

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 11/12

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

New This Issue

- TOGETHER-GREEN FELLOWSHIP
- CHRISTMAS FUND RAISER POT LUCK
- CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
- YVAS CONSERVATION GRANT



NOVEMBER 21ST MEMBERSHIP MEETING

ADOPT-A-LEK COMING TO MONTANA AUDUBON

A project for monitoring Greater Sage-Grouse populations is coming to Montana Audubon! Dubbed "Adopt-a-Lek", the effort has been training and fielding volunteers to collect information on sage-grouse population and habitat trends across Montana since 2000. Beginning in 2012, the project will be led by Montana Audubon. Experienced technicians will be going afield, and some new volunteers will be needed to monitor specific leks during the April breeding season. The program is directed by Ben Deeble who has been working on Greater Sage-grouse conservation in Montana for over a decade and helped craft the state's 2006 sage-grouse management plan. He currently co-chairs the western Montana Sage-grouse Local Working Group, and will present more details about conservation efforts with YVAS at the November 21 Membership Meeting.



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.

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Monday, November 14, 6:00pm: Board Meeting

Monday, November 21, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting



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



Monday, December 5, 6:00pm, Christmas Pot Luck Dinner and Fundraiser, Masonic Center, 1101 Broadwater

☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

KAYHAN OSTOVAR HONORED WITH TOGETHERGREEN FELLOWSHIP



Montana Audubon announced that YVAS Past President Kayhan Ostovar, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science & Fish and Wildlife Management at Rocky Mountain College, was one of forty applicants accepted to participate in the TogetherGreen Fellowship Program. TogetherGreen is a partnership between National Audubon and Toyota that promises a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project. Working with students, Kayhan said he plans to use osprey as a biological indicator of water quality on the Yellowstone River. The goal will be to create a larger program that examines heavy metal and hydrocarbon toxicity in the population near the Billings' industrial section. He stated that "in light of the oil spill, this may be an

especially useful way to document changes to the ecosystem. Since osprey eat the same fish as humans in the area, this study will be a useful bio-indicator of overall aquatic health. Students will also work directly with Audubon members in monitoring the program, giving them a great opportunity to be mentored by passionate bird enthusiasts."



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Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, battie@bresnan.net
Vice-President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
Secretary: open
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
 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
 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, 651-0218, nwiggin83@gmail.com
 Field Trip Chairs... George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467,
 gmowat@bresnan.net
 Greeters.....Phyllis Holt 252-7373
 Audrey Jurovich 656-2748
 Injured Raptors...Jeanette Tasey 669-3169,jtasey@gmail.com
 Membership Secretary.....Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,
 cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com
 Program Chair.....open
 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.

YVAS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AND FUNDRAISER



DATE: Monday, Dec. 5, 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 directions:
 - If your last name begins with **A ...G** - entree or side dish, enough for your party plus 6
 - If your last name begins with **H...M** - dessert, enough for your party plus 6.
 - If your last name begins with **N...Z** - salad, enough for your party plus 6

• PROGRAM



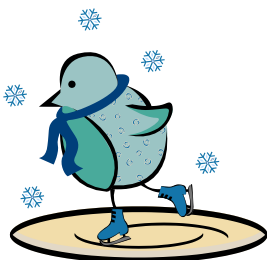
Bob Landis will again share his wonderful and often humorous photography taken in Yellowstone National Park. He is an Emmy award-winning wildlife cinematographer who has produced many films for programs such as National Geographic and Nature. Recording wildlife behavior on movie film and video is the hallmark of Bob Landis' films. His work has taken him to Denali, Kluane, and Algonquin National Parks, but his home is Yellowstone National Park, a place dear to his soul.

• 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 Rita Harding at 259-7586. Donations can also be made during the silent auction to any number of YVAS special projects, including Audubon Adventures, the Osprey Project, the Endowment Fund, and the Conservation Grant.

• RESERVATIONS!

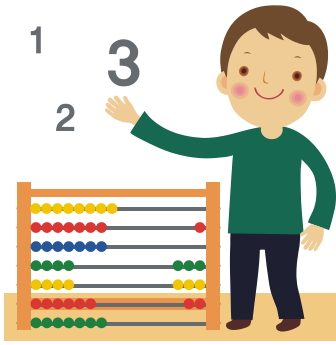
Call or email Rita Harding at 259-7586 or mtroses22@bresnan.net. Tell her the number in your party, your name and what type dish you are bringing and if you need a ride to the dinner.



**RESERVATIONS, RESERVATIONS,
RESERVATIONS, RESERVATIONS!**



THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17



Grab your checklists, warm gloves and binoculars for the 112th year of the Christmas Bird Count, the National Audubon Society's premier citizen science event. Experienced and new birders alike are encouraged to participate. Please call Helen Carlson at 248-8684; she will sign you up and provide information about your route, group, etc. There is a \$5.00 fee to participate. Participants will meet at 7 a.m. on **DECEMBER 17**, 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.

From December 14 through January 5 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season. Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation. Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition-a "Christmas Bird Census"-that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count.

FINAL ISSUE OF THE FLYER FOR 2011



This YVAS Flyer combines the November and December editions in one Issue. Watch for your next copy of the Flyer to arrive in January 2012. If you would like to receive the Flyer on-line (where it is much more colorful) and help defray mailing costs and printing waste, please send your email address to membership Secretary Joel Bowers at jmba@jmba.com.



FIELD TRIP NOTES

OCT 1, 2011 COONEY DAM BIRDING ADVENTURE



YVAS Crew at work Photo by Will Crain

We met as usual at Rocky, and 5 daring birders in two vehicles headed to the land and waters west of Boyd 22 mi from Billings and another 8 mi to Cooney Dam. Although Cooney is Montana's most used recreation area, for us it was nearly deserted.

Upon our arrival we met Stan, who was to be our tour guide extraordinaire; he has spent many years identifying and cataloguing the birds within the confines of Cooney Dam—an interesting reservoir fed by Willow and Red

Cooney Reservoir, about ½ hour from Red Lodge, is one of the most popular lakes in Southeastern Montana during the summer months. Originally created as an irrigation reservoir, it is primarily a day-use recreation area, covering more than 300 acres and nearly 800 water acres.

Lodge Creeks in a great birding corridor. Our first spotting of serious interest



Horned lark Photo by Will Crain

turned out to be a surf scoters, rare in the interior so a jewel for us birders. Thankfully we had 3 digital scopes to view these migrants that we chased around the lake to get better views ...only to get better views of other birds sitting in the middle of the lake... 3 Greater White-fronted Geese! Loons were sporadic on this gorgeous Fall day but still a welcome site.



Common loon Photo by Will Crain

As we came to the final stretch of the adventure, we chanced to see two young horned larks learning how to be larks; then on to the end of

the trip around the spillway area where there were empty campsites with trees and tables for hungry birders. Sorry Helen Carlson was under the weather for this adventure, but thanks to George Mowat for getting us organized. Thanks to Will Crain

CONSERVATION GRANT AVAILABLE



The 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 \$1000.00 is available.

Applications will be accepted until February 1, 2012 for the 2011 grants. Any applications received after February 1 will be included in the pool for grants the following year. The YVAS Board will review applications and successful Conservation

Grant applicants will be announced at the April 2012 General Membership meeting. Please visit yvaudubon.org for an application form or call Nancy Wiggins at 406-651-0218.



EVENTS AT THE AUDUBON CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER FALL 2011

7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101406-294-5099
www.mtacec.org

November 11 Nature Night at the Audubon Center! Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Program is open to 1st – 6th grade students, and runs from 6 – 8 PM. Fee is \$10 per child. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

November 20 Free Weekend Wonders family program, “Survival Skills 101” from 1:30 – 3 at the Audubon Center. We’ll learn how early settlers survived in Montana – including how to build fire and shelters. Call 294-

5099 to register.

November 22 Free evening lecture from 7 – 8 PM at the Audubon Center. John Carlson with the BLM will speak on “Prairie Birds - The Story of Birds in a Sea of Grass and Sky”. No registration required.

November 23 Terrific Turkeys School Break Camp from 8:30 – 4:30: Learn all about this fabulous bird and its feathered friends as we prepare for Thanksgiving. Open to students in 1st – 6th grades. Fee is \$40/child. Register by calling 294-5099.

December 9 Special Holiday Nature Night at the Audubon Center! Drop your child off for 2 – 4 hours while you prepare for the holidays. Your child will enjoy an evening of adventures, crafts, and stories with our Teacher Naturalists. Program is open to 1st – 6th grade students, and runs from 5 – 9 PM. Fee is \$5 per child per hour. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

December 18 Free Weekend Wonders family program, “A Solstice Celebration” from 1:30 – 3 at the Audubon Center. We’ll learn about the winter solstice and the reason for the seasons. Call 294-5099 to register.

NESTING MATERIALS:



The book, The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession (2004) by Mark Obmascik, is tale of dedicated birders and their adventures while trying to beat the record for most species identified in a year. The movie, “The Big Year” is not a close rendering for those who read the book, but is still quite charming and very entertaining. In both the book and the movie, you have to admire the rare passion and dedication that a big year attempt requires.

For those who are real birders themselves, some license was taken -- a spotted woodpecker was seen (well I suppose if someone spotted it, then it was, in fact, a spotted woodpecker), but these are easily overlooked as you are forced to laugh at yourself as you laugh at the characters on the screen. If you want to see lots of birds, stay for the credits . . . Thanks to Starr Stevens

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 _____

Do you want to receive the Flyer electronically?

YES NO

Send this application and your check to:
Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075



WHOOPS!!

Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or renew your chapter membership?

PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR FLYER. IF IT SHOWS "YVAS JAN 12" BELOW YOUR NAME, THEN YOU ARE A SUPPORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$20, USING THE FORM ON THE RIGHT. YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS FUND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FLYER ALONG WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR CHAPTER.

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 application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.

1. **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.
2. 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



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

**Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
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PERMIT NO. 27**

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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.

Dec 17 (Sat) ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. More details are in the FLYER, page 4.

Jan 1 (Sun) NEW YEAR'S FIELD TRIP. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sack lunch. Yellowtail Dam Afterbay. Helen Carlson, leader.

Jan 7 (Sat) ANNUAL EAGLE MIDWINTER SURVEY in Lower 48 States. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Yellowstone River: Billings to Columbus. Brad Hall or George Mowat, leader. No Host Lunch.

Feb 4 (Sat) WINTER WANDERERS FIELD TRIP --Rare winter birds. Progressive birding and eating. 9 a.m. to dark. FUNDRAISER. Reservations required by Feb. 2nd. See the January FLYER for more details.

Apr 21 (Sat) EXXON PONDS AND EMERALD HILLS. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sack lunch. One Mile Walk.

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

