATER AND WOODBINE AREAS. 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.** Sack lunch. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader
- **May 28 (Sat) POMPEY'S PILLAR. 7a.m. to early afternoon.** Sack lunch. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader.
- **June 3-5 Montana Audubon's *WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY BIRD FESTIVAL* in Glasgow, See Flyer for details.**
- **June 7 (Tues) meet at pictograph cave. 5:30 p.m.** Ruth Vanderhorst, leader.



**Field Trip Chairs: George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467**