

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.

MARCH 2025

VOLUME 55, NUMBER 2

AMERICAN PRAIRIE



American Prairie landscape Photo by Gordon Wiltsie

YVAS hosts a presentation on “American Prairie” with Corrie Williamson on March 17th. Coffee and cookies served at 6:30 p.m. at the Mayflower Congregational Church (corner of Rehberg and Poly). The evening’s program begins at 7:00 p.m. YVAS programs are free and open to the public.

Submitted by Bruce Waage

American Prairie is working to connect, conserve, and share over 3 million acres of prairie grasslands in Montana's Northern Great Plains. Join Corrie Williamson, American Prairie's Community Outreach Director, to explore this ambitious mission: celebrating and protecting this unique and precious ecosystem for the benefit of the land, wildlife, and people who call it home. Corrie will discuss American Prairie's history and operational model, its rewilding and conservation efforts, the scientific and community partnerships that fuel its work, current initiatives, and how you can visit and experience the prairie firsthand. The presentation will also include time for audience questions and conversation.

Corrie Williamson, American Prairie's Community Outreach Director, is based at their National Discovery Center in Lewistown. She works to build awareness, support, and collaborations for American Prairie's conservation mission, focusing on areas such as the Advisory Board, neighbor relations, the Field Notes newsletter, the American Prairie Field School, and partnerships with Indigenous communities. Raised on a small farm in the foothills of Virginia's Appalachian Mountains, Corrie moved to Montana in 2013 and has since worked in outreach, communication, and education. For three years, she served as Outreach Director at AERO (now Abundant Montana), collaborating with farmers and ranchers statewide. Her experience also includes working as a naturalist guide in Yellowstone National Park and teaching writing, communication, and environmental studies as an adjunct professor at both Carroll College and Helena College. Corrie currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and is the author of three books of poetry.



Corrie Williamson Photo by Emily Clewis



Chirps and Tweets



YVAS Osprey Nest Monitoring Project



Osprey aerobatics Photo by Pete Murray

Dr. Marco Restani will be holding this year's Osprey Orientation at the Billings Public Library on Saturday, March 29th, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The program will review Osprey natural history and how to collect standardized data for the project. The orientation is required for new monitors and provides 'refresher' training for returning monitors. YVAS members and those interested in learning about Osprey nest monitoring are welcome. An RSVP is requested and can be sent to me at debregele@gmail.com.

This will be YVAS' 14th year of banding Osprey nestlings along the Yellowstone River between Gardiner and Miles City. We are currently looking for a few new monitors to observe nests in various locations along the Yellowstone River. If you are interested or have questions, please contact me at the above email.

Submitted by Deb Regele



New Fledglings at the Livingston Ball Park Photo by Edie Linneweber

Membership Data Administrator Needed

Are you interested in volunteering with Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and its membership but enjoy working from home? Well, this could be for you! This position does not require that you be on the YVAS Board of Directors, although it is an option of your choice. It does require various monthly membership data management duties along with periodic updates to the Board throughout the year.

As the Membership Data Administrator, the main focus is to maintain the Membership Data Base using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and sending monthly renewal reminders to YVAS members. For each publication of the Flyer, the updated "Membership Renewal Reminders" article needs to be emailed to the Flyer editor. The Editor will also need the addresses of members receiving the paper Flyer. There are a few additional tasks as well.



If you are interested in more information or the complete list of tasks for the Administrator position, please contact any YVAS Board member. In the fall of 2023, I temporarily stepped in for the previous Administrator but due to ongoing commitments with YVAS, I need to pass this position on to a new volunteer.

Submitted by Deb Regele

Montana Audubon Center Events

Submitted by Emily Chilcoat

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

- **Nature Nuts (Every Tuesday)** – A fun-filled "Toddler and Me" program perfect for young nature enthusiasts.
- **Winter Birding Experience:** Feathers in the Frost (Feb 22nd) at the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary in Red Lodge
- **Morning Bird Stroll** (March 8th)
- **Great Horned Owl Encounter** (March 8th)
- **Owl Prowl** (March 15th)
- **Native Plant Symposium** (March 29th)

Montana Audubon Center
7026 South Billings Blvd.
Billings, MT 59101

Office: (406) 294-5099
Cell: (406) 794-8095

YVAS Birding Field Trips

Contact Carolyn Jones at carolyn684@gmail.com to be included on the Bird Trip Notification List. The people on the Notification List will 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.

Date	Day of Week	Meeting Place	Description	Leaders
3/30/2025	SUN	8AM Rocky/ BST parking lot	Big Lake, migrating swans, sandhills, etc.	Mike Weber
4/12/2025	SAT	7:30 Bridger Park, end of town	Pryor Mountains, search for sagebrush sparrows	Stan Heath and Susan Hovde
4/26/2025	SAT	Phipps Park 8AM	BLUEBIRDS AND BLOOMS, steep hike to	Carolyn Jones & Sue
5/4/2025	SUN	Two Moon Park 8 AM	Hike Two Moon Park	Mike Weber
5/10/2025	SAT	8AM Rocky/ BST parking lot	Broadview Ponds	Carolyn Jones
5/17/2025	SAT	Itch-Kep-Pe Park, Columbus, near restrooms, 8 AM	Bridger Creek	Stan Heath and Susan Hovde
5/27/2025	TUE	Parking area to the right at entrance, meet at 5 PM	Riverfront evening stroll, mosquito repellent advised	Cathy Breeding
5/31/2025	SAT	Itch-Kep-Pe Park, Columbus, near restrooms, 8 AM	Stillwater River/Woodbine area	Carolyn Jones
6/7/2025	SAT	7:30 Rocky or 8AM Bundy fishing access	Pompey's Pillar and Bundy access	Carolyn Jones
6/10/2025	TUE	8:30 Red Lodge Town Pump	Red Lodge area	Stan Heath and Susan

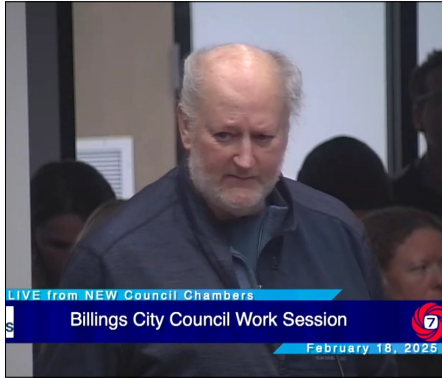


Two Bison on the American Prairie

Photo by Gordon Wiltsie

YVAS Weighs in on Park Disposal Plan

On Sunday, February 16th, Marian Lyman Kirst alerted the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS) Board to an upcoming Billings City Council meeting concerning the potential disposal of city-owned properties, many of which are vital open habitat areas enjoyed by birders and the community. Recognizing the urgency, the board swiftly reviewed the extensive list of nearly 130 tax-coded properties to prepare a response.



Steve McConnell addressing City Council

Board members Steve McConnell and Kris Decker, joined by member Bill Morgan, meticulously compared each property against GIS maps to assess the potential impacts of their disposal. Some of the lands are within existing and established residential subdivisions as boulevard strips and small green spaces the City has been maintaining for years. Other larger areas constitute important natural and open habitat areas that we feel are important to retain.

During the City Council work session, open to public comment, YVAS delivered both verbal testimony and a formal letter to the Mayor and City Council. Many other individuals who support Audubon's mission to protect and conserve habitat were at the meeting, also providing excellent testimony questioning and generally opposing the outright sale of park properties at this time.

The strong public presence, including local high school students, was encouraging. The YVAS Board and its members will stay engaged with the City Council process to help provide input on this important matter. Ultimately, it is hoped that the disposal list will go from 130 parcels to only a handful. Any proceeds from property sales are intended to support the City Park Department, which currently faces an operating deficit.

Submitted by Bill Morgan

The Osprey by Tim Mackrill

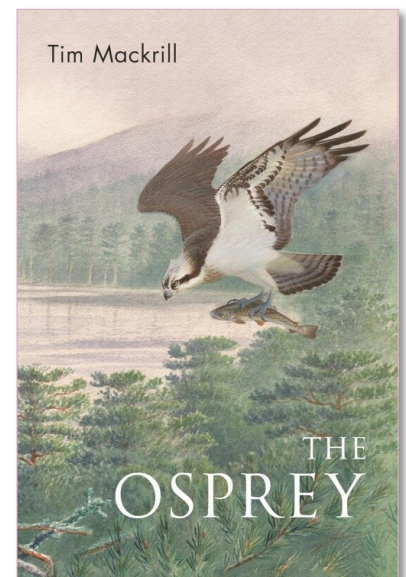
Published in 2024 by AD Poyser. 304 pages.

Did you know that Ospreys were extinct in Britain in the 1890's and that their extinction was due to local communities eating their eggs and killing them to protect fishing ponds? Or that young Osprey "imprint" their birth location at the time of fledging? These stories are just a few of the many reasons to read Tim Mackrill's comprehensive review of Osprey research and conservation. The book includes contributions by Dr. Marco Restani --six photographs, as well as information about the risks to Ospreys from baling twine and electrocution that can result from nesting on power poles. The success of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society's Osprey monitoring program in identifying Ospreys at risk gets a shout-out in the chapter "Our Relationship with the Osprey."

Tim Mackrill completed his PhD on Osprey migration at the University of Leicester. He has been active in the Rutland Osprey Project, central England, where the first Ospreys to breed in England for 150 years were re-established. His book emphasizes information on Ospreys in Britain, but also covers Europe, North America, Australia, and the British Ospreys' wintering grounds in West Africa. The book is rich in diagrams, migration routes, photographs, and summaries of research.

Ospreys are an adaptable species. In our Yellowstone River valley, we usually see Ospreys nesting on human-made platforms or power poles. Worldwide, the variety of nesting sites is amazing. In addition to fascinating information on nesting, there are chapters covering subjects including behavior, migration, courtship, raising young, fishing, distribution, and...just about everything Osprey.

The Osprey can be ordered online from a variety of bookstores.



Submitted by Ginny Waples

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: March 10, 2025 —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: March 17, 2025. 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 406-780-0810 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 406-780-0810
 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 406-780-0810
 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 406-780-0810 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



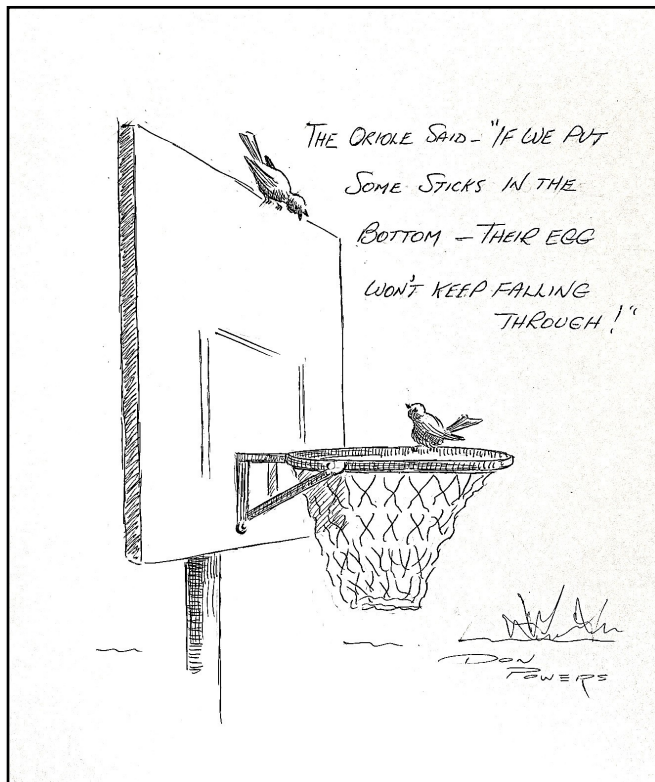
**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**

P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BILLINGS, MT
PERMIT NO. 27

***** 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.



March renewals: Becky & Gregory Gill, Lois Gorseth, Claudia Janecek, Robert Mackin, Kathie & Steve Shandera, Nicholas Wright.

February renewal: Barbara Garrett, John & Carol McNeal, Larry Newell & Marlene Pirtz, Sarah Stockburger.

January renewals: Vern Schneider, Mike Weber.

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