



# The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Volume 30, Number 4

**July/August 2011**

## WAS Meetings and Happenings

There will be no July meeting.

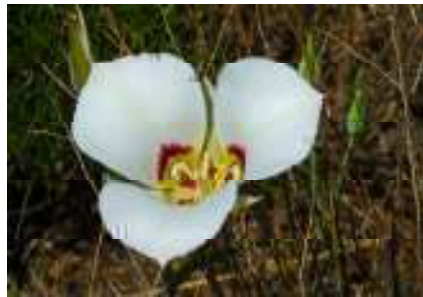
Don't forget the Annual Wasatch Audubon Pot Luck!!

August 16<sup>th</sup>

It's time once again for our annual potluck. The grills will be fired up and soft drinks will be provided. Bring a dish to share, your own meat to barbecue, dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>).

**Come and bring a friend!**

## SEGO LILY – HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



On March 18, 1911, the sego lily was named the state flower of Utah. We just celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event, but I saw no media coverage. My personal celebration of the anniversary came on a recent trip to Antelope Island State Park where

sego lily blooms highlighted many areas normally covered with a monoculture of cheat grass. History shows that Native Americans ate the bulbous root of sego lilies. Then during hard times for the Mormon pioneers, when their food was rationed, they relied on the sego lily for sustenance. Sometimes called Nuttall's mariposa-lily, the sego lily (*Calochortus nuttallii*) is a member of the mariposa lily group consisting of some 60 species in the West. Mariposa is Spanish for butterfly and the name "sego" is a Shoshonean word for edible bulb. Our cool, wet spring has been perfect for Utah's state flower as well as a profusion of other wild flowers.

This spring, the blooms started in May at the lower elevations and will progress to higher elevations through August. I urge everyone to take advantage of this special summer. While enjoying the flowers, you will have ample opportunity to enjoy hummingbirds, butterflies, and other wildlife of the meadows. For a preview of what is in store visit [www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org) and click on the "Wasatch Bloomers" tab. Check for organized trip opportunities on our calendar page. We look forward to visiting with you along the outdoor trails.

Keith Evans



**Wasatch Audubon Society**

Website: [wasatchaudubon.org](http://wasatchaudubon.org)

Email: [patricia@peakbusinessolutions.net](mailto:patricia@peakbusinessolutions.net)

801-597-1091

**Officers**

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Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-731-4925
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
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Newsletter	Rich Kennedy	801-782-9555
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Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

**President’s Pipeline.** On the education front, I am proud to report that WAS will be expanding our program through a partnership with Ogden City and Weber State. WAS members, Dennis Collins and Les Talbot, recently submitted an education grant proposal to Ogden City for federal grant money from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The federal grant money is a partnership agreement between U.S. cities and the Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve migratory birds through education, habitat improvement and bird conservation actions. The grant was recently awarded to Ogden City despite having to compete with larger cities, such as Denver.

With these funds, WAS intends to expand the Audubon Adventures program to more schools in Ogden, provide a spotting scope that can be used by school kids on field trips, and provide lessons taught by our volunteers. Also Dennis and Les will be working with Weber State to develop teaching aids for an owl presentation program.

The WAS share of the grant will be \$4000 with \$2000 earmarked to be put toward the Audubon Adventures program. Congratulations to Dennis and Les for a job well done!

Audubon Adventures had another great year with further expansion into more schools. In Weber County, Quest Academy (our first charter school) and Hooper Elementary are now using the Audubon Adventures. I recently talked with the principal at Hooper Elementary, and he reported that the teachers spoke very positively about the curriculum. Dennis Collins also reported that two elementary schools in Brigham City are now participating in the program.

Once again, we received thank-you letters from fourth and fifth-grade students who used the Audubon science curriculum at Gramercy Elementary School. Here are comments I pulled from some of the letters from the students:

*“They help you understand how birds migrate and come back. The scientists think they have a magnet....”* - Amber

*“My favorite newspaper was The Bandy’s Back”* -Paul

*“I can’t wait to log on to your website about gray whales.”* -Kylee

*“My most fav was the Mognart butterflies.”* -Cindy

*“I have so much more to say but it is time for recess so bye.”* - Joaquin

*“My favorite is On The Wing. It talks about birds and why they migrate.....I wish I could fly like a bird”* -Sandey

Me too Sandey!

*Paul Merola*

**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 at: [geoteck@hotmail.com](mailto:geoteck@hotmail.com)

**CONSERVATION CORNER**

*by Lynn Carroll*

**Conservation across Utah.** The Spring meeting of the Audubon Council of Utah was a great opportunity for sharing successes and concerns among chapter members, Policy Advocate, Steve Erickson, and National Audubon employee, Wayne Martinson. A lot of the talk involved conservation, and I'll try to convey some idea of the many ways Audubon works for the environment in our state.

Steve Erickson presented an overview of his efforts on our behalf at the legislature. I've already written about that. Steve doesn't just speak for us at the legislature though. Chris Cokinos of Bridgerland Audubon was interested in promoting bird-safe building practices, so he provided Steve with material on the subject. Knowing that Salt Lake City has people working on ways to encourage sustainable building, Steve was planning to circulate copies of the bird-safe building guidelines among them and encourage voluntary use of the guidelines.

He also kept the Council involved in fighting the "Las Vegas Water Grab" by filing a protest of a proposed well in Spring Valley on our behalf. Spring Valley groundwater is connected to that of the Snake Valley on the border and probably to other basins in Utah.

Representatives of each chapter reported on recent activities and concerns. I mentioned that Wasatch Audubon has been involved with the Coalition to Keep the Lake Great, fighting threats from mineral extraction operations to the ecology, and especially birds, of Great Salt Lake. I also pointed proudly to our support of Audubon Adventures for local classrooms, developing citizen scientists of the future.

Great Salt Lake Audubon is also very interested in the health of its namesake, but the project that requires the greatest volunteer effort by their members is restoring bird habitat along the Jordan River. With help from four other groups, they are planting trees, maintaining an irrigation system, and mapping noxious weeds on 120 acres.

We were happy to have someone from Red Cliffs Audubon at our meeting. He arrived prepared to

tell us about issues of special concern to them. One is the Lake Powell Pipeline. We heard that \$12 million has already been spent on 23 studies for the project. Quite a bit of energy would be expended to transport the water over the distance from the lake to Washington County. Worst of all, of course, is that it would be used to artificially support further population growth in the county, but another extended drought could put Lake Powell water out of reach.

As Utah's IBA Coordinator, Wayne Martinson became deeply involved in Great Salt Lake issues. He spoke at the Council meeting about the Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan being prepared by Utah's Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands. For the first time, the plan will involve differing actions depending on the level of the lake. He encouraged members to follow the development of the plan (via public open houses and/or internet) and help shape this important document. His comments to the Division on behalf of National Audubon will emphasize the need to maintain adequate inflow to the lake to keep it above critical levels, around 4193-4 ft., where Gunnison Island becomes a peninsula, and salt no longer moves between north and south.

Wayne also spoke about the Gillmor Sanctuary on behalf of Ella Sorenson, who manages it for National Audubon. The work with heavy equipment is complete and the area has been divided into 10 units with water on eight of them. What started with the donation of 107 acres has grown to 2738 acres. Ella is hoping to get volunteers to do weekly bird counts.

In many areas and by a variety of means, Audubon people in Utah are working to conserve our natural heritage.

**Leks & Loons by Les**

April 23, 2011

*by Les Talbot*

Upon arriving at the lek, the grouse were already doing their thing. We spent about an hour watching and being entertained by their antics. We counted 35 males and 10 females. One male tried to get through the fence but kept getting stuck. After several attempts, he was able to get to the other

side. One male had an injured wing but seemed to be holding his own.

There were very few loons on East Canyon Reservoir. In fact there were very few birds on the water.

Judy & Rich Kennedy, Becky Demeter, Betty & Keith Evans, Jack Rensel, Jeanette & Brian Nosker, Paul Lombardi, Lynn Carroll, and I enjoyed the trip.

We saw the following: Greater Sage Grouse, Raven, Meadow Lark, Canada Geese, Prairie Falcon, American Robin, 3 Ospreys (2 were carrying fish), Black-billed Magpie, European Starling, Common Loon, Western Grebe, Mallard, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture, Lewis Woodpecker, Great Blue Heron, Northern Flicker, and Red-winged Blackbird.

We also saw a large herd of mule deer west of the lek, a porcupine and a skunk.

If you have not been on this trip, put it on your bucket list. It is really worth the time to see the grouse search for a mate.

**Correction:** The May/June newsletter stated that the Bird Tours at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge would be held each Friday and Saturday at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. It should read that the tours are at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The tours will run through September. The road going to the auto tour loop reopened Friday, June 17th.

**May Field Trip**  
May 21, 2011  
*by Les Talbot*

There is no trip report for May. I was disappointed that I was the only one that showed up for the May trip to Jordanelle, so the trip was cancelled.



**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](mailto:geoteck@hotmail.com).  
Enjoy! Rich

**HOME SWEET HOME**

*by Keith Evans*

In addition to information on 150 birding hotspots, the book titled, Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites 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.

**July in the High Country.** Finally, the mountain snow cover has been reduced to small patches on the north slopes and roads only used by snowmobilers a few months ago are open to auto traffic. By July in the high-elevation mountains of Utah, the flowers are blooming and the birds are singing—in some cases, the mosquitoes are hungry. All roads heading east from the Great Salt Lake Valley go uphill. Three of the best are US-89 to Bear Lake, UT-39 from Ogden east over Monte Cristo Pass, and the Mirror Lake Road from Kamas, Utah, to Evanston, Wyoming. Every stop along these roads offers opportunities to identify flowers (bring a flower guide) as well as observe and listen to birds. Some characteristic birds include: Warbling Vireo, Red-naped Sapsucker, Western Tanager, Mountain Chickadee, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Chipping Sparrow and Mountain Bluebird. There are “specialty” spots throughout these areas: the Purple Martins at the Curtis Creek road just over Monte Cristo Pass on UT-39; the Cassin’s Finch and Pine Siskins in the top of trees at the Bald Mountain picnic area on the Mirror Lake Road; and, the American Dippers and Fox Sparrows observed along the Logan River on US-89. I remember driving towards Monte Cristo when a hen Dusky Grouse stopped in the middle of the road and stopped all traffic. When all of her chicks made it safely across the road, the hen followed. This



experience gave us a chance to talk about the recent split in the Blue Grouse group changing the name of what we always called Blue Grouse to Dusky Grouse. Those birders along the Pacific Coast now call their “Blue Grouse” the Sooty Grouse. Each time I look at my photo of this Dusky Grouse, I’m reminded that you don’t always need to rise early to enjoy a great bird sighting. I took this photo at high noon and the bird’s shadow is projected directly down onto the pavement.

**August in the Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands.** The pinyon-juniper woodlands (P-J habitat) are common in Utah and comprise almost 20% of the state. Due to arid conditions, this conifer woodland is often called the pygmy forest as trees are small. The P-J habitat is quite variable and occurs in small patches associated with the shrub-steppe type, the mountain-shrub type, or the mixed-conifer type, as well as in extensive stands covering large areas of the landscape. P-J bird species rarely found anywhere else during the breeding season include: Gray Vireo, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Gray Flycatcher, Pinyon Jay, and Juniper Titmouse. Because of the immense size of the P-J woodlands and the low productivity per acre, birds are rarely concentrated. The extensive size makes up for the low productivity when ranking the importance of the P-J woodlands. Many birders will say, “Don’t go in August; it’s hot and the summer birds have quit singing.” This may be true, but consider that the specialty species numbers are the highest with all the juvenile birds of the season and many species begin to flock preparing for fall migration. In addition, there is a challenge in identifying many of the juvenile birds. When you become tired of hearing, “What flycatcher is that,” the flocks of busy Bushtits, noisy Juniper Titmice, and flashing Chipping Sparrows provide a distraction from the non-descript flycatchers. The first time I visited the Clear Creek Campground in the Raft River Mountain Range managed by the Sawtooth National Forest, I was surprised to find P-J habitat. The Clear Creek Road is in the bottom of the valley and provides good birding for riparian species. However, the south facing slope (north of the east-west running road) is covered with a nearly pure stand of pinyon pine. I really enjoyed the flocks of Pinyon Jays mixed in with Gray Flycatchers and

highlighting a diverse range of riparian and P-J birds.

### **Birder Profiles**

*by Jay Hudson*

#### LES TALBOT

Les is a retired school teacher who wonders like many of us, why Audubon holds so little interest for young people. He started birding in the early 80's in Layton, went to a class at the Ogden Nature Center followed by a trip to the Bird Festival at the Bear River Bird Refuge and easily signed up there with the Audubon folks at their exhibit.

Jay: What’s your favorite bird ?

Les: “I like the eagle for all the usual reasons.”

Jay: Does your family watch birds?

Les: “My wife watches the feeders.”

Jay: Have you ever been on a birding tour?

Les: “No, but I would love to go to Alaska.”

Jay: What’s the best way for someone to learn about birds?

Les: “When I go on a walk, I stay close to the more experienced birders.”

Jay: Do you have a library of bird books?

Les: “I have six field guides and a few other books.”

Les has been active in the Audubon over recent years leading bird walks and participating in management.

### **ABERT’S TOWHEE**

*by Jay Hudson*

After you drive over Nevada’s Hoover Dam going south, the road is long and lonely. There is one gas station in the middle of nowhere and they know there is no second chance down the road. It is expensive! We were on our way to visit the Thompson Arboretum in Globe Arizona and see what they were able to do with little water and lots of sun. The arboretum is a “world class botanical garden” and it draws a significant number of birds both as regulars and migrants.



The Abert's Towhee (*Pipilo aberti*) is a regular! James William Abert was an 1842 West Point graduate and rode with Steven Watts Kearny in the war with Mexico. His engineering background and surveying experience taught him to be a keen observer and it was during his time with Kearny that he acquired a new species of bird which was named after him.

100 years before J. Abert "acquired" his bird, an English naturalist in America thought the Towhee's call sounded like "too-whee", thus evolved the name. The Abert likes to stay hidden and when I saw it, it was on the ground scratching for food like a quail and trying to stay under cover in the brush. It looks much like the California Towhee with its long tail and cinnamon under tail coverts, but the California Towhee does not range into Arizona and the Canyon Towhee has a brown cap, so there was no mistaking it. Cowbirds have been taking their toll on the Towhee's future by parasitizing their nests but the smart little Towhee has learned to live closer to man making its nests in gardens of metropolitan areas including the campus of Arizona State University in Phoenix.

Barbara and I found the Arboretum with its tall trees and running water an oasis in the hot Arizona climate. The grounds were well kept and the stop was both productive and refreshing. We always put a little money in the pot even if there is a modest entry fee knowing that these nature centers are manned by volunteers who give of their time and expertise and are so willing to share their knowledge with visitors. I have not seen another Abert's Towhee since the Arboretum but have seen many of the Towhee's cousins including buntings, sparrows and juncos all of which have their own variations to remember. I once met two Englishmen in the mountains of Ecuador who had gone to southern Arizona and picked up well over 100 "lifers" with no local guide to help them. Now that's a goal for any novice birder!

**OBSERVATIONS**

*by Jay Hudson*

The older I get the earlier field trips start.

No outing is without a story.

Your own back yard can be as fascinating as an English garden.

Knowing a bird well means you can see humor in its life.

The telephone line to your home is like a highway rest stop to local birds.

Dreams of the ultimate backyard habitat never match your pocketbook.

Sometimes the best bird sighting is in the parking lot while sitting in a \$40,000 4x4.

Grammar schools should require bird identification to sharpen the mind.

Birding in terrible weather builds character.

Sitting still for over five minutes watching birds means you are out of your teens.

When you can write your field notes in Latin; you have arrived.

"hora fugit" (HAW-rah FUU-git)

The hour flies

From "Amo, Amas, Amat and More" by Ehrlich

**Welcome New Members**

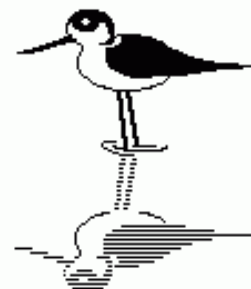
*by Paul Lombardi*

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

John B. Goddard  
Jane Ann Johns  
Anne Lighthouse  
Wendy Luker

Sue Minnoch  
Rebecca Rens  
Cathy Welch  
Christine Wylie

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.

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For further information on  
Meetings: Jack Rensel 399-0240  
Field Trips: Les Talbot 731-4925  
Bird Walks: Paul Lombardi 801-295-7738

**July**

**6 Wednesday 7:30/8:15am** **Bird Walk**  
**Powder Mountain:** Meet at 7:30 at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 at the Smith's (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison) parking lot to carpool.

**13 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am** **Bird Walk**  
**Riverdale Parkway:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (Riverdale Road & 900 W) for breakfast or at 8:00 at trip start: From Riverdale Rd., North on 700 W for two blocks. Right on 600 W to parking lot.

**20 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am** **Bird Walk**  
**Willard Bay:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, east of I-15, Exit #349) for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool.

**27 Wednesday 7:30/8:00/8:30am** **Bird Walk**  
**Fielding Garr Ranch:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (Riverdale Rd & 900 W) for breakfast, at 8:00 to carpool, or be at the Antelope Island entrance lot at 8:30.

**30 Saturday 8:00am** **Annual Flower Walk**  
**Monte Cristo CG:** Meet at 8:00 at Smith's (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison). Bring a lunch and water. Note that this is a week later than usual.

**August**

**2 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.

**Don't forget!**  
**The Annual Wasatch Audubon Pot Luck!!**  
Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM  
Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>)

**3 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am** **Bird Walk**  
**Fernwood Trail/Kays Creek:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (5745 S. Harrison) for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool. Directions: From U.S. 89 in Layton, turn East on Cherry Ln. Take Valley View Rd north. Turn onto Fernwood Dr. (2000 N) heading east. Turn right at first "T" intersection. Stay on Fernwood Dr. to parking area.

**10 Wednesday 7:30/8:15am** **Bird Walk**  
**Maples CG, Snowbasin:** Meet at 7:30 at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 at the Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison) to carpool.

**16 Tuesday 7:00pm** **Annual WAS Potluck**  
It's time once again for our annual potluck. The grills will be fired up and soft drinks will be provided. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>). (See front page side bar for details.)

**17 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am** **Bird Walk**  
**Mantua Reservoir:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, east of I-15, Exit #349) for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool. We'll explore the various locations afforded by the completion of a trail system around the reservoir. Parking is available with restrooms on the east, west and south sides.

**20 Saturday 7:00/7:45am** **Field Trip**  
**Silver Lake (Brighton Area):** Meet at 7:00 for breakfast at the Roy Village Inn (5600 S. Roy just west of I-15), or at Village Inn at 7:45 to carpool. Bring a lunch & water. For those who live south of Roy and don't want to meet in Roy contact Les Talbot at 801-589-2591 to make other arrangements.

**24 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am** **Bird Walk**  
**Morgan's Mickelsen Mile:** Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (5745 S. Harrison) for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool.

**31 Wednesday 7:30/8:15am** **Bird Walk**  
**Powder Mountain:** Meet at 7:30 at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 at the Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison) to carpool.

**September**

**7 Wednesday 7:30/8:15am** **Bird Walk**  
**North Arm Wildlife Viewing Area/Pineview Reservoir:** Meet 7:30 at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 at the Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison) to carpool.



*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**



## *Wasatch Audubon Society* **Mountain Chickadee Subscription**

You can receive **The Mountain Chickadee** (6 issues) for just \$6, without joining **National Audubon**. If you would like to support Wasatch Audubon's education and conservation efforts, please indicate the amount of your contribution and include it in your check. Thank you.

1-year **Mountain Chickadee** subscription: **\$6.00**

\_\_\_ My contribution to Wasatch Audubon: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check, payable to **Wasatch Audubon** to:

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