

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 40, NUMBER 11 NOVEMBER 2010

- New This Issue**
- **YVAS Conservation Grants**
 - **Field Trip Notes**
 - **Christmas Potluck Fundraiser**
 - **Christmas Bird Count**
 - **New Look for YVAS Website**



MONTANA AUDUBON SOCIETY AND THE 2011 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Often sessions of the Montana legislature become contentious, especially over issues concerning or affecting our state's environment and wildlife. The next session promises to be no different. Important and seemingly forever unresolved environmental issues need constant attention--especially from YVAS members!

Our Chapter will get an idea of what's expected on the next legislative agenda from Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon's Program Director, experienced lobbyist for MA and a well known statewide spokesperson for environmental issues. Janet will speak to the Chapter, Nov. 15.

Janet, well versed in legislative discourse and its political vagaries, will bring us up-to-date on wildlife and habitat legislation being considered for the 2011 Montana Legislative session.

MA and YVAS Audubon's priority legislative concerns are:

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YVAS MEETINGS

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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, November 8, 6:00pm: Board Meeting

Monday, November 15, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting

ALERT: CHANGE IN THE CHAPTER MEETING PLACE FOR NOV 15! The meeting will be held at 7pm at the Yellowstone Council on Aging building at 1505 Avenue D. There is off street parking on the west and at the rear of the building. There will be NO dinner preceding the meeting. Please use the west door on Ave. D to enter the building.



☞ We're on the web! yellowstoneaudubon.org

THIS FLYER IS PUBLISHED ON SFI CERTIFIED PRODUCT

- 1) Protection of rivers. Pressures to develop lands along our state’s rivers and streams --including the Yellowstone--are never ending! Legislation will be introduced to ensure that new buildings are a safe distance from river banks in order to protect people and property—and thereby our river’s outstanding economic, biological and recreational values.
- 2) Wind Power. Alternative energy sources like wind power are increasingly essential to meet our country’s energy demands. A few large-scale wind energy “farms” already operate in Montana, and new projects are slated for construction across the state. More than ever, responsible wind energy development is essential. Poorly-sited wind power sites will cause significant damage to birds, wildlife, and habitat.
- 3) Climate change concerns. Global warming threats loom larger than ever. It is vitally important to work towards energy efficiency standards, increased use of renewable energy and decreased use of coal and petroleum products.

These are a few of Montana Audubon and YVAS priority issues! If you share concerns over impending legislation affecting Montana’s birds and wildlife, Janet will explain what lobbying entails and how you can you get involved.



Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon’s Program Director, has lobbied for Montana Audubon since 1983 and was hired to staff its office on a year-round basis when it opened in 1989. Her well-respected work focuses on protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat through public policy, with an emphasis on land use planning, stream setbacks, wind energy, and more. Janet has received several awards for her work, including the Conservationist of the Year Award from Montana Audubon, the Montana Wildlife Federation, and the Montana Environmental Information Center; and Special Achievement Awards from the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:
President: Ruth Vanderhorst, 245-5118, acriv@bresnan.net
Vice-President: Dick Moore, 656-6241
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
 Steve Regele: 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
 Monty Sullins: 656-5242, ssullins@bresnan.net
 Jeanette Tasey, 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com
 Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nancyhwiggins@hotmail.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
 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
 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
 email: 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.....Robert Lubbers 245-2970
 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 6:30pm. 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.

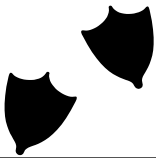


THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

This is the 111th year of the Christmas Bird Count, which is one of the National Audubon Society's premier citizen science events. YVAS will again be taking part, and members are encouraged to participate. Please call Helen Carlson at 248-8684; she will sign you up and provide you with information about your route, group, etc. There is a \$5.00 fee to join up. Participants will meet at 7 a.m. on **DECEMBER 18**, at Denny's Restaurant (501 N 27th Street, in downtown Billings), unless otherwise notified by their section leader. The bird count is an all-day activity, with lunch as decided by the individual groups. At the end of the birding day, participants gather for a soup supper at Helen's house (519 Highland Park Drive, Billings), where they will tally what they have seen. That data will become part of the nationwide survey. Plan on joining YVAS for this important and fun event!

TAKE THE TIME to visit our NEW YVAS website at www.yellowstonesudubon.org.

Webmaster Tom Lyman has distinguished our Chapter with an impressive new look that is easy to navigate. Members are encouraged to submit photographs and rare bird sighting for the website to Tom at Tomglyman@gmail.com.



The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) Photo Award

For the second year in a row, YVAS Board member Jeanette Tasey has won an award for bird photography with her picture of Gray-Crowned Rosy Finch, during the Great Backyard Bird Count. Last year she won an honorable mention among almost 6,000 entries. Congratulations Jeanette! The 14th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held from **FEBRUARY 18 - 21, 2011**. See the Flyer for more details.



Gray-Crowned Rosy Finch

Leucosticte Tephrocotis

I'm amazed at how easy it is to catch an unfamiliar bird out of the corner of my eye. That's precisely what happened last winter while sitting at my kitchen table drinking coffee. I had excitedly discovered the Gray-Crowned Rosy Finch.

As usual, I had my camera ready to snap a few quick photos to later identify this little beauty. I found that there are three main species: the Gray-Crowned, the Brown-Capped, and the Black Rosy Finch. All are approximately 5 1/2 - 6 3/4" in length. Its distinguished,

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH

bounding flight pattern is what initially drew my attention. In observing these little birds, they alternated with rapid wing beats, then pulled their wings in close to their sides. They were landing on my back deck for food and water, but instead of just flying in, they would first drop, then swoop up over the railing, tuck their wings in and dive head first to the land on the deck boards to eat. They landed with quite a 'thump'. I was feeding them black oilers and hulled & cracked sunflower seeds, which they devoured like their counterparts. The Gray-Crowned Rosy Finches are primarily migratory, monogamous birds that feed on both seeds and insects. Courtship competition can be vigorous since the males outnumber the females year round by 6:1. The female selects the nesting site, mostly in ridges of rocks and cliffs, builds the cup-like nest and incubates 3-5 eggs, while the male feeds and protects her from other birds. Both parents participate in feeding by developing 'gular pouches' in the upper throat with an opening to the floor of the mouth. This helps them carry large amounts of food to their young. Unfortunately, many Alpine nests, eggs, and young are destroyed by Clark's Nutcrackers. Thank you to Jeanette Tasey



FIELD TRIP NOTES

STILLWATER AND COONEY DAM On Saturday, October 2, about a dozen birders welcomed a clear, beautiful autumn day. We drove the back roads to Laurel before traveling on the highway to Cooney Dam. As it was my first trip with the YVAS, I was impressed with the use of radios to capitalize on the dozen sets of eyes and shared expertise in the sightings along the way. We enjoyed our lunch after visiting several stops around the reservoir, including a long observation watching a picturesque loon. After much discussion as to whether it was a Red-throated or Common, I believe the experts decided it was a Common Loon! For me, it did not matter, as it is always exciting to have the opportunity to see a loon. It was also fun to see some of my all-time favorites: Red-tailed Hawks, American Avocets, Ring-necked Pheasants and Canada Geese. The highlight



COMMON LOON Photo George Mowat

of my trip was my first sightings and identification of the Horned Lark, Eared and Western Grebes, Marbled Godwits, American Pipits, Eurasian Collared-doves, and Baird's Sandpipers. It was a fantastic day, and I thoroughly enjoyed the outdoors and bird sightings along with the fellowship and new friendships of those on the trip. Thank you to Coleen Model

Located 40 miles south of Billings, Cooney State Park is a popular destination for visitors to south-central Montana. Cooney State Park is home to Cooney Reservoir, the largest body of still water in the area. **Directions:** Cooney State Park is located approximately 20 miles north of Red Lodge, between Highway 78 and Highway 212. Cooney can be accessed from either highway. From Highway 212, at Boyd turn onto Cooney Dam Road, and follow it west for 8 miles. From Highway 78, head east on Shane Creek Road for 13 miles. Both routes are marked by state park signs.

VICTORY FOR COTTONWOODS: SALE OF RUSSIAN OLIVE NOW PROHIBITED

Riparian areas are a small part of Montana, yet they are critical for wildlife. In fact, riparian cottonwood forests provide habitat for at least 150 of Montana's bird species all or part of the year. One significant threat to this habitat is invasion by exotic plants, with Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) near the top of the list. In fact, Russian olives out-compete our native cottonwoods, and could eventually replace cottonwoods along our rivers and streams.

In order to combat this problem, in August 2008 Montana Audubon and the Native Plant Society petitioned the Montana Dept. of Agriculture to list Russian olive as a noxious weed. We are pleased to report that after a lot of hard work and several challenges, Russian olive can no longer be sold in the state of Montana as of September 10, 2010. This victory should reduce the spread of this exotic plant—and help protect our important riparian areas!

Russian olive, a plant native to southern Europe and western Asia, has been planted in Montana as an ornamental for windbreaks, erosion control, and wildlife enhancement purposes. This tree is invasive, and it is taking over riparian ecosystems, displacing native cottonwoods and willows on such rivers as the Marias, Missouri, Yellowstone, and Big Horn. If we lose cottonwood habitat along our rivers and streams, an important part of Montana's wildlife habitat will also be lost.

PHOTO: Northern Flicker. Although cottonwoods are used by cavity nesting birds for nesting, Russian olive is not used by these birds. Cavity nesting birds include woodpeckers, bluebirds, Tree Swallows, chickadees, and more.



YVAS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AND FUNDRAISER



DATE: **Monday, Dec. 6, 2010** Time: **6 p.m. Dinner**

PLACE: **Masonic Center, 1101 Broadwater**

(come early and browse the Silent Auction & Raffle)

Since we are no longer able to sell bird food, this is our major fundraiser.

- **ADMISSION**: \$5.00 per person (covers coffee, punch, rolls and building rental)
- **FOOD**: Be sure to bring plates and utensils for personal use, and food to share according to the following direction:

If your last name begins with A ...G___ salad, enough for your party plus 6

If your last name begins with G...M __ dessert, enough to share for your party plus 6.

If your last name begins with N...Z___ entree or side dish, enough to share for party plus 6

- **PROGRAM**

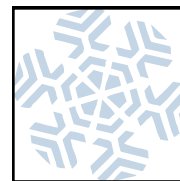
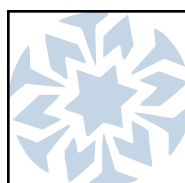
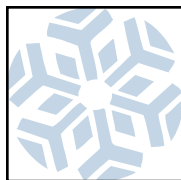
Bob Landis will again share his wonderful and often humorous photography taken in Yellowstone National Park. He is an Emmy award-winning wildlife cinematographer who has produced many films for programs such as National Geographic and Nature. His work has taken him to Denali, Kluane, and Algonquin National Parks, but his home is Yellowstone National Park where he has excelled in the art of wildlife film-making for over 30 years.

- **RAFFLE AND SILENT AUCTION**. Think about doing your Christmas shopping on this night. Donations for the raffle and silent auction will be collected at the November General Membership Meeting or contact Robert Lubbers at rslubbers@q.com, or 245-2970

- **RESERVATIONS!**

Call or email Rita Harding at 259-7586 or mtroses22@bresnan.net. Tell her the number in your party, your name and what type dish you are bringing.

RESERVATIONS, RESERVATIONS, RESERVATIONS, RESERVATIONS



MEMBERSHIP REMINDER



When you join the National Audubon Society you receive a courtesy membership to the YVAS Chapter also, but not as a supporting Chapter member beyond the first year. To continue as a supporting member of YVAS you need to complete the separate application at the end of this Flyer and mail it with a check for \$20 to the membership Secretary. Check the address label of your current issue of the Flyer. If the label reads 'YVAS JAN 10', for example, it means your ARE a Chapter Supporter and your renewal was due in January, 2010. Thank you to the following YVAS Chapter members for your renewed support.

Anne M. Cowan
Robert R. Cushing
Michael & Nancy Downing
Donna M. Forbes
Catharine Glennon
Kathryn (Billie) Hicks
Phyllis Holt

Karen & Ray Honkomp
Mary E. Johnson
Donald E. McComas
Joan R. McKeown
Colleen Model
Jeanne Olson
Jane E. Scharff

Donald Seibert
Duane L. Smith
Monty Sullins
Ruth and David Torrence
Ruth Vanderhorst
Dick Walton and Susan Newell



YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY CONSERVATION GRANTS

Our Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society annually awards Conservation Grants to eligible educational institutions, groups, or individuals with a sound project that meets the YVAS mission. Our mission is to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat. This year an award of up to \$400.00 is available.

Applications will be accepted until February 1 for the 2011 grants. Any applications received after February 1 will be included in the grant pool for grants the following year. The YVAS Board will review applications and successful Conservation Grant applicants will be announced at the April General Membership meeting.

Grant applications are to include: name, address, telephone number and email address of applicant and of supervisor (in the case of students), purpose, activities, time line and budget.

Grant award winners will be expected to submit a written report of their project and its success within one year of the initial award date. They will also be asked to present their results at either a board meeting or at a general membership meeting. For more information, contact Nancy Wiggins at nancyhwiggins@hotmail.com, Dick Moore at andersmoore@msn.com, or Ruth Vanderhorst at acrv@bresnan.net .

MONTANA AUDUBON EDUCATION CONSERVATION CENTER (ACEC)

Program Schedule

- **Saturday, November 20 9:30-11:00 a.m.** 'Tracking Animals in Our Backyard'
- **Tuesday, November 23 7:00-8:00 p.m.** 'Pine Bark Beetle Natural History and Effects on Forest Ecology'
- **Friday, November 26 7:30-9:00 p.m.** 'Owl Prowl'
- **Saturday, December 11 9:30 – 11 a.m.** 'Making Natural Ornaments'

Pre-registration is suggested for all programs

The ACEC is located at 7026 S. Billings Blvd. at the Norm's Island Trailhead across from the entrance to Riverfront Park. Telephone 406.294.5099 or online at www.mtaudubon.org

Membership Information

1. As many of you know, we offer membership in YVAS as Supporting Chapter Members for \$20.00 per year. We do this to help pay the costs of membership. Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our Chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to join our Chapter as Supporting Chapter Members. Use the bottom application form on the right to join as Supporting Chapter Members or to renew your Chapter membership.
2. An application for *initial* membership in the National Audubon Society is also printed in each YVAS Flyer (see application 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, along with the fee, to the address provided. Our Chapter will then receive payment for recruiting a new member.
3. Please note the address label on your issue of the Yellowstone Valley Flyer. If your label has a date on the top, you are a National Audubon Member. If your label has YVAS and a 2 digit year and month, you are a Supporting Chapter Member (or both). For example, if your address label reads [YVAS JAN 10*] this means your renewal was due by January of 2010. An [*] symbol indicates an expired local membership. Please renew Chapter memberships when due using the form in the Flyer. Renewal of NAS membership is NOT handled by the Chapter. You should renew directly with the NAS.
4. Moving??? Please 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.
5. 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, please make sure you leave a note for the membership secretary indicating your academic affiliation.

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 the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society. I understand I will be supporting local Chapter activities, receiving the Flyer, 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

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.

- **NOTE CHANGE IN THE FOLLOWING DATE FROM NOVEMBER 6 TO Nov 13 (Sat) YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY.** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Bring a sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.
- **Dec 18 (Sat) ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT.** More details are included in the FLYER
- **Jan 1 (Sat) NEW YEARS FIELD TRIP.** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Bring a sack lunch. **Yellowtail Dam Afterbay.** Helen Carlson, leader.
- **Jan 8 (Sat) 33rd ANNUAL EAGLE MIDWINTER SURVEY in Lower 48 States.** 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **Yellowstone River: Billings to Columbus.** Leader: Brad Hall or George Mowat. **No host lunch. (Note: this trip is not listed in the 2010-2011 field trip list)**
- **Feb 5 (Sat) WINTER WANDERERS FIELD TRIP**—Rare winter birds. **Progressive birding and eating. 9 a.m. to dark. FUNDRAISER. Reservations required by Feb 3rd.** See Flyer for more details.

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

