

# The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society** http://www.wasatchaudubon.org

Volume 30, Number 1 **January/February 2011** 

#### WAS Meetings and Happenings

#### January 18th Meeting

Speakers Lynn de Freitas,
Executive Director of the Friends
of the Great Salt Lake (FOGSL)
and Rob Dubuc, President of the
FOGSL Board, will present <u>Friends</u>
of the Great Salt Lake Advocacy
Activities for Protection of the
Great Salt Lake, a discussion of the
current status of issues impacting
the Great Salt Lake, especially the
proposed Great Salt Lake Mineral
expansion. 7:00 PM at the Ogden
Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>).

#### February 15th Meeting

Mr. Kevin Bunnell, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources wildlife biologist, will present An Update on the Wolf Recovery Program. Somewhat unexpectedly, wolves from the original transplant in Yellowstone National Park have shown up in Northern Utah. Mr. Bunnell will present the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' position and plans for management options in the future. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>).

### Come and bring a friend!

#### **DEDILS OF WINTED**

The birds on the feeders look so happy. Maybe they are -- there is a continuous supply of unlimited food. However, there is a downside for birds at our feeders during the winter. They are more vulnerable to disease, accidents, and predators. Let me explain. First, many of the birds at our winter feeders have migrated from areas free of concentrated buildings and windows. Flying through an obstacle course is a new experience. Second, most nesting birds defend a specific territory, which spreads a few birds over a fairly big area. Most of the birds depending on our generosity at the feeders find themselves in a concentration not experienced during the nesting season. Third, there are the predators. Predators that feed on birds need to eat too, so let's not judge too harshly. If a Sharp-shinned Hawk or a Cooper's Hawk zooms through the yard and picks off a House Sparrow, generally we seem to accept the "natural" event. However, at least for me, if a house cat catches a bird in my yard, I'm not as accepting of the event!

Winter feeding is good! Our generosity, demonstrated by buying and feeding black oil sunflower seeds, proso millet, cracked corn, thistle (nyjer), suet, and more, far outweighs the increased risk to which the birds are subjected during winter. We are saddened by a pile of feathers indicating the loss of a bird, but the fat and happy birds we send to the nesting grounds in the spring produce more offspring, which makes up for any loss. And, enjoyment of the birds in our backyard ranks high on the quality recreation scale. In addition, citizen science projects like Project Feeder Watch, Great Backyard Bird Count, eBird, and the Christmas Bird Count provide valuable information on the health of our bird populations. We encourage YOUR participation! And, don't forget to check the calendar for Eagle Day and Swan Day activities. Keep up the good work - I'm sure our winter birds appreciate your generosity in keeping a good supply of food available for them.



#### Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

Email: patricia@peakbusinesssolutions.net 801-597-1091

Officers				
President	Paul Merola	801-731-4815		
Vice President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383		
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Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115		
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Wed. Bird Walks	Mort Somer	801-782-5668		

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Paul Lombardi

Joyce Overdiek

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Patricia Allaire

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801-829-3383

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About Us: The Wasatch Audubon Society is an association of people who share an interest in birds, all natural things, and Utah's varied habitats. Our goals include: educating ourselves and others about wildlife and the natural environment; enjoying the out-of-doors in fellowship with others who share similar values; fostering an appreciation of wildlife and understanding of ecological principles; promoting opportunities for the public to see and appreciate birds and bird habitats, and influencing public policy toward a conservation ethic. You might also want to visit our website at: http://www.wasatchaudubon.org

Newsletter Articles: Items for the next newsletter are due by the 20th of the month prior to the newsletter date. Send letters, articles or comments to Rich Kennedy, 1184 W. Pleasant View Dr., Pleasant View, Utah 84414 or by email to: geoteck@hotmail.com

#### President's Pipeline.

#### **MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

Well, it's that time of the year again to resolve that I am going to lose 20 lbs, exercise more, reduce my golf handicap, and save more money. And, typically, none are ever achieved. So, being bored with the same old resolutions, I have come up with some new New Year's Resolutions.

First, reduce my carbon dioxide emissions - Now at this point you are probably thinking, "That's easy, just shut up." My wife would like that! Tough for me to stay quiet, so I've come up with alternatives to this:

- 1. Reduce electricity usage by 5% This could be easily achieved by putting a moratorium on using the TV and computer one day a week. Meeting this goal will save 900 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and about \$50.
- 2. Reduce Natural Gas usage by 5% I'll do this by lowering the thermostat a little and if it's really cold, I'll put on my ugly sweater or my old "Bronco Nagurski" brand long underwear (inside joke for those who listen to the auto repair guys on public radio). This will save about 352 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>. (I don't use much natural gas because of the solar design of my home).
- 3. Keep some reusable shopping bags in my car For those inevitable trips to Walmart and Home Depot. That's good for about 100 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- 4. Stop buying vegetable and juice items that are in plastic containers - This stuff drives me nuts. I'll have to work with Hannah on this goal since she does the grocery shopping. Why does lettuce and spinach have to come from a clear plastic box? Remember when fruit juice was sold as concentrate and you mixed it in your own pitcher? If I do this, another 100 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> will not be emitted.
- 5. **Get out of the fast lane-** No more 70 mph on I-15! I will cut my speed to 65 mph and my gas mileage will improve by 15%. Based on calculations from American Forests (http://www.americanforests.org/resources/ccc/) I will have avoided dumping a whopping 1000 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> into the air.

So with some achievable goals, I hope to avoid dumping about 1 1/4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere by the end of 2011. Should be easier to meet than the old resolutions and is better for the environment.

(Continued on Page 6)

**Fundraising** 

Hospitality

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#### **CONSERVATION CORNER**

by Lynn Carroll

#### Support Your Local Planet

It's a week before Christmas, and all through the mail and airwaves we are being reminded to help the homeless, the hungry, and other causes. That's good—it's the season for goodwill toward men. As the New Year begins, though, I hope you have something left for nature.

The need is great. As habitats shrink and ecosystems are disrupted, maintaining the world's biodiversity becomes increasingly difficult. Displaced animals struggle to survive in less suitable places, so people intervene to provide what's missing. It's complicated and timeconsuming to artificially compensate for disrupted habitat. There is so much we need to study to understand the organisms we're trying to help. There are so many new threats to former wild places requiring skilled political and legal work. There is so much manpower needed to build fences, remove invasives, enforce rules and laws, develop good plans, herd cattle to new pastures, educate the public about how to cause less harm, move fish around dams, protect endangered species from even their natural enemies, clean up polluted waters, etc., etc.

The wide range of needs offers a variety of ways to help. I urge generous monetary contributions, if you are able, to multiple environmental organizations working on different problems and in different places. Audubon is a good choice!

Government agencies need help to do their work too. When you fill out your Utah income tax form this year, check for an opportunity to contribute to the Utah Nongame Wildlife Fund, which supports the Division of Wildlife Resources' programs for species of concern.

Give of yourself. Participate in our bluebird box project, the Christmas Bird Counts, the WAS board or a committee. Volunteer at an environmental education center such as Ogden Nature Center or Bear River Refuge. Offer feedback and new ideas to the organizations you support.

Educate yourself, then spread the word. Be an advocate for wildlife among your friends and

acquaintances. The annual state legislative session will start in a couple of weeks. If you provide your e-mail address, you can receive information from the Utah Audubon Policy Advocate about wildliferelated activity on the hill. Then let your legislator know how you think he or she should vote and why. There is lots of information about the legislature and the bills they are considering at <a href="http://le.utah.gov">http://le.utah.gov</a>. You'll find the names and contact information of your representatives there. Contact me at <a href="mailto:bradlynnc@comcast.net">bradlynnc@comcast.net</a> for more information.

Please help birds, our environment, and all life on earth with your money, your enthusiasm, and your time.

#### **Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Trip**

October 23, 2010 by Les Talbot

It was overcast with mild temperatures when we left Ogden. We had a slight rain shower as we drove along the north leg of the auto tour loop. All of the birds were pretty much along that loop. We didn't see many birds after we left the northwest corner. At that corner we could see a large number of Tundra Swans to the north of us, though we had to use a spotting scope to tell that they were swans.

The following people were on the trip: Sharen Perry, Jeane Taylor, Matthew Lyon, Susan Snyder, John Bellmon, Dennis Collins, Lynn Carroll, Mort Somer, Carma, Aliscis, Sidney, and Steven Dorney, and myself.

We saw the following birds: Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, White-faced Ibis, Tundra Swan, Mallard, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Ringnecked Pheasant, American Coot, American Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, Ring-billed Gull, Common Raven, Marsh Wren, American Pipit, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

#### **And One Became Three**

November 20, 2010 by Les Talbot

It was to be an interesting day. We were to meet at Wendy's in Roy at 8:00 AM. I arrived at 7:50 AM and waited until 8:10 AM. Since no one else had arrived I drove to the kiosk at the entrance to Antelope Island. Paul Lombardi was waiting there. We waited a few minutes and no else showed up, so Paul and I decided to go ahead and drive across the Causeway. There was a very strong wind blowing all the way across—so hard that we couldn't hold the spotting scopes still enough to look through them. There were many birds in rafts a long way north of the causeway. Since we couldn't use the scopes, we weren't able to identify them. At the marina two hunters were putting an airboat in the water. We decided to turn around and go home. I arrived home at 10:00 AM.

After the trip I received an email from Keith Evans. He said he and Betty were on the trip but didn't make connections with us, so they were group number two. Keith said they had run into Mort and Carolyn Somer, who had never connected with Paul and me, so they were group number three.

Keith and Carolyn compared notes and combined their lists, which Keith sent to me. All together we saw: Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler, Common Goldeneye, American Kestrel, American Avocet (a lot of them), Ring-billed Gull (a lot), Common Raven, Red-winged Blackbird, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Eared Grebe, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, California Gull, Rough-legged Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, European Starling, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, House Finch, & House Sparrow.

It was a great day for seeing birds. There were hundreds of them. One cool sighting was when a large flock of Avocets took off as one and flew towards the marina.



#### JOIN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Count for Fun. Count for the Future.

Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), **February 18-21**, **2011**.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this free event is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards and local parks, and at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at:

http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

The Wasatch Audubon Society would like to thank Bill and Billy Fenimore and the Wild Bird Center of Layton for their continued support of the bird feeding program at the Ogden Nature Center.



#### Members Corner

**Editor's note**: Following are a few new columns/articles submitted by our members. Each month we will have something new in this section. Some will become regular monthly columns, while others may be a onetime treat! Please feel free to send me your ideas, photos, articles, etc. or anything you might like to share with the readers of *The Mtn. Chickadee* at geoteck@hotmail.com.

Enjoy! -Rich-

#### VERMILLION FLYCATCHER

by Jay Hudson

Barbara and I were birding the San Pedro River east of Serra Vista, Arizona, on a typically bright day. The San Pedro is one of only two rivers that flow north out of Mexico and is a haven for migrants. Shortly after seeing my first Green Kingfisher, a red-headed fast-moving flycatcher caught my eye. It was the Vermillion Flycatcher, that brightly-colored, unmistakable bird that so captures everyone's imagination and is a bird that you will remember every time you see it. I added the two birds to my life list and went on with living.

Later when Barbara and I were in the country of Belize at the Audubon's "Crooked Tree" preserve there was that Vermillion Flycatcher again. Could it be the same one from Arizona? Even later in the small town of Otavalo, Ecuador, where I went to see the wood carvers who make furniture for the people who come across the Colombian border shopping, I saw another Vermillion Flycatcher on the lawn of a small hotel near the colorful central market. This bird was south, far south!

In November of 2010, I was at a cattle ranch on the Pampas south of Buenos Aires Argentina hanging with some gauchos when up pops a Vermillion Flycatcher to sit on a fence rail not thirty feet from me. Now this sighting got my attention.

The Vermillion in southern Arizona probably came up from Mexico. The one in Belize came from who knows where or was a year-round resident. The one in Ecuador could have been part of a migration that ranges from Columbia to the Pampas of Argentina, south of Buenos Aires. The Vermillion Flycatcher is a fascinating bird and so colorful that it can stand out in a crowd of flycatchers as the king of flycatcher feathers.

As for the scientific name of Pyrocephalus, it breaks down like this: Pyro is from the Greek meaning

"Fire" or "Flame-colored" and Cephalus means "head" in Greek and comes from the name of a man who was the "head" of a great family including the hero Odysseus. So the name translates as "flame-colored head," which makes perfect sense when you see the bird

#### HOME SWEET HOME

by Keith Evans

In addition to information on 150 birding hotspots, the book titled, <u>Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites</u> is full of information on habitat types. Is habitat as important as size, color, wing-bars, and bill shape for bird identification? Probably not, but being habitat aware sure helps. And, for the birds, habitat is everything. This month-by-month series is based on information from the book with a few anecdotes to add interest.

**February on the Marsh.** In February the birding hotline is full of reports of rare and unusual gulls. Early migrants like Tundra Swan, Green-winged Teal, and Northern Pintail are increasing in numbers while wintering birds like Bald Eagles and Roughlegged Hawks are still common. Many birders think of the marsh as best during the peak migration and nesting season and are thinking, "Let's wait a couple of months to visit the marsh." A February visit to marshes, like the Farmington Bay, Ogden Bay, or Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Areas (WMA), will provide a unique experience. Most WMAs lower water levels during winter to control carp numbers and protect the dikes from ice damage. This provides a smorgasbord for fisheating species like Bald Eagles and gulls. My old bones complain during cold weather, but with an extra set of long underwear, I can enjoy many hours of birding from the car. February birding also fills the gap between the Superbowl and March Madness. I remember when Jack and I were each peering through a spotting scope looking over a few thousand birds at Farmington Bay WMA. I was intent on looking at each gull and calling off species like Ring-billed, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, Western (very rare in Utah), and California when I noticed Jack taking photos with his digi-scope setup. Later, I asked if he got some good gull photos. After a little hesitation, he asked if I had noticed the Bald Eagle with a red band on the right leg. It turned out that while I was getting my "gull fix,"

Jack was checking details on charismatic megafauna like Tundra Swans and Bald Eagles.

We did agree that if a singing bird clock with the calls of spring marsh birds were available, we would both buy one.

#### **CRANE LORE**

by Jay Hudson

The Sergeant put a rifle in my right hand and a softball sized-rock in my left hand. I had been in the Army for three days and my duty was to stand guard from 10 PM to midnight—in the rain. I knew the reason for the rifle, but the rock baffled me. Flashback to Plutarch the ancient Greek who tells this story:

"Within each flock of roosting cranes, there is one individual charged with the safety of the others. The sentinel stands on one foot in shallow water. The elevated foot holds a stone as a safeguard against falling asleep. If the sentinel happens to fall asleep, his relaxation causes him to lose his grip on the stone. The stone then falls into the water causing a splash that awakens the malingering watchman."

The mythology of cranes is vast and spans Europe, Asia, Australia and North America. We are all aware of Aesop and his fables; the crane appears in seven stories where children learn morals and values. Adults need to be reminded of these simple fables as the messages are simple, direct and easily related to our grown-up experiences.

#### AESOP'S WOLF AND THE CRANE

A Wolf got a bone stuck in his throat while eating his dinner. No matter what he did, he could not dislodge the bone. A crane walked by and said he could retrieve the bone, and the wolf said he would reward the crane if he got the bone out. The crane put his head in the wolf's mouth and with his long beak, withdrew the offending bone. The crane then asked for his reward and the wolf said, "Be happy that you are still alive after sticking your head in my mouth. That should be reward enough for your silliness!" The moral of the story: "A villain will never reward you for a job well done; a safe escape is your reward for having the bad judgment to consort with the wicked."

From the International Crane Foundation's new book: THE QUALITY OF CRANES. <a href="https://www.savingcranes.org">www.savingcranes.org</a>

#### **President's Pipeline** (Continued from Page 2)

My second New Year's resolution is that when I am walking the dog and birding, I will carry a plastic sack with me to pick up trash and shotgun shells along the way. I do a lot of birding at the Ogden Bay Wildlife Management Area. Over the course of the years I have become the rightful owner of camouflage netting, a huge heavy duty plastic tarp and a baby doll's head (??). Starting this year, I will now pick up those ubiquitous beer cans, shotgun shells, and foam worm containers along the way.

My third New Year's resolution is to take a young person birding. Since I don't have any grandkids yet, I now take my dog, Annie, and she loves it. She knows how to heel and freeze so as not to flush a bird and appreciates the outdoors as much as I do. I don't expect kids to heel or freeze but that's okay. Surely there is some young person somewhere that loves birding and the outdoors as much as I and my dog do.

#### HAPPY BIRDING AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

#### Paul Merola

sfarkus@yahoo.com

#### Welcome New Members

by Paul Lombardi

Please join us in welcoming those who have recently joined Audubon and/or our chapter:

Kim Dohrer Bill McLain
Paulette Dunn Andrew Mieler
Maralee Foster Esther Mitchell
Renee Genovesi L. Hansen Shelley Sheldon

Charles Le Fevre Denzel and Jacquelyn Taylor

James Lombardo Emily Ann Thomas Virginia Luce Dorene Valentine Jean Mc Mahon Mary Welker

Hope to see you at our next meeting and field trip.





#### **CALENDAR**

All activities listed below are open to the public. No fees are charged for any event unless noted.

For further information on Meetings: Jack Rensel 801- 399-0240 Field Trips: Les Talbot 801-731-4925 Bird Walks: Mort Somer 801-782-5668

#### January 2011

5 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am

Bird Walk

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at 8:30 at The Village Inn (322 12th) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

12 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am

**Bird Walk** 

**<u>Ft. Buenaventura</u>**: Meet at 8:15 at Burger King (SE corner of 21<sup>st</sup> & Wall) for breakfast, or at 9:00 outside the Fort.

#### 18 Tuesday 7:00pm

**WAS Meeting** 

Guest speakers Lynn de Freitas and Rob Dubuc will present Friends of the Great Salt Lake Advocacy Activities for Protection of the Great Salt Lake. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>). (See front page side bar for details.)

#### 19 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am

Bird Walk

**Riverdale Parkway:** Meet at 8:15 at McDonald's (Riverdale Road & 900 W) for breakfast or at 9:00 at the trailhead parking lot (from Riverdale Rd., south on 700 W for one block, left on 4600 S. to lot on right at end of road.)

#### 22 Saturday 6:45am

Field Trip

Hardware Ranch / Willow Park Zoo: Meet at Harmon's (2nd Street) at 6:45. We need to leave no later than 7:00 to get to the ranch before 9:00 am. We will help feed the elk and then visit the Willow Park Zoo. At the beginning of the trip, Les Talbot will collect \$5 from each person for the Ranch. The Zoo does not charge an entrance fee, but does ask for a donation (minimum of \$1). After the zoo, we'll have lunch at the Blue Bird in Logan.

Don't forget the <u>Great Backyard Bird</u> <u>Count</u> - February 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc

#### 26 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am

Bird Walk

**Beus Pond:** Meet at 8:30 at Burger King (4160 Harrison) for breakfast or at 9:00 at Beus Pond.

#### **February**

1 Tuesday 7:00pm

**Board Meeting** 

The Board of Directors meets at 7:00 at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>). All members are welcome.

2 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am

Bird Walk

**Perry Nature Park:** Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700N, Farr West – just east of I-15, Exit #349) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

9 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am

**Bird Walk** 

**Ogden Cemetery:** Meet at 8:15 at Burger King (SE corner of 21st & Wall) for breakfast or at 9:00 at the cemetery entrance at 20th and Jefferson.

12 Saturday 10:00am to 3:00pm Bald Eagle Day Come to Compton's Knoll at Salt Creek WMA between

10:00 am and 3:00 pm. *Wasatch Audubon* members will be assisting DWR personnel there. Call **Jack Rensel (801-399-0240)** for more information. DWR personnel will also be at Farmington Bay WMA from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

15 Tuesday 7:00pm

**WAS Meetin** 

Kevin Bunnell, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources wildlife biologist, will present An Update on the Wolf Recovery Program. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>). (See front page side bar for details.)

16 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am

Bird Walk

Willard Bay: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, east of I-15, Exit #349) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

19 Saturday 8:00am

Field Trip

Morgan County Field Trip: Meet at 8:00 at the DWR Office (515 E. 5300 S., Ogden). This is a great opportunity to see Bald Eagle, Golden Eagles, and Wild Turkeys. Bring a lunch. We will stop for breakfast at the Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan.

23 Wednesday 8:00am

**Bird Walk** 

**Ogden River Parkway:** Meet at 8:15 at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) for breakfast, or meet at 9:00 at the MTC Park on the Ogden River off Monroe.

#### March

2 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am

Bird Walk

<u>Pineview Area</u>: Meet at 8:30 at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool to Ogden Valley.



Wasatch Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3211
Ogden, Utah 84409



## Wasatch Audubon Society Mountain Chickadee Subscription

You can receive a 1-year subscription to *The Mountain Chickadee* (6 issues) for just \$6. If you would like to help support *Wasatch Audubon*'s educational and conservation efforts, please indicate the amount of your contribution below and include it in your check. Thank you.

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Wasatch Audubon Society P.O. Box 3211 Ogden, Utah 84409

## Audubon Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of **Audubon** and of my local chapter, **Wasatch Audubon**. Send my membership card, and my annual subscriptions to **Audubon** magazine (6 issues) and **The Mountain Chickadee** (6 issues) to the address below. My check for \$20 (Introductory rate only) is enclosed.

NAME				
ADDRESS				
CITY	_STATE	_ZIP		
Send this and your check for \$20, payable to Audubon to:				

National Audubon Society P.O. Box 422250 Palm Coast, Florida 32142-2250

Local Chapter: Wasatch Audubon Society C9ZW540Z