



The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Volume 30, Number 6 *November/December 2011*

WAS Meetings and Happenings

November 15th

Howard Browsers, wildlife biologist for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, will present Bird Banding in Peru, South America – research experiences with birds in a very productive and exotic ecosystem. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about bird life in far off places..

December 20th

Bill Fenimore, long-time birder and outdoorsman, will present Birds by the Season – birding experiences and observations during a year at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. The Refuge is one of the largest and oldest reserves in the federal refuge system and a favorite, well-known birding destination.

Come and bring a friend!

BIRDING SEASON NEVER CLOSES

It's time to don your heavy coat and boots and go birding. The good news, winter birding can begin after a late and leisurely breakfast. The birds are concerned about finding enough food to sustain them, so they remain active from around 9:00 a.m. until about 4:00 p.m. This is the true definition of leisure birding! In addition, we have the opportunity to contribute to the longest running citizen-science database on birds in the world - over 100 years. The schedule for local Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) is in this newsletter, so mark your calendar for participation.

Backyard birding can be accomplished from the warmth and comfort of the house - keep your bird feeders full. By now, you should have a supply of black oil sunflower seeds (obtained from Wasatch Audubon Society during our recent fund-raising event). Most of our winter birds thrive on sunflower seeds. To add variety to your backyard birding experience, add a thistle (nyjer) feeder and a suet block. Both the American and Lesser Goldfinch like thistle; and woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, and kinglets will be attracted to the suet block.

Depending on the harshness of the winter weather, any area with open water can be a rich birding spot. A favorite of local birders is the Antelope Island causeway. The salt content of the Great Salt Lake provides a longer ice-free season and there is always a chance to see rare migrants along the causeway. So far in October, unusual sightings have included Sabine's Gull, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Phalarope, Harlequin Duck, Merlin, and Horned Grebe. The Garr Ranch is usually better earlier in the fall; however, you might still see Hermit Thrush, Varied Thrush, and White-throated Sparrow along with the more common winter birds.

Thanks to those who feed the birds in this area. We hope each of you find an opportunity to enjoy our feathered friends throughout the winter.

Keith Evans



Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

Email: patricia@peakbusinessolutions.net

801-597-1091

Officers

President	Paul Merola	801-731-4815
Vice President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Scott Baxter	801-540-9417

Board of Directors

2011	Les Talbot	801-731-4925
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2011	Dan Johnston	801-731-4573
2011/2012	Weston Smith	801-829-4183
2011/2012	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
2011/2012	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216

Committee Chairpersons

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
Fundraising	<i>Vacant</i>	-
Historian	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
Hospitality	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Mailing List	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
Membership	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Newsletter	Rich Kennedy	801-782-9555
Programs	Jack Rensel	801-399-0240
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

President's Pipeline.

The Wasatch chapter of the Audubon Society is at a critical crossroads in its history. We are, in my opinion, at the point where we need a new generation of active members in order to sustain the numerous activities we are involved with.

As a part of the yearly reporting requirements for National Audubon, I am required to list chapter activities and volunteer hours. I surveyed board members and committee chairs over a four month period and had them list their chapter work and time. The survey found that the chapter concentrates its efforts in education, advocacy, data collection and public outreach. At this time we have about twelve members who are very active in these areas. What surprised me is that we average about 100 volunteer hours per month and that may be a somewhat conservative estimate. Bluntly, this is not sustainable given the age demographic of the active members.

Taking on new projects or assignments is not realistic at this time regardless of how important they may be. This issue is not unique to our chapter. Other state chapters are also struggling with this. However, I really don't think that members are more apathetic these days. In fact, I would say they are more involved than ever. It's just that their involvement time is shared with support to their children, grandchildren, and maybe even aging parents. Plus the need to be more involved in other issues that come with our complex society, such as keeping your job, etc.

Well, the bottom line is that we need new people to step to the plate and become more involved. If not, this chapter may have already seen its best days.

Paul Merola
WAS Chapter Leader

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: geotek@hotmail.com

JOHN NELSON AWARD



The 15th John Nelson Award was presented to Sharen Perry at the September meeting. The John Nelson Award is not presented every year. When presented, it is awarded to a member of Wasatch Audubon Society to honor commitment to conservation, volunteer service to the community, and lifetime dedication to the Audubon cause. Sharen has been our Secretary for 10 years and has rarely missed any of the Board or monthly meetings. In addition to her duties as Secretary, she has supported activities pertaining to the nest box trails (both spring surveys and nest box clean-out and repair in the fall). She also has represented the chapter by distributing informational materials at the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival and festivities sponsored by the Wild Bird Center of Layton.

Conservation Corner

by Lynn Carroll

Problems with Pipelines

Pipelines have been capturing my attention lately, and I've spent time learning about and campaigning against three of them. Like roads and fences, pipelines negatively affect many kinds of wildlife by interfering with movement either within a home territory or in migration. They can benefit predators at the expense of prey by removing cover. A pipeline corridor may benefit some species like bluebirds that thrive at the edge between woods and open fields.

What spurs me to action, though, is not the pipeline itself but what it carries. And it's the idea that our society isn't learning to adapt to scarcities, instead going to great lengths to import scarce resources. For example, I've learned that conservationists in the arid West subscribe to the principle that water should remain in the basin where it is found. Some

must be left to support flora and fauna living in that basin, which are adapted to the usual water regime there. If the water is diverted for human use within the basin, at least some of the water will seep into the ground to replenish the aquifer, and runoff may find its way back into local waterways. Inter-basin transfers of water are wasteful, unfair and costly.

I've written before about the Snake Valley water issue. In October our policy advocate wrote on behalf of the Utah Audubon Council asking the BLM to choose the "no build" alternative for the pipeline that would transport groundwater pumped from rural eastern Nevada to Las Vegas and vicinity. We have a number of concerns. The carbonate aquifers that hold this water form an interconnected network that extends under western Utah. How much and how quickly water in Utah would move toward the extraction sites is unknown. Fish Springs might be affected. Other springs closer to the drill sites would almost certainly yield lower flows, reducing the size of these special habitats. The "Las Vegas water grab" is a prime example of what's wrong with inter-basin transfers.

Environmental groups have been campaigning against the Keystone XL oil pipeline that is proposed to take crude oil 1700 miles from tar sands in Alberta, Canada, to Texas for refining. Among the concerns are the high energy investment for this long-distance transportation adding to the oil's total carbon footprint and the pipeline company's history of leaks. I sent one of those easy, e-mail letters to the Obama administration.

Another pipeline for inter-basin water transfer is proposed in Utah—the Lake Powell pipeline. It would take Colorado River water 139 miles from Lake Powell to Washington County, and a branch would go to Kane County. All of the states in the Colorado River basin have major projects taking water from it, often leaving little for the fish and riparian zone and none for the delta. Yet legally, Utah has a right to take more out. The Washington County Water Conservancy District is planning on the pipeline to be ready for predicted growth. Many county residents would rather not see that much growth and would rather not pay for the pipeline. No one can be certain that Lake Powell's level will remain high enough to feed the pipeline.

The Utah legislature’s Water Issues Task Force met this summer to talk about funding for water projects. They say that \$60 million will be needed soon for design and engineering of the pipeline, and construction during 2016-18 will cost \$1.1 billion. The State Treasurer suggests delaying until \$2 billion for transportation projects is paid; I say don’t do it at all. Put money into conservation and allow new developments as water is freed up by that effort.

Silver Lake Bird Trip

August 20th, 2011

by Les Talbot, Field Trip Chair

It was a nice day and the temperature was just right; there was not a cloud in the sky. Four of us, Jeane Taylor, Sharen Perry, Paul Lombardi, and I visited the Brighton area and had a leisurely walk around Silver Lake. We saw four times as many bird species as there were people on the trip. We saw the following: Mallard, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, Stellar’s Jay, Common Raven, Barn Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, House Wren, American Robin, MacGillvray’s Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and a House Finch.

You Are Invited To
"Music for the Birds"
GSLA’s party – concert - fundraiser

Enjoy food, drink, socializing, and raffle opportunity followed by a Concert featuring 3 well-known local Folk Musicians:

Jen Hajj, Kate MacLeod & Otter Creek

Friday, November 11, 2011
6:30 - Brats & Beer & More
7:30 - Concert Begins
8:45 - Coffee and Dessert

\$30 per person; \$35 at door

PLACE: Holladay United Church of Christ
2631 E Murray-Holladay Rd. (4800 S)

For options to register and pay by check or credit card:

www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

Contact Deedee O'Brien for more information
d-dobrien@comcast.net or 801-272-8060

THANK YOU!!

We want to send a special “Thank You” to Jolene Hatch and the group of Scouts who provided us with 9 new bird nest boxes this fall. Over 25 years ago, Wasatch Audubon Society established a total of 121 Bluebird nest boxes on several trails in the area around Ant Flat, Monte Cristo, and over into Rich County. Over the years, numerous volunteers have checked each of the boxes to determine species of use and nesting success. Bluebirds, House Wrens, Tree Swallows, Cassin’s Finch, and Mountain Chickadee all have used the boxes for nesting. In the fall, volunteers return to the area to prepare the boxes for use the following spring. This preparation includes determining whether a successful hatch occurred, cleaning the debris left in the boxes, repairing damaged boxes, and replacing boxes that are beyond repair. This year Ms. Hatch and the Scouts provided us with much needed, well-constructed boxes, built to the exact specifications required by the birds. Surely the birds join us in extending our thanks and appreciation for this terrific effort. If you would like more information on the nest box project, please contact Jack Rensel at 801-399-0240.

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 Chickadee at geoteck@hotmail.com.

Enjoy! -Rich-

HOME SWEET HOME

By Keith Evans

In addition to information on 150 birding hotspots, the book entitled, 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.

November along the Antelope Island Causeway.

The causeway and Antelope Island State Park always provide good birding. This is my personal favorite bird viewing area in Utah, partially because it is near my home and easily accessible. The salt content in the water varies from fresh to brackish to salty, providing unique habitats for Utah. Additional habitats include riparian (around the spring at the Garr Ranch), marsh, shrub-steppe, grassland, and mudflats. I selected November as the “feature” month because the brine shrimp and brine fly populations are at their highest annual density and provide tons of food for migrating birds. And, late fall is the best time to find rare birds that are a little off course as they fly south from the Arctic. Some of my favorite sightings include all three species of Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Herring Gull, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-necked Phalarope, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Baird’s Sandpiper. Even widely traveled birders will be amazed at the sheer number of migrating birds using the Great Salt Lake during the fall migration. Some of Utah’s super rare birds observed along the causeway include Harlequin Duck, Pacific Golden Plover, Ruff, Hudsonian Godwit, and Wandering Tattler. I’ve taken more birders to Antelope Island to add the Chukar to their life list than any other species. There are only a few easily accessible areas in the United States where Chukars can be found regularly.

December Christmas Bird Counts. Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were started in 1900 and provide the longest continuous database on wintering birds in the world. Over 2,000 counts are made throughout North America each year. CBC birding is social, exciting and provides valuable information on bird populations. The database is online at www.audubon.org/cbc. Wasatch Audubon Society volunteers coordinate, compile and collect CBC data for four count circles – Ogden, Morgan, Bear River Refuge, and Antelope Island. Habitats throughout these areas are variable, but are primarily residential, agricultural, and wetland. The common birds encountered on most counts, provide the most useful information for the database, but the

rare encounters offer the most excitement. Some of the expected birds include Canada Goose, Mallard, Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Black-billed Magpie, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, White-crowned Sparrow, and many more, as approximately 80 species of birds commonly winter in the area. I remember a cold winter day when Bohemian Waxwings were abundantly mixed in with the more common Cedar Waxwings. Darrell Greenfield and I were counting birds on the high bench residential area on both sides of 12th Street. First we were spending lots of time carefully counting each species whenever a flock was encountered. We finally realized that our eyes were going bad and the sun was going down. So we changed our strategy. First we calculated the percentage of Bohemian’s within the flocks we had already counted, then we counted total birds and applied the “percentage rule.” I believe we were as accurate and efficient as possible. This was Darrell’s first CBC and he was almost overcome with the “wow factor.” This same dilemma has occurred with flocks of gulls and starlings. I remember when one of our observers reported a “ton of gulls.” Our recorder, being an engineer, asked if that was a short ton or a metric ton. I’ve been participating in CBCs for nearly 50 years in Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri, Virginia and Utah and am always amazed at the variety of experiences. And, don’t forget the great pot-luck dinner after the Ogden count.

WORD OF THE DAY

by Jay Hudson

Will-o’-the wisp

Colloquial name for the Common Nighthawk

Windhover

Colloquial name for the American Kestrel and also for the Australian and Nankeen Kestrel. An old cowboy in Australia told me that these birds hover at 30 feet and always face the wind.

Accipiter

Any member of the hawk genus Accipiter, medium-sized to large hawks with long tails, short rounded

wings, rapid flight, rapid wingbeats alternating with short glides.

Addled

Describing an egg that is empty or rotten. Much like the brain of my cousin Cletus!

Aerie (same as eyrie)

The nest of a hawk, eagle, falcon or osprey high on a tree or cliff

Albinism

Color variation caused by an absence or reduction of pigments in feathers including four types: total, in which all pigments are completely absent from feathers, skin and irises; incomplete, in which pigment is absent from one or more of the feathers, skin or irises but not all three; imperfect, in which all pigments are reduced or at least one pigment is missing and partial, the most common form in which pigments are reduced or absent from parts of the feathers, skin or irises.

Altricial

Describing a newly hatched bird with unopened eyes, scarcity of natal down, incapable of locomotion and fed by parents.

Precocial

Opposite to Altricial! Describing a newly hatched bird with opened eyes, extensive down, and the capability of locomotion.

Long John

Colloquial name for the Great Blue Heron.

Injury feigning

A form of distraction display to lead predators away from nest or broods (for example by Killdeer).

Insurance egg

An extra egg laid by a species that normally successfully raises only one chick per nest cycle.

WAS Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Bear River Refuge Count: Wednesday, December 14th, meeting at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West - just east of I-15, exit 346) at 7:30 AM for breakfast or at 8:00 AM to carpool.

Ogden Area Count: Saturday, December 17th, meeting at 7:30 AM at the Denny's Restaurant (take 1100 W north from 21st St. to Flying J/Conoco Plaza on the left) for breakfast and to get your assignment. Come to the UCC Church (3350 S Harrison) at 6:00 PM for a potluck dinner and compilation of data.

Morgan Area Count: Wednesday, December 28th, meeting at Utah DWR (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) at 7:30 AM to carpool to breakfast at the Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan, or meet at the Inn at 8:00 AM.

Antelope Island Count: Sunday, January 1st, meeting in the parking lot outside the Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00 AM.

Welcome New Members

by Paul Lombardi

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

W. Allen	Phyllis Powers
Joyce Barton	Dale Rowell
Bonnie Bushaw	Michael Speight
Marilyn Corbridge	Brian K. Smith
Michelle D. Dobson	Terra Smith
Dennis Donoviel	Marilyn Swartwout
Michele Erskine	Helen Torman
Drew Johnson	Irma Ward
Rhonda Lehr	Melissa Weber
Edith Lorenz	

Hope to see you at our next meeting or 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: Paul Lombardi 801-295-7738

November

2 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am **Bird Walk**
Kays Creek Parkway: Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison Blvd) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

4-5 Friday & Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm
Sunflower Seed Pick Up. Pick up your pre-ordered sunflower seed at the Utah DWR Warehouse (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

9 Wednesday 8:15/8:45am **Bird Walk**
Ogden Cemetery: Meet at 8:15am at Burger King (SE Corner of 21st and Wall) for breakfast or at 8:45 at the Cemetery entrance at 20th and Jefferson.

15 Tuesday 7:00pm **WAS Meeting**
Howard Browers, wildlife biologist for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, will present Bird Banding in Peru, South America. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page sidebar for details.)

16 Wednesday 8:15 **Bird Walk**
Two Rivers Trail: Meet at 8:15 at the Denny's for Breakfast (North on 1100 W from 21st street in the Flying J Plaza) or meet there to carpool to the trail.

19 Saturday 8:00/8:20am **Field Trip**
Jensen Nature Park, Kaysville Ponds, Glover Ponds, & Farmington Bay WMA: Meet in the parking lot by McDonald's in Riverdale (909 Riverdale Rd.) at 8:00 a.m. or at the parking lot by the Wild Bird Center at 8:20 a.m. We'll carpool from both places. Bring a lunch and water.

23 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am **Bird Walk**
Willard Bay (south): Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West –Just east of I-15 exit #349) for breakfast or at 9:00am to carpool. Remember, this is a fee area.

30 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am **Bird Walk**
Pineview Area: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) for breakfast at 8:30 or in the Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) at 9:00 to carpool. We'll decide the birding location(s) that morning.

December

6 Tuesday 7:00pm **Board Meeting**
The Board of Directors meets at 7:00 at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). All members are welcome.

7 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am **Bird Walk**
South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

14 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am **Christmas Bird Count**
Bear River Refuge: Meet at 7:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West – just east of I-15 exit 349) for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool. (See page 6 for details)

17 Saturday 7:30am **Christmas Bird Count**
Ogden Area: Meet at 7:30 at the Denny's Restaurant (Take 1100 W north from 21st St. to Flying J/Conoco Plaza on your left) for breakfast and to get your assignment. (See page 6 for details.)

20 Tuesday 7:00pm **WAS Meeting**
Bill Fenimore, long-time birder and outdoorsman, will present Birds by the Season.. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page sidebar for details.)

21 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am **Bird Walk**
Riverdale Parkway: Meet at McDonald's at 8:15 (900 W and Riverdale Road) for breakfast or at 9:00 at the trailhead parking lot (From Riverdale Rd., north on 700 W for two blocks, rt. on 4300 S, rt. on 600 W to the parking lot.

28 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am **Christmas Bird Count**
Morgan County: Meet at Utah DWR (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) at 7:30 to carpool to breakfast at the Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan, or meet at the Inn at 8:00. (see page 6 for details.)

January 2012

1 Sunday 8:00am **Christmas Bird Count**
Antelope Island: Meet in the parking lot outside the Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00. This is a fee area. (See page 6 for details.)

4 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am **Bird Walk**
Ft. Buenaventura: Meet at 8:30 at the Burger King (SE corner of 21st and Wall) for breakfast or at the entrance to the Fort at 9:00.



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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