

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.

NOVEMBER 2025

VOLUME 55, NUMBER 9

Orange-breasted Falcon: Population Dynamics and Species Restoration in Central America



OFB on eggs Photo by Robert Berry

Robert Berry, falcon breeder, rancher, and conservationist, traveled to Belize in the early 1990s to learn more about a young graduate student's work on a rare tropical falcon. That experience, and the spectacular acrobatics of Orange-breasted Falcons (*Falco deiroleucus*) in flight, captured Bob's imagination... and the **Peregrine Fund Orange-breasted Falcon ('OBF') Restoration Program** was begun. Since then, and for nearly 35 years, Bob has worked tirelessly to better understand the population dynamics and restoration potential of this isolated population of OBF's in Central America. Scott Newbold joined the OBF program in 2011 and for 3 years witnessed this unique conservation program in action. Scott will share insights from field work in Guatemala and Belize and provide an overview of the 30-year program.

Scott Newbold earned his Ph.D. in Ecology from Utah State University. His research focuses on the community ecology of terrestrial vertebrates and invertebrates, particularly lizards, small mammals, birds, and ants, and applications of basic ecological principles to conservation and restoration issues. He has also been involved with large-scale monitoring initiatives through the Long-Term Ecological Research program and the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring program. Scott has taught in the biological sciences at Utah State University and Colorado State University, and is currently serving in his 14th year as an Instructor/Researcher at Sheridan College through a partnership initiated with Bob Berry.



Scott Newbold Photo by Jonathan Urbina

Submitted by Marco Restani

Join us on Monday, Nov 17th for our next YVAS program featuring Scott Newbold on the Peregrine Fund's restoration program for the Orange-breasted Falcon. The program will be held at the Mayflower Church on Poly and Rehberg Lane. A social with coffee and cookies begins at 6:30 PM; the program begins at 7 PM.

YVAS' OSPREY BANDING STUDY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN



Banded Osprey 55/E with fish
Photo by Ginny Waples

Due to the government shut down which began on October 1, 2025, additional federal government offices have been shut down and additional federal employees have been laid off by President Trump. Included in this round is the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL). The BBL website states, "The USGS Bird Banding Laboratory is closed due to a federal funding lapse. Reports submitted here will be securely stored and processed once normal operations resume. Thank you for continuing to report your bird bands."

(https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/Bander_Portal/login/reportband.php)

Not only is YVAS' Osprey Nest Monitoring and Banding Study affected, but all government and nongovernment avian banding and research work. The best tool YVAS has right now to track green-banded Ospreys is social media postings. Ospreys are still migrating

so most sightings will likely be along the southern coast of the United States and maybe Central America. If you, or anyone you know, finds a green-banded Osprey on Facebook, Instagram, online wildlife cameras, or other media posts, Marco Restani (federally licensed Osprey bander) would like to be able to contact them and/or the photographer. He can be reached at restani@stcloudstate.edu.

It is unclear exactly when the BBL will reopen and resume its operations even if the shutdown ends. For more information on the BBL go to the link below where it states, "The Bird Banding Laboratory (Est. 1920), an integrated scientific program, supports the collection, curation, archiving, and dissemination of data from banded and marked birds. These data allow for developing effective bird science, management, and conservation. The lab, in collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Service Bird Banding Office, administers the North American Bird Banding Program."

<https://www.usgs.gov/labs/bird-banding-laboratory>.

Submitted by Deb Regele

FIELD TRIPS COMING UP

Please note the change of date from Nov 1st to Nov 2nd for the Yellowtail Dam trip. Mike Weber will lead.

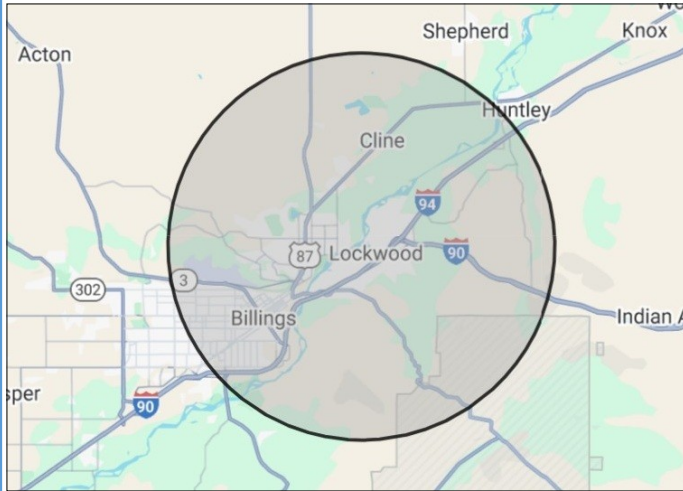
Check the YVAudubon.org website, Facebook, and the Flyer for any schedule changes including times, cancellations, or impromptu trips. Contact Carolyn Jones at carolyn684@gmail.com to be included on the Bird Trip Notification List.

Date	Day of Week	Meeting Place	Description	Leaders
Nov 2	SUN	8AM Rocky/BST parking lot	Yellowtail Dam Afterbay	Mike Weber
Dec 20	SAT	Perkins for Breakfast, 7AM	Christmas Bird Count 2025	Jerry Dalton
Jan 1, 2026	THU	8AM Rocky/BST parking lot	Annual New Years Day Bird Trip, Yellowtail Dam Afterbay	Ron Kuhler
Jan 4, 2026	SUN	8AM Rocky/BST parking lot	Mid Winter Eagle Count	Mike Weber / Ron Kuhler

2025 Audubon Christmas Bird Count

All Volunteers Welcome - Please Sign Up!

Save **Saturday, December 20th**, on your calendar for the Billings 2025 Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Sign up for a free bird watching adventure! When you sign up, you won't know how sunny or snowy the day will be. Meet some new birdwatching friends or reconnect with some birding buddies. Learn some new places to find birds, and spot that species no one else sees that day.



Approximate area of Billings CBC

The CBC is a long-term citizen science effort started in 1900 by National Audubon and conducted in Billings for the first time about 1940. Billings count area is a circle of 7.5-mile radius, centered on the Billings Par Pacific Refinery, formerly Exxon. The extent of the circle area reaches the Huntley bridge across the Yellowstone River on HWY 312, to six miles north of HWY 312 on HWY 87 N, the east edge of Zimmerman Park, Rehberg and Grand, King Ave West and South 24th St West, ¼ mile West of Norm Schoenthal's Island, Blue Creek Road at Briarwood Golf Club, HWY 87 S at Pryor Road, I-90 at Pryor Creek Road, and back to Huntley, including Lockwood, Billings Heights, and the close in part of west Billings.

This year we will plan to meet for a no host breakfast from 7:00 – 8:00 am at Perkins, 825 N 27th Street. To

compile the species observed, plan to meet after the count at about 5:00 pm at the Montana Audubon Center, 7026 S Billings Blvd, for free pizza and beverage provided by Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS). Treats and desserts would be welcome.

Each person will be assigned to an area with specific boundaries and a leader by the count organizer/compiler. Maps and recording sheets will be distributed the morning of the count, or in advance to group leaders. Birders will walk and/or drive to count the number of birds of each species observed. Please return results of the count to the Montana Audubon Center, 7026 S Billings Blvd, around 5:00pm on count day or to the compiler as soon as possible afterward.

Feeder watchers are also needed on count day, December 20. Birders living in the count circle can tally and report the species and numbers of birds they see at their feeders and from their home. You may be the lucky one to add a species to the count total. More feeder watchers would be welcome.

Please contact one of the count organizers well before December 20. Let them know you want to help.

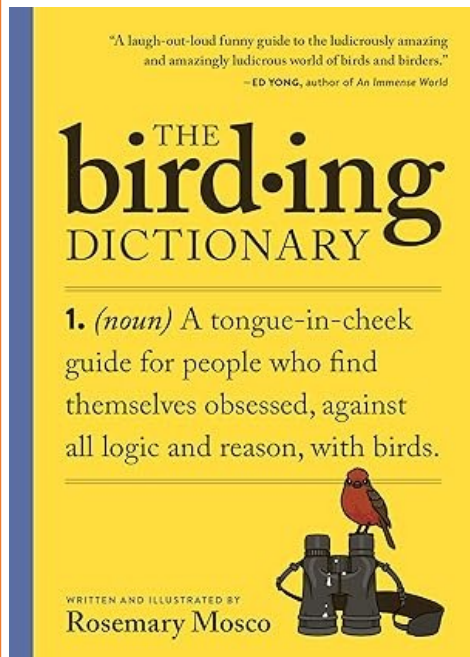


Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) - One of the species likely to show up in the Billings Christmas Count
Photo by Dottie Herring in Missoula (ML642943607)

Contact: Lois Dalton, feeder watcher organizer, 406 656-3656, daltonlois921@gmail.com

Contact: Jerry Dalton, Billings CBC organizer/compiler, 406 656-3656, jerrydalton96@gmail.com

You Probably Need This Book



Do you need a book that will get you through the stress of the holiday season? Or a book that would make a perfect stocking-stuffer for the birders in your life? Rosemary Mosco has written the most delightful ornithological book of 2025, and it can meet those needs.

The Birding Dictionary:

A tongue-in-cheek guide for people who find themselves obsessed, against all logic and reason, with birds.

The Birding Dictionary can be read straight through, or a little at a time, or even in random order, thanks to its alphabetical format. The text is interspersed with Mosco's amusing and instructional illustrations. You will probably learn something new and acquire an impressive vocabulary (*Kleptoparasitism! Zygodactyl! Patagonia Picnic Table Effect!*) and you will certainly smile or even laugh out loud.

The book provides pithy definitions, such as:

"vulture: a bird of prey that, out of politeness, waits for its prey to die of natural causes before eating it."

Other entries are riffs on birding topics:

"car blind: Any vehicle from which you view birds. Most birds don't view cars as a threat—perhaps they see vehicles as some sort of large grazing animal—so you can creep up to birds by driving slowly, then roll down the window and take pictures. Just don't open the door and step out. Birds will instantly flee from the horrifying sight of a huge grazing animal giving birth to a human."

Rosemary Mosco is best known for her *Bird and Moon* comics which, like *The Birding Dictionary*, are a sweet combination of facts and gentle humor. Rosemary has a strong background in natural history and a commitment to communicating scientific concepts in creative, engaging ways. If you have not run into Rosemary's work in Cornell Lab's *Living Bird Magazine* or online via Instagram or Facebook, you can find an archive of *Bird and Moon* comics at her website (see the link below) or get her book *Birding is My Favorite Video Game* (2018).

You can order Mosco's latest book through your local independent bookstore (recommended) or via the usual online booksellers:

***The Birding Dictionary* written & illustrated by Rosemary Mosco, Workman Publishing, 2025. \$15.00.**

To see a collection of Mosco's webcomics:

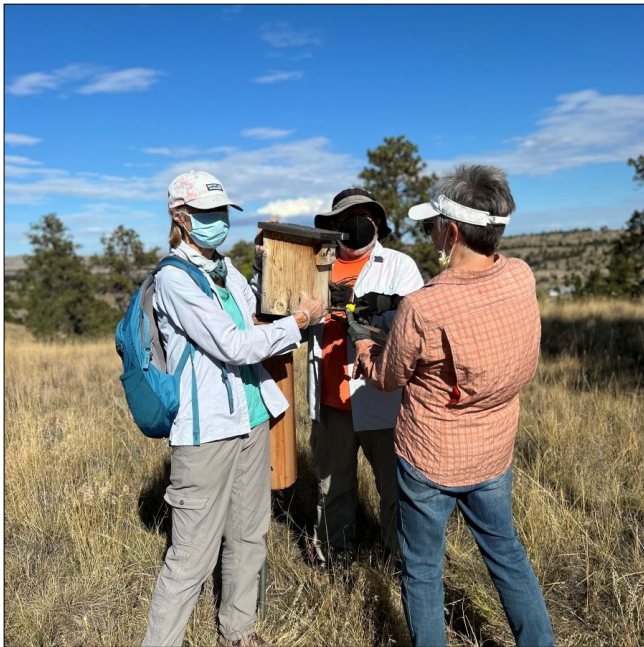
Bird and Moon comics archive by Rosemary Mosco at <https://rosemarymosco.com/comics/bird-and-moon/all>

For more information about the author/illustrator:

"Something Funny Happens When Rosemary Mosco Mixes Art and Science" *Audubon Magazine*, Fall 2024. <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/something-funny-happens-when-rosemary-mosco-mixes-art-and-science>

Submitted by Ginny Waples

Fall Housekeeping for Blue Birds



Nest box clean up crew Photo by Carolyn Jones

Wednesday, October 1st, was a beautiful day for house-keeping, so our party of four set out to climb Phipps Hill and get the bluebird boxes ready for next spring. With so many “hands” our work went quickly with each of us having a job. I took the front door off and handed it to Ginny Waples who scrubbed it clean. Kris Decker and Bill Morgan scrubbed out the house after I had removed any nest debris. The inside was sprayed with bleach water, then scraped and brushed out, followed by a water rinse.

We found it really informative to be able to examine each type of nest more closely than just the picture taken in the spring. Bluebird nests are compact and neat with little blue feathers in the nest. Tree swallow nests are bigger and messy with no blue feathers in the nest. English sparrow nests almost fill the box and slant toward the entry hole.

For 2025 there were 15 bluebirds fledged from 5 nests.

Submitted by Carolyn Jones

YVAS October 20th Program

We enjoyed author Sneed B. Collard III as our presenter for the October YVAS program. He related how he became a birder, told anecdotes about how birding enhances his travels, and shared advice from his newest book *Birding for Boomers; And Everyone Else Brave Enough to Embrace the World's Most Rewarding and Frustrating Activity*.

Sneed is currently working on a book about prairie birds of eastern Montana.

Submitted by Ginny Waples



Sneed Collard III book signing Photo by Ginny Waples

Montana Audubon News

Montana Audubon Center Events

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

Nature Nuts: Every Tuesday, 10 AM – A fun-filled “Toddler and Me” program perfect for young nature enthusiasts.

Morning Bird Stroll : November 8th, 8:30AM

Weekend Wonders Family Program: November 8th, 10:30 AM

Wreath Workshop: November 15th and November 29th. 2:00 PM

Registration and more information is available on the website: mtaudubon.org/center.

Submitted by Emily Chilcoat

Audubon Wildlife Fund Grants

Since 1996, Montana Audubon has awarded small grants to individuals or organizations in support of research and education projects that directly benefit wildlife in Montana. In 2025, we awarded seven grants to support research, habitat clean-up, a hawk watch station, and raptor rehabilitation centers. Visit the grant website (linked below) to see updates from each recipient.

Applications for the 2026 cycle are now available. All proposals must be received no later than Friday, January 16, 2026. Winners will be announced in March 2026.

See grant guidelines, download the application form, and read updates from 2025 recipients here:

<https://mtaudubon.org/wildlifegrants/>



Montana Audubon Citizen Science Reports

This year, Montana Audubon organized three Citizen Science surveys: a new pilot project surveying for Nightjars; the second year of surveys for Western and Eastern Screech-owls; and the continuation of the long-running Long-billed Curlew Initiative, now in its 13th year.

Across all three projects, a total of 221 citizen scientist volunteers conducted a total of 167 survey routes, covering an estimated 1,287 miles! In total, 1,713 detections of target species were made, contributing to species conservation status and conservation action plans for these species.



Thank you to everyone who was involved with our Citizen Science surveys this year! These efforts would not have been possible without the dedication of volunteers, and we are grateful that so many joined us in looking for these birds in need.

These projects would not be possible without all of our sponsors and partner organizations, including Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Montana Natural Heritage Program; Tracy Aviary; L.E.A.W Family Foundation; Blackfoot Challenge; and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Read the reports here: <https://mtaudubon.org/2025-citizen-science-reports-now-available/>

Montana Audubon news submitted by Lauren Smith

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Nov 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: Monday, Nov 17, 2025. Programs are held on the third Monday of the month at the Mayflower Church on the corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive in Billings. YVAS programs are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30 for coffee and cookies; the program begins at 7:00 pm.

Board of Directors

President: Open

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Sue Weinreis granpeak47@gmail.com

Treasurer: Pam Pipal ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

Kris Decker krisdecker4@gmail.com

Carolyn Jones carolyn684@gmail.com

Kristin Neva ksneva@gmail.com

Deb Regele debregele@gmail.com

Bruce Waage bruce.waage@outlook.com

Ginny Waples waplesv@gmail.com

Committees and Assignments

Christmas Bird Count: Jerry Dalton jerrydalton96@gmail.com

Facebook: Ginny Waples waplesv@gmail.com

Field Trip Chair: Carolyn Jones carolyn684@gmail.com

Flyer Editor: Kristin Neva yvasflyer@gmail.com

(Committees, continued)

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center
406-585-1211

Membership Data Admin: Kris Decker
YVAS.membership.data@gmail.com

Mt Bluebird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones
carolyn684@gmail.com, and
Sue Weinreis granpeak47@gmail.com

Osprey Nest Monitor Coordinator:
Deb Regele debregele@gmail.com

Osprey Research Coordinator:
Marco Restani restani@stcloudstate.edu

Program Committee: YVAS Board of Directors

Publicity: YVAS Board of Directors

Recycling (aluminum):
Larry Handsaker larryhandsaker@gmail.com;
drop off at 918 Ave C, Billings

Website: Deb Regele 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 (YVAS). I understand I will be supporting local Chapter activities and receiving the YVAS newsletter. I will enjoy full family Chapter benefits.

- YVAS is affiliated with the National Audubon Society, but membership payments and benefits are independent.
- YVAS cooperates with the Montana Audubon Center in some projects, but membership is separate.

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 _____

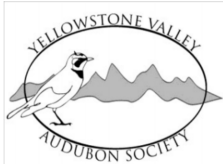
Email _____

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



Prepare yourselves to see a lot more of these!
Canada Geese Photo by Ginny Waples

Membership Updates



October renewals: Peter Cummins, Beth Horn, Steve Linder, Robin Manfredi, John Scheuering

November renewals: Cathy Breeding, Ed Gillig, Carl & Diana Ochsner, Carolyn Sevier, James Snyder, Verna Uffleman, Sue Weinreis, Linda Wham

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 membership helps 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.

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