

Vol 34, Number 2

Mar/April 2015

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tuesday, Mar 17th 7:00 p.m.

WAS Meeting The Ordinary Extraordinary

Junco. Join us for a documentary highlighting research on a common yet amazing group of backyard birds, the Juncos! Introduction by Katie McVey.

http://juncoproject.org/

Come and bring a friend! Ogden Nature Center, 966 W. 12th Street, Ogden.

Tuesday, April 21st 7:00 p.m. WAS Meeting

Monitoring Wildlife on Shemya Island, Alaska is the program by biologist and birder Dennis Shirley, who has conducted population surveys for the United States government on this island seasonally during the past three years.

Everyone is welcome at our meetings! Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

2015 GREAT SALT LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL

May 14-18, 2015
Featuring David Allen Sibley

by Neka Roundy

The 2015 Great Salt Lake Bird Festival promises another fantastic program of field trips, workshops, and family events. And the icing on the cake for our 17th annual Festival is Keynote Speaker David Allen Sibley.

Festival attendees have several incredible opportunities to interact with Sibley, America's most gifted contemporary painter of birds, and the author and illustrator of <u>The Sibley Guide to Birds</u> (2nd edition released in 2014). Sibley will offer a workshop at 3 p.m. on Friday, May 15, followed by a book signing. He will also co-lead two field trips on Saturday, May 16, and conclude the day as the keynote speaker at the Festival's Dutch Oven Dinner.

Dinner tickets to hear David Allen Sibley are on sale now at www.GreatSaltBirdFest.com; just click the "Register Now" button. Field trip registration started March 2nd. Log in now to reserve your space; many trips fill up fast.

As always, the Festival offers a full slate of family activities on Friday evening and all day on Saturday. The "Birding Is for Families" theme is carried out in the first workshop on Saturday morning, offered by author and birder Bill Fenimore. Saturday workshops are free and feature many live birds.

Another great feature of the Festival is the annual Student Art Contest. The contest is open to Utah students in pre-school through 12th grade. In recent years, the festival has received several hundred exceptional entries from students all over the state. All student art is on exhibit at the Festival from 12–7p.m. on Friday, May 15, and from 10 a.m.– 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 16.

We want to thank all of the Festival volunteer members of the planning committee, past and present, for their hard work. The Festival is truly a result of their passion for sharing the unique bird life and habitat around the Great Salt Lake. We are also grateful to Festival sponsors who support advertising, operations, the Student Art Contest, and field trip locations. Thank you to the birding organizations in Utah who have taken the Festival "under their wings" and supported us in many ways. And many, many thanks to the best field trip guides in Utah, who have offered their expertise and shared their time and efforts to make sure our guests have a great trip. Finally, if you are reading this, it is very likely you fit in one or more of the categories mentioned above: Thank you for your support!



Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

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

PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE

by Katie McVey

Spring is in the Air, So Get Outside!

Spring is in the air and March is a great month to spend more time outside. Wasatch Audubon offers more than 5 birding trips every month and you don't have to be a member to attend! All are welcome to our monthly meeting and our trips. Of course, we hope you may choose to become a member, but attending trips and meetings is a great way to spend time outside, make new friends and see lots of birds.

CELEBRATE LOON DAY AT EAST CANYON

by Nancy Arnett

Join the staff of East Canyon State Park and Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) volunteers on Saturday, April 25th from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. to celebrate Loons as they visit Utah on their migration north. WAS will have spotting scopes and binoculars for viewing and answer any questions. The event will also include fun, family-friendly and educational activities, such as canoeing, a fishing demonstration and live birds. A Utah State University graduate student studying the tracking of sage grouse will be on hand with details of his study.

East Canyon is a fee area. The cost for this event will be \$5.00 (half the price of the normal fee).

Make it a morning of two fun events to get outside and enjoy birds. This event follows the Greater Sage Grouse Lek trip beginning at 5:00 A.M. (see the newsletter calendar for more details).

Visit East Canyon's website at

http://stateparks.utah.gov/park/east-canyon-statepark/events/lek-and-loon-day for a current list of activities. Activities may be subject to change.



CONSERVATION CORNER

Light Pollution:

It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature

by Lynn Carroll

It's sad that an estimated two-thirds of the people in the U.S. cannot see the Milky Way at night. Even sadder is the disruptive effect that "light pollution" has on the natural world. That's why the International Dark Sky Association has been working with conservation groups to change the way people use lights, and why the Ogden Valley chapter approached Wasatch Audubon Society to help spread the word. After all, they said, bright night skies cause a lot of bird deaths. I investigated and learned a lot.

The most direct way that birds can be killed by lights is when a bright light shines steadily into the night. Especially during rain or fog, night-migrating birds fly low enough to be attracted to the light and tend to circle in the lit area without leaving. They can die in large numbers as they collide with the source or each other or circle to the point of exhaustion and succumb to predators. This happened at lighthouses until they changed to rotating beams.

The birds seem to become disoriented, and it probably involves disruption of their ability to sense magnetic gradients. Rotating or flashing beams don't have that effect, and only light that includes the longer wavelengths (mostly red or white) attracts and disorients birds. The "9/11 Tribute in Lights," two powerful beams of light shining into the sky over Manhattan, has attracted and "trapped" birds in its beams, so the lights are turned off briefly when large numbers accumulate. At night or in bad weather, birds collide with communication towers that have red warning lights. The numbers of birds colliding with tall buildings increase with the amount of light they give off at night.

The more widespread light pollution from homes and parking lots can also cause bird deaths. Light doesn't have to be very intense to cause disorientation. Also night-migrating songbirds typically stop before dawn to rest and eat. If they are attracted by urban glow and stop in a city, they may find less to eat. Searching for food they face the huge risk of collisions with windows. As the American Bird Conservancy publication, *Bird-Friendly Building Design*, states, "It is thus likely that light pollution causes continual, widespread, low-level mortality that collectively is a significant problem."

Light has other effects on birds that are less understood. Hormones in Scrub Jays were shown by researchers to be affected by nighttime light in ways that could put the males and females on different breeding schedules. Other experimenters caught wild European Blackbirds and either exposed them to modest light levels (night light group) or kept them the dark at night (control group) for two years. The daytime lighting simulated natural conditions. The night light-exposed males became breeding-ready earlier than the controls the first year. In the second year, the night light group never had the normal increase in testosterone and development of testes that would have prepared them for breeding. The same birds also started to molt early in both years.

Another widespread effect of nighttime light is males singing earlier than the usual "dawn chorus." This can affect the female's choice of a mate, but for better or worse? Birds may spend more time foraging, but will it improve their health? The spread of light pollution will surely affect whole ecosystems, although we can't predict the winners and losers. Nocturnal owls lose the advantage that exceptional night vision gives them, but light also gives away their prey, and the owls may be the winners. Some insects die by the thousands as they are attracted to lights. Will insect-loving birds find plenty of others? More research is needed, but the known hazards are enough to persuade us that lights should be used with more care for Mother Nature. Join the fight to protect the night!

WOODPECKER MONEY

by Jay Hudson

The American Numismatic Society has an interesting collection of articles used as a medium of exchange. These include "wampum" (Algonkian Indian for white shell bead) and Aztec miniature copper axes. Whatever was deemed valuable prior to the European concept of money, be it paper or coin, was used in religious ceremonies, bride purchases and fines for sins against the tribe. There is one article in the collection, from the world of birds that was used as money as defined by the ANS. It is termed "woodpecker scalp money." The Pacific Northwest Indians' most valuable assets were fishing and hunting grounds, acorn groves, shell fish sites and even driftwood before the white man brought the metal saw blade. Ancient China, India and Siam used sea shells which didn't rot like corn and rice as "currency" on their trade routes. Pacific Islanders used twelve-foot diameter carved stones which looked like early streetcar tokens as articles of value as early as 500 A.D. Stamped coins were in circulation at the time of Jesus. Continued on page 7



CALENDAR Mar/April 2015

March

4 Wednesday 8:30/9:45 am

North Arm Pineview Reservoir: Meet at Dylan's Restaurant (12th and Monroe, Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:45 am at Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison, Ogden) to carpool. Depending on conditions, we may alter the location.

11 Wednesday 8:30/9:45 am Bird Walk Kay's Creek Parkway: Meet at Denny's (5805 S Harrison, Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:45 am at the trailhead.

12 Thursday 5:30 pm Birdy Thursday Evening Walk Dale Young Nature Park in Perry: Meet at 5:30 p.m. on the east side of the Brigham City Walmart parking lot. We'll caravan over to the nature park in Perry and bird for about an hour. Flat trail. If by some chance we get snow, wear appropriate footwear. Trail may not be shoveled. We will have dinner at a Mexican restaurant in Brigham City after the walk, for anyone who is interested. Children 8 and up are welcome, with a parent/guardian. For information, call Susan, 801-388-4201.

14 Saturday 10:00 am-3:00 pm Swan Day DWR Tundra Swan Day at Salt Creek Waterfowl

Management Area: Located 4 miles west of Corinne on UT-83, to 6800 West, follow signs to the landfill. For many years, Wasatch Audubon members have volunteered at this event, providing scopes and talking to visitors about Tundra Swans, other local birds, and conservation. Hope to see you there. Call Arnold 801-829-3383 if you have questions.

17 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Ogden Nature Center: Meet at Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street, Ogden) at 7:00 pm. The Ordinary Extraordinary Junco is the topic. Join us for a documentary highlighting research on a common yet amazing group of backyard birds, the *Juncos! Introduction by Katie McVey.* Film is approximately 50 minutes. http://juncoproject.org/ Come and bring a friend!

18 Wednesday 8:00/9:15 am Bird Walk

<u>Two Rivers Trail</u>: Meet at Denny's (North on 1100 W from 21st Street, in the Flying J Plaza on your left) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:15 am at the trailhead.

21 Saturday 8:00 am

Field Trip

Lee Kay Ponds & Decker Lake: Meet in the southeast corner of the parking lot near Wendy's (1900 West 5600 South, Roy) at 8:00 am to carpool. Both of these areas are good for waterfowl. Tim Avery spends a considerable amount of time at Decker Lake looking for unusual gulls. It is a good spot to visit when migration is in its early stages. For those who live south of Roy, an alternative meeting place will be at the parking lot near Bennion's Crafts in Kaysville (Main Street and 300 W). Meet there at 8:20 am. This trip is all day. Bring a lunch and water.

25 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am

Bird Walk

<u>Fort Buenaventura</u>: Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 S Wall Ave, Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the Fort entrance parking lot. To reach the Fort's parking lot, turn south from 24th Street on Avenue A. Keep to the left and head down past the ball fields.

April

1 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am Bird Walk Riverdale Parkway (North from 31st Street): Meet at McDonald's (900 W Riverdale Road, South Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am at the trailhead parking lot. To reach the trailhead parking lot from Riverdale Road, turn north on 900 W to 4400 S, then left to Parker Drive. Turn right from Parker Drive just past Riverdale Storage.

7 Tuesday 7:00 pm Board Meeting
Ogden Nature Center: All members are welcome to attend.
966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

8 Wednesday 8:00/9:30 am
West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail: Meet at Denny's
Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21st Street, in the Flying J
Plaza on your left) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:30 on the
frontage road in front of Stevens-Henager College.

9 Thursday 5:30 pm Birdy Thursday Evening Walk 21st Street Pond: Meet at 5:30 p.m. in the parking lot located on the north side of 21st Street and the southwest corner of

the pond. We'll walk the paved path around the pond and look for waterfowl and songbirds. We might even spot a mink along the Ogden River on the pond's north side. Children 8 and up are welcome, with a parent/guardian. For information, call Susan, 801-388-4201.

15 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am Bird Walk
Perry Nature Park: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N,
Farr West, just east of 1-15 exit 349) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

18 Saturday 12:00 am-4:00 pm ONC Earth Day Ogden Nature Center: Fun activities sponsored by ONC. Wasatch Audubon will have an education booth. Please contact Arnold 801-829-3383 if you would like to volunteer. Visit www.ogdennaturecenter.org for more information.

21 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting
Ogden Nature Center: Meet at 966 W. 12th Street, Ogden
at 7:00 pm. "Monitoring Wildlife on Shemya Island, Alaska" is
the program for this meeting. Biologist and birder Dennis
Shirley has conducted population surveys for the United
States government on this island seasonally during the past
three years. These studies involved breeding and migrant
birds and marine mammals inhabiting the Island at the
remotest portion of the Aleutians. Everyone is welcome at
our meetings!

22 Wednesday 8:00/9:15 am Bird Walk Ogden City Cemetery: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe, Ogden) at 8:00 for breakfast or meet at 9:15 am at the northeast corner of the cemetery.

25 Saturday 5:00 am Leks by Les and Loons by East Canyon: Meet at the DWR office (515 E 5300 S – Adams Ave, South Ogden) at 5:00 am to carpool to the lek. The Sage Grouse lek is definitely something you should have on your bucket list. It is a great opportunity to see the grouse perform the annual mating dance. After the lek, we'll visit East Canyon Reservoir. The State Park personnel will be sponsoring activities about loons, and we will be assisting them. This trip is all day, so bring a lunch and drinks. **East Canyon is a fee area.**

29 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am Bird Walk Willard Bay: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, just east of 1-15 exit 349) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool. We'll bird the areas that are open. Willard Bay is a fee area.

May

6 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am Bird Walk

Canal Walk (North Mountain Road): Meet at McDonald's

(Washington and 26th N, North Ogden) at 8:00 am for

breakfast or 8:30 am to carpool. Take 2450 N off Mountain

Road, over the canal into the small parking lot. Depending on

conditions in the area, we may alter the location.

14-18 Thurs thru Mon
Great Salt Lake Bird Festival: Various locations and times.
Information on activities and trips for all ages is available on their website at www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com. On Saturday, May 16th ,from 10am to 4 pm. Wasatch Audubon will have an education booth. Please contact Arnold 801-829-3383 if you would like to volunteer.

UTAH AUDUBON COUNCIL SPRING RETREAT

The Great Salt Lake Audubon will host the Spring Retreat for the Utah Audubon Council, **Saturday, April 18th** at the Robert Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Center at the Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area. The meeting will start at 9:00am and provide good information about all of the different chapters activities and the efforts of our Policy Advocate with the Utah State Legislature. We will also be planning activities in the future as a united Audubon voice in Utah. Everyone is invited to attend. Contact John Bellmon, 801-444-3704 for more information.

Contact Persons for WAS Outings

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi 801-295-7738

Birdy Thursdays - Susan Snyder 801-388-4201

Saturday Field Trips (the Saturday after the WAS Meeting) - Les Talbot 801-731-4925

Other Field Trips - Mike Hearell 801-529-8693

2014 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by John Bellmon and Weston Smith

Our Christmas Bird Counts went off very well this year. A very big **thank you** to all who participated and made this year's Christmas Bird Counts such a success. These counts provide very important data about wintering bird populations and are the longest continuous wildlife survey in the world. 2014 was the 115th year of the Christmas Bird Count. On the **35th Ogden Christmas Bird Count,** we all had a good time in spite of some miserable, albeit much needed, winter rain in Ogden. Some of the highlights were Greater Whitefronted Geese, a Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker and a White-throated Sparrow. Our totals were 27,198 individuals counted and 85 species.

The Morgan Christmas Bird Count was held December 23, 2014, and was the 14th annual count. Due to the warm weather, East Canyon Reservoir was almost devoid of ice, which was a big help in busting the numbers. Five new species were added to the Morgan circle: Common Loon, Sandhill Crane, Ring-billed Gull, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Brewer's Blackbird. We had 18 participants who totaled 3662 individuals counted and 62 species.

On the **Bear River Refuge Christmas Bird Count,** we had really great weather. A warm, sunny day is really unusual for this time of year for a bird count. Some of the highlights were a Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Shrikes and some Bonaparte's Gulls. Our totals were 39,930 individuals counted and 60 species.

Wasatch Audubon Society is looking for a volunteer editor for *The Mountain Chickadee*.

The editor is responsible for putting the newsletter together and emailing it to the printer. The newsletter is published six times per year.

If interested in this volunteer position, please contact Melissa Hofer at mah3338@msn.com or 801-388-0800, 801-544-1453.



On the **Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count,** we again had really great weather, a fine day with almost no wind, very unusual in the winter. Some of the highlights were Longtailed Ducks, White-faced Ibises and Dark-eyed (Slatecolored) Juncos. Our totals were 4,763 individuals counted and 59 Species.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Swaner Ecocenter and Tracy Aviary January 24, 2015

by Les Talbot

This trip was a big success! The cougar display at Swaner Ecocenter was excellent. It covered all aspects of the cougar's life and gave precautions which one should observe when encountering a lion. A volunteer originally from Connecticut took us under her wing. She had a wealth of knowledge about the cougar and explained the programs they have for the public.

I was really impressed with Tracy Aviary. The last time I was there, the birds were housed in wooden cages covered with chicken wire and it was difficult to see them. The birds are now enclosed in new buildings behind large glass windows. They are allowed to go outside into areas that keep them from flying away. They have two Great Grey Owls in the owl display and an African Marsh Owl which is a new addition. One of the trainers had it roosting on her arm so we were able to get a good look at it.

Marily, Sharen, and I attended a bird show. They had several trained birds that would fly to various spots in the room. A Macaw flew above me close enough that I felt its tail brush against my forehead and the top of my head. They had a young girl stand in front of the audience and put a leather glove on her right hand. She extended her arm and a trainer placed a piece of hamburger on the end of her glove. An Aplomado Falcon flew across the room landed on her hand and took the hamburger. The falcon landed on her hand several times and she didn't flinch once. Trainers at the Aviary have worked with the falcon since it was hatched, so it is used to being around people.

Trip members suggested that we not do both areas in one day. We could easily have spent more time at each location. They are both great places to visit.

WOODPECKER MONEY

Continued from page 3

The Indians of the Pacific Northwest had no such technology developed through the use of trade routes. They used the top-knot red-feathered scalp of the Pileated Woodpecker. Its scientific name is Pileatus (capped) dryocopus (Greek for woodpecker).

The Spanish ran into this unusual valuable asset in what is now California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The Russians ran into it in what is now Southern Alaska and some say Lewis and Clark probably were acquainted with it when they camped on the Pacific Ocean in Oregon. On a list of objects valuable to the Indians, including animal skins and blades of obsidian, the red-top scalp of the Pileated Woodpecker stood out because of its color, its portability and its use in purchasing brides, as well as slaves. It was also used in the "red woodpecker hat dance" which called for the regeneration of the earth after natural disasters and the depletion of resources. There were other birds that had red crowns, but the Pileated Woodpecker had the biggest and the brightest, thus it had a greater monetary value.

We tend to think of everything as it is related to the dollar. We have developed other ways to garner wealth including bonds, gold and property, but everything is geared to the dollar. We quake during times of deflation or inflation and the effect they can have on our bank account. It is a story repeated in history. Roman soldiers were paid in salt. (Was the man worth his salt?) Shamans were paid in food and drink for their medicine and all societies developed standards that they hoped would hold over the long haul. If not, one's wealth depended on one's negotiating skills. A woodpecker's red scalp has lost its value today but the American Numismatic Society cabinet of oddities does include one Pileatus dryocopus example of woodpecker scalp money.

OWL PELLETS WANTED

If you happen to discover any owl pellets while out birding, please collect them for me; or let me know the location, and I will get them. I do a lesson in elementary schools on owls, and the students enjoy dissecting the pellets.

Thanks for your help and happy birding. *Dennis Collins* (801) 393-1115

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Pat Bausman

Please join us in welcoming those who recently joined National Audubon:

Maria Albert Prudence Kuhn
Catherine Burt Delores Ottley
Joe Donahue Lisa M. Mullin
Connie Hunt Naomi Sessions
Carol Iverson F.K. Smith

Sara Johnson Kylee Van Havermaet

Charlotte Kibbie

Hope to see you at our next meeting or field trip!



Don't forget to visit the Rosy Finches at Powder Mountain before they are gone. Photo by K. Tumpane.





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.

is enclosed.
NAME
ADDRESS
CITYSTATEZIP
Send this and your check for \$20, payable to National 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 \$12, 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.

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