

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 10

OCTOBER 2011

New This Issue

- **FUND RAISING DINNERS**
- **FIELD NOTES**
- **CONSERVATION GRANT**
- **NESTING MATERIALS**



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MONDAY, **OCTOBER 24th**, MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Silvertip/Exxon oil spill in the Yellowstone River at Laurel, MT occurred on July 1, 2011. The October YVAS General Membership Meeting will feature an update and summary of the effects of that spill on birds and bird habitat, other wildlife and ecology, and related rehabilitation efforts since the spill. Mr. Dave Pauli will present some of his experience in dealing with that situation as well with other impacts and rehabilitation and recovery efforts involving birds and other wildlife. Mr. Pauli is the director of the Western Regional Office of the Humane Society of the US and has been involved with the evaluation, clean up, and rehabilitation efforts of numerous human caused impacts to wildlife around the world, including the Silvertip/Exxon oil and the Gulf oil spill. Allison Begley, biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will also provide a brief update on the Yellowstone River oil spill and clean up efforts of this summer.



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, October 10, 6:00pm: Board Meeting**

• **Monday, October 24, 7:00pm: General Membership Meeting (Change from Oct .17th)**



There is no dinner scheduled before this General Membership Meeting

☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

THIS FLYER IS PUBLISHED ON SFI CERTIFIED PRODUCT



Fund raising dinners prepared by YVAS members and served prior to General Membership meetings have long been a popular tradition with our organization. They provide an opportunity for members to gather and socialize before meetings and often give the invited speaker a chance to meet and talk with members of our community. In the past, very generous volunteers have prepared delicious menus and donated the funds to a designated YVAS project. We still have the very generous volunteers who are willing to prepare dishes, but In order to continue providing the meals, we are looking for someone who could coordinate and schedule what gets done - you **DO NOT** have to do the cooking! If you could help out with this effort, please call Nancy Wiggins at 651-0218 or nwiggins83@gmail.com

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

The following classrooms have been added to our Audubon Adventures Program. Thanks to the new donors!!



SCHOOL

ELYSIAN
LOCKWOOD
SITKA, ALASKA

TEACHER

Mr. Murl
Dylan Barnard
Home school student
Janice Micheal

GRADE

5
4
5

NEW DONORS

George and Bernie Mowat
Grant Barnard
Dorcas Halverson

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Bill DeMeyer, 671-7501, battie@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
Jeanette Tasey, 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com
Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@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.....Jeanette 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, nwiggins83@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.



FIELD TRIP NOTES



OSPREY Photo by George Mowat

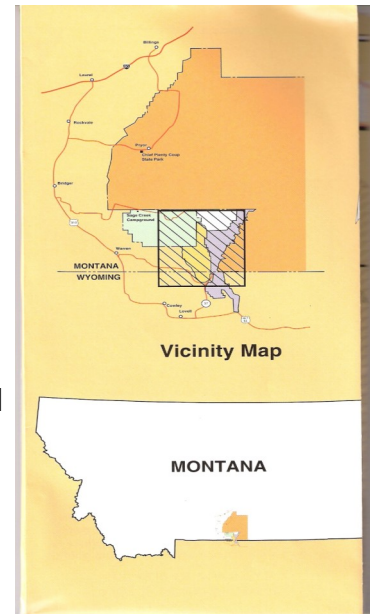
Thursday's hunt for migrating birds at Riverfront Park produced very few. There were, however, cross-country warblers of the 7th and 8th grade variety running on designated paths throughout the park. The birds that remained undeterred by these human sprinters were the killdeer, eastern kingbirds, black-capped chickadees, double-crested cormorants, Canada geese, mallards, barn swallows, mourning doves, and gray catbirds which harassed our group from the shrubs throughout the walk. The highlight of the evening was an osprey sitting atop a tall dead tree between Lake Josephine and the Yellowstone River. Our leader, George Mowat, was able to get a beautiful silhouette of this large raptor in front of an almost full Harvest Moon. Thank you to Deb Regele

SEPTEMBER 8, 2011 RIVERFRONT PARK

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SEPTEMBER 10, 2011 CLARK'S FORK AND PRYOR MOUNTAINS

Ten of us met at Rockvale and were off to Bridger to enjoy the ponds where we saw mallards, northern shoveler, barn swallows, red-winged blackbirds, great blue herons, mourning doves, savannah sparrows, wood ducks, cat birds, common yellowthroat, meadowlarks, house finches, and a marsh wren who climbed the cat tails several times! In the Pryors where the roads were unforgiving with dust and ruts, we watched vesper sparrows, northern flickers, red-tailed hawks, and eastern kingbirds while a golden eagle watched us. We added a loggerhead shrike, lark buntings, a sage thrasher, common raven, american gold finch, cedar waxwings, song sparrow and white-crowned sparrows to our inventory. Continuing on, we spotted a brown creeper, mountain chickadee, williamson's sapsucker, red-breasted nuthatch, black-capped chickadee, townsend's solitaire, yellow-rumped warbler, clark's nutcracker, cassin's finch and dark-eyed juncos. In all, we recorded 43 species and worked up hearty appetites, so we stopped for hamburgers in Bridger and dined at Billie's house in Rockvale. Do join us next year! Thank you to Billie Hicks



SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2011 FIFTH ANNUAL YELLOWSTONE RIVER CLEANUP

Team 'Yellowstone River' led by Kayhan Ostovar, embarking from Duck Creek landing at 9:45 AM, had 14 people, in 2 rafts, 1 drift boat loaned by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 4 canoes and 1 kayak. Stopping at Norm's Island we unloaded two pick up loads of trash. At least 30 tires of all sorts, lots of metal from old cars and general trash that was



(Continued on page 4)

washed into the river during the flooding. Yellowstone River Parks Association left a big truck for us to fill but it was not big enough! On the second leg a giant tractor tire was wheeled onto my drift boat; many more tires were found this year probably because of the flood waters. We also pulled out a water heater. The hardest part was at the end near Coulson Park. Flood waters have dramatically changed channels here making access to the parking ramp very difficult. We overfilled a very large trailer with trash about 7PM. A shore-based team waiting at the end would be a really big help. Three other teams were at it as well: 10 people were cleaning up at Riverfront Park lead by Bill DeMeyer. We picked up a lot of trash and I found \$20. Lots of bending over but it was clean when we left. Team 'Mystic Park' from Billings Clinic was lead by Phil McBride. Ten volunteers from St. Vincent's Hospital cleaned along the river in a light rain and then carried the bags to the Mystic Park parking lot for pickup. Set your Calendar for September 15th 2012 for the next Audubon ~ Yellowstone River Clean-up!



Photo by Kayhan Ostovar

Widespread community supporters included:

- Peaks and Prairies Land Trust
- Montana Wilderness Association-Eastern Wildlands Chapter
- National Audubon/Toyota – Together Green Grant
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- Western Organization of Resource Councils
- ExxonMobil
- Billings Clinic Foundation
- Walmart West End
- St. Vincent Healthcare's Environmental Stewardship Committee
- Yellowstone River Conservation District Council
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Yellowstone River Park Association
- Pita Pit



Photo by Will Crain



Photo by Kayhan Ostovar



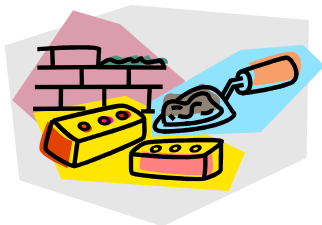
IN MEMOREUM Reverend Dr. Milous Repka, Presbyterian Minister, Hospital Chaplain retired, passed away on Saturday, Sept. 3, 2011. He was born Feb. 9, 1925, in Czechoslovakia, where he lived under Nazi rule and later the communist regime. In 1958, he fled the country by escaping over the border into East Germany hidden in a compartment beneath the floorboards of a van. Repka, then a political refugee, and his wife emigrated to Omaha, Neb. where he led a Czech-speaking congregation. In April 1967, the family moved to Billings, where he became assistant pastor at First Presbyterian Church. He joined St. Vincent Healthcare as their first Protestant chaplain and will be remembered and missed by the YVAS community for giving the blessing at our annual Christmas dinner.

YVAS CHECKLIST



- CHRISTMAS FUNRAISER: MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2011**, 6PM at the Masonic Center, 1101 Broadwater. RAFFLE, SILENT AUCTION AND OF COURSE MR. BOB LANDIS TO ENTERTAIN WITH HIS AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHY AND STORIES OF YELLOWSTONE. Watch for more details in the November Flyer
- OSPREY REPORTS:** Those members assisting with the Osprey nesting surveys should return the data sheets at the YVAS meetings or send them to Monty Sullins, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075.
- CHOOSE TO RECEIVE YOUR FLYER ON-LINE.** Contact Joel Bowers at 534-3672 or jmba@jmba.com and send him your e-mail address.

- EVENTS AT THE AUDUBON CENTER** 7026 South Billings Blvd., Billings, MT 406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org
 - **October 14:** 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.
 - **October 21:** Fabulous Fall School Break Camp from 8:30 – 4:30: Winter is on its way, and the world outdoors is preparing for the cold, dark months ahead. Come celebrate fall and discover what happens to plants and animals in the winter. Open to students in 1st – 6th grades. Fee is \$40/child.
 - **October 23:** Free Weekend Wonders family program from 1:30 – 3 at the Audubon Center. Learn the basics of canoeing and explore our ponds with your family. Open to all ages; Call 294-5099 to register.
 - **October 25:** Free evening lecture from 7 – 8 PM at the Audubon Center. Ray Wright will speak about “Reptiles and Amphibians: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”. He will give general background, including taxonomy, defining characteristics, and natural history before focusing on notable Montana species. He will also discuss how to identify venomous animals, and what to do when encountered. He’ll end with a live specimen hands-on experience. Dr. Wright is an emergency physician in Billings with a life-long interest in wildlife, most avidly in reptiles. No registration required.
 - **October 31:** Halloween Party! Free family program from 6:30 – 8 PM. Make a nature-inspired mask and wear it while we go on an evening prowling in search of owls.



HERITAGE WALKWAY AT THE AUDUBON CENTER

The Audubon Center is discontinuing the sales of bricks on December 1st. If you or your chapter have not purchased a brick, this is your last chance to be a permanent part of the Heritage Walkway. Bricks are \$150. If you have any questions contact The Center at 294-5099.

NESTING MATERIALS—DON'T MISS THESE VIDEOS

<http://www.arkive.org/osprey/pandion-haliaetus/video-00.html>

<http://youtube/IMbDjNDD4cM> Owl < <http://www.dogwork.com/owfo8/>>





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.

Fall Songbird Migration is Upon Us

Those little tufts of bright feathers that sang beautiful songs and entertained us in the spring and early summer are headed south –fast! It's songbird migration time. Actually, many songbirds have been migrating for a while. Some left north central Montana by late August and early September, like the western kingbird and northern oriole. Some won't leave their northern homes until severe weather pushes them south, though south may be just to Montana. To this group add the common redpoll and bohemian waxwing. And others are closer to the middle of migration through Montana: American goldfinch and common yellowthroat.

The migration puzzle has fascinated humans forever. In the Middle Ages, a belief took hold that birds flew to the moon for the winter. They don't, in case you wondered. Others thought that birds like swallows and swifts hibernated in caves. Not a bad idea, really. Bats do it, why not birds? But also not true.

Some folks believed hummingbirds rode on the backs of geese. Hummingbirds are so small, the argument went, there's no way they can fly very far on their own. They must hitch a ride on the backs of geese. Though it's not true, some folks still believe it. Birds evolved to migrate because it works. Those species that travel from northern latitudes to warmer winter climates are able to live in two different areas during seasons when each region provides favorable conditions. But migration is tough. More than half the small land birds of the Northern Hemisphere never return from their southbound migration, according to one estimate. There are energy costs and risk of exposure, exhaustion and physical dangers both natural, like hurricanes, and man-made, such as skyscrapers.

Many of us have had a bird fly into a window at home and die from the impact. Now think bigger, say, New York City bigger. New York or most any metropolis on the eastern seaboard lies along a major songbird migration route. All of those big cities have big buildings with lots and lots of glass, which can be a perfect mirror in certain lights. The Audubon Society estimates 90,000 birds are killed annually in New York City by flying into buildings. That estimate, by the way, comes from volunteers picking up dead birds each morning in the fall at the base of the city's glass towers.

Not all birds migrate. Magpies and house sparrows spend their summers and winters in the same spot. And all of our upland game birds stay put, mostly just moving about within their habitat, like the mountain grouse species. Birds that do migrate, especially those that fly thousands of miles, accomplish feats that boggle the mind. Think of it, a human who wants to complete a 26-mile marathon typically trains for months or longer and usually even goes over the course just before the race. Meanwhile, a multi-colored western tanager that hatches and learns to fly in the Gallatin Valley will several weeks later fly 2,400 miles south to Guatemala navigating by landmarks it has never before seen.

Once again, which is the superior species?

By Bruce Auchly, FWP Region 4 Information Officer



Western tanagers spend their summers in Montana then migrate to Mexico and Central America for the winter. Photo by Dan Casey.

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



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
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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.

- **Nov 5 (Sat) YELLOWTAIL DAM AFTERBAY. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sack lunch. George Mowat, leader.**
- **Dec 17 (Sat) ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. More details will be in the November Flyer.**
- **Jan 1 (Sun) NEW YEAR'S FIELD TRIP. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sack lunch. Yellowtail Dam After-bay. 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 FLYER for more details.**

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

