



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Volume 39, Number 6 November/December 2020

WAS MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 - 7:00pm

Join us on Zoom as Cooper Farr, of the Tracy Aviary, talks to us about bird window strikes and efforts to help prevent them. Jay Stretch will send the link for the Zoom meeting to members via email a couple of days prior.

Tuesday, December 15, 2020 - 7:00pm

Join us for another online Zoom meeting where we will show our annual collection of photographs, and do a prize drawing among those in attendance. The link for that meeting will be sent out in the same manner as November

NEITHER RAIN, SNOW, SLEET OR HAIL.....(or Covid) THE CBC GOES ON!

Wasatch Audubon Society will do its best to continue with the traditional Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It is hoped that there will be no further restrictions put in place before the counts occur. As of the issuing of this newsletter, the changes will be as follows.

There will be no breakfast before or potluck dinner after the count. During the counts, masks will be worn by all. We will keep the prescribed social distance as best we can. If you would like to carpool with a friend during the count, that is your prerogative. It will be up to you to coordinate this with your friend. It is our hope that all participants will stay safe and healthy through all the events. Of course, we look forward to returning to our less restrictive format next year.

Details you will need to participate can be found in the calendar section of this newsletter. If you have questions, contact John at 801-444-3704. If you have not participated in a Christmas Bird Count before and would like to this year, contact John - he will connect you with the team going to the area that you would like to cover.

PHOTOS NEEDED!!

Birders, please look through your photos. Locate any birding photos you would like to share at the December meeting. Email them to Susan Snyder at naturescall@gmail.com

Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Officers

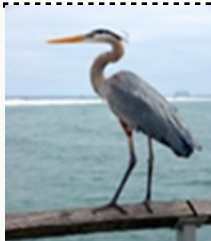
President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Vice President	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
Past President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

Board

2019/2020	Taylor Abbott	980-622-9889
2019/2020	Mike Hearrell	801-529-8693
2020/2021	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2020/2021	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
Vacancy		
Vacancy		

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Field Trips	Vacant	
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-678-8065
Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
Hospitality	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
Membership	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Newsletter	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
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Thank you for your support!

Annual Nest Box Cleanout

by Nancy Arnett

The weather on Saturday, September 19th was cold and wet. The second storm of the long, hot and dry summer was the day we cleaned out the nest boxes. It was still a successful day and the approximately 120 nest boxes are ready for the 2021 breeding season. Our crew included myself, Brian Nosker, Connor Johnson, Polly and David, John Bellmon and Lynn Carroll.

Additional Audubon members, John Bellmon, Dan and Laura Johnston and Arnold Smith, cleaned out boxes on other routes on different days. Thank you to everyone who came out to ensure clean homes for our beautiful Mountain Bluebirds, and the occasional House Wren and Tree Swallow.

NEEDED!!

It is that time of year when Audubon positions need to be filled and we need nominations. Positions are: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. There are also 4 board member positions open. Please contact Dan Johnston (801-645-8633) to nominate for any of these positions.

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>.

Welcome New and Rejoined Members!

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Gaylynn Allen | Sandy Mitchell |
| Isis Buckles | C. Greg Nielsen |
| Fran Bush | Terry Schow |
| Joseph Casale | Densie Sly |
| Joyce Coy | F. K. Smith |
| Tom Hooker | Sue Stain |
| Jacob Kent | Mrs. Denzel E. Taylor |
| Jerry Kirk | Michelle Wilde |
| Mary McKinley | |

**Conservation Corner:
Just the Good News**

by Lynn Caroll

I've been pleased to hear some good news over the last couple of months, so in this column I will pass some along without spoiling it with anything negative.

The Utah Climate and Clean Air Compact was unveiled in early October. It is a document, signed by over 100 Utah business, political, and civic leaders, in which they commit to helping the state move forward in addressing air pollution and climate change. Here is a bit of the text:

We ... care deeply about Utah's future and the future of children here and around the globe. ... Climate change and air quality represent urgent challenges for our health, families, and economy. We call upon ... Utahns to adopt the mileposts of the Utah Roadmap ...

The complete text and list of signers is at: climateandcleanaircompact.org

The Utah Roadmap is a distillation of policy ideas into seven priority steps for the legislature to take to address climate and air quality. See: <https://gardner.utah.edu/utahroadmap/>

Given the climate denial and unfunded programs of the past, I see the Compact as a sign of changing attitudes.

Conservationists in Utah have been fighting against the planned Lake Powell Pipeline (LPP) for years. Audubon is involved because so much of the Colorado River's water is being diverted to human use, leaving habitats along its course unable to support bird species that depend on it. So when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released, there was a big effort to point out problems with the draft (like not including conservation as an alternative) and show public opposition with comment letters. The Bureau of Reclamation received 14,000 letters, but it was a particular one that led Utah to ask for more time, so a supplement to the EIS can be prepared with more detailed analysis. That letter was from the other six Colorado Basin states to the Secretary of the Interior, asking that he interrupt the process until the states can resolve "outstanding legal and operational questions" about the pipeline project. It raised the specter of "multi-year litigation" over the LPP interfering with reaching consensus among the states.

Bird collisions with communication towers have in the past killed over six million migratory birds every year in the U.S. Turning off the lights would reduce the rate of mortality by around 70%, but this might not be safe. After years of effort by conservation groups, in 2015 new FAA guidelines allowed flashing lights, which also save birds. The steady lights are being replaced pretty rapidly, since it saves energy, and thus money, a win-win result.

My final bit of good news came in a talk by a person researching how to re-establish biocrust in deserts where it has been destroyed by human activity. The researchers have been successful in growing biocrust artificially, a necessary first step. A future column will tell more about this.

President's Pipeline

by Dan Johnston

Have you had a species that has eluded your searches? Usually it's fairly common in your area and most birders find it the first time they look. But you just cannot locate even one of them after several tries. I call this elusive bird my "bane bird." I have had several over the years, but my main bane bird was the Varied Thrush.

In 1988, I was driving my family to Vancouver, Canada, to see Expo 88. An expert birder told me to keep an eye out in the Northwest for the Varied Thrush. I checked out several hundred American Robins (as they appear very similar to the Robin) but didn't see the Varied Thrush. For the next 25 years and many trips to the Northwest I searched and searched. I looked at thousands of Robins and not one Varied Thrush. I heard several fellow birders comment, "I saw one just yesterday."

Finally, in October of 2013, a friend and I went camping at the Nehalem Bay State Park in Oregon to do some serious birding. Our first morning there, we looked out the window of the camper and there it was, A VARIED THRUSH. As with most bane birds, once you see it, it became ubiquitous - everywhere we looked we saw one! Now I see one almost every time I travel to the Northwest. I once saw 9 in my daughter's garden.

The very next spring, 2014, I observed a Varied Thrush at Garr Ranch, Antelope Island, for my Utah Varied Thrush. In 2018, I was watching some Robins taking baths in my backyard and was surprised when a Varied Thrush popped up

out of nowhere. I tried to get a picture of it but it was gone before I could get it in my lens.



What is a Varied Thrush?

The male Varied Thrush is dark blue-gray on the back and rich burnt-orange below with a sooty-black breastband and orange line

over the eye. The wings are blackish with two orange bars and orange edging to the flight feathers. Females have the same patterns, but are paler gray-brown than males. The Varied Thrush is a fairly large thrush species. It is similar in size to the widespread American Robin, though the varied is on average shorter with a heavier, more robust build.

The Varied Thrush breeds in western North America from Alaska to northern California. It is migratory, with northern breeders moving south within or somewhat beyond the breeding range. It sometimes surprises birders by straying all the way to the Atlantic Coast in winter. Many will move into dense parks, gardens and backyards in the winter.

The haunting songs of the Varied Thrush echo through the dense humid forests of the Pacific Northwest. With long minor-key whistles repeated after deliberate pauses, they seem like sounds without a source.

May your bane birds not haunt you for 25 years. Take care of yourself and others.

Good birding, Dan.

CALENDAR

Please note: For the time being, we will NOT be meeting for breakfast at the Wednesday bird walks. We will meet at the trailheads at the time indicated. At all events we will observe social distancing and wear face masks. Bird themed masks will be available for \$5.00.

NOVEMBER**4 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk**

Riverdale trail South: Take 700 W off Riverdale Road. Left on 4600 S to lot at end of the road.

11 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at trailhead off Monroe Ave. at the Ogden Botanical Garden.

17 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Join us on Zoom as Cooper Farr, of the Tracy Aviary, talks to us about bird window strikes and efforts to help prevent them. Jay Stretch will send the link for the Zoom meeting to members via email a couple of days prior.

18 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

Wilkinson Reservoir Area, Mountain Green: From Old Highway 30, take Silver Leaf Road for about 0.6 miles. Reservoir is on your right.

21 Saturday 7:30 am field trip

Ogden Valley: Meet at Smith's on 12th St. Join us as we get familiar with some of Ogden Valley's best birding locations in preparation for the future *Ogden Valley Christmas Bird Count*. We will be mostly on pavement or in our vehicles. Dress for the weather and plan water and food for 6 hours.

25 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

Two Rivers Trail: Meet under the 21st Street overpass, east of the Flying J Plaza.

DECEMBER**1 Tuesday 7: 00 pm WAS Board Meeting:**

Held remotely.

2 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail, west of I-15: Meet on frontage road in front of Stevens-Henager College.

9 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville: meet at the parking lot. The road to the area off of Highway 89 has been moved south about 100 yards. Take care around the heavy road construction on 89.

No bird walks or field trips in December starting Dec. 16 due to the upcoming Christmas bird counts.

15 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Join us for another online Zoom meeting where we will show our annual collection of photographs, and do a prize drawing among those in attendance. The link for that meeting will be sent out in the same manner as November.

16 Wednesday 9:00 am Bear River Christmas Bird

Count: Meet at the Bear River Refuge Headquarters' parking lot at 9:00am to divide into three teams to cover different areas. It is an all day trip so bring water and a lunch.

19 Saturday Ogden Christmas Bird Count:

Meet up with your team leader on the morning of the count at a time and place designated ahead of time by the team leader. (If you don't have a team, call John Bellmon (801-444-3704) for an assignment. There will be 10 teams, so your help is needed. This is an all day trip so bring water and lunch.

23 Wednesday Morgan Christmas Bird Count: 8:00 am

Meet at Arnold Smith's home (796 N. 700 E., Morgan UT) to divide up into teams to cover the areas. It is an all day trip, so bring water and lunch. Information from each team will be returned to Weston Smith at Arnold's home when your area is completed.

Continued from pg. 5

JANUARY

1 Friday 8:00 am Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count: Meet in the parking lot at the entrance to the park. We will divide up into three teams to cover the areas. It is an all day trip so bring water and lunch.

6 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk Bountiful Pond: The road to the pond is off Legacy Highway, Exit 500 South. The pond is just south of the Bountiful dump.

<p>CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS Wednesday walks - Paul Lombardi: pslombard@gmail.com Bird counts - John Bellmon 801-444-3074 Field trips - Dan Johnston 801-645-8633</p>

Black Rosy-Finch Study

by Kris Purdy

The Black Rosy-Finch study continues this year at Powder Ridge Village Condominiums near Powder Mountain Ski Resort with the same goal: To provide more insight to the abundance and movement of Rosy-Finches.

Powder Ridge was one of the three most successful feeder sites of twelve in the study during the 2019-2020 winter research season. Not only did the site attract high numbers of Rosy-finches, but it also supported four banding days for a total of 108 Gray-Crowns banded of the season’s 268 total, and one Black Rosy-Finch banded of the season’s 14 total. Our very gracious hosts at the condo complex supported the study’s continued banding efforts after the pandemic shutdown eliminated several feeder sites especially at ski areas like Snowbasin.

Powder’s results appear to support anecdotal data from previous seasons at Alta: “Local” Black Rosy-Finches may not winter here but instead return to the area late in winter. No Black Rosy-Finches were observed regularly at Powder Ridge; four were observed there in March and one of those was banded.

The RFID-band technology yielded an amazing tale of travel of one Gray-Crowned Rosy-Finch banded at Powder Ridge on Feb 19. The bird was detected at the Powder Ridge feeder from Feb 20-Apr 17. However, on Mar 27 after being recorded at Powder Ridge in the morning, the bird was recorded at one of the Alta feeders in the afternoon, 60 miles to the southeast. It was back at Powder Ridge the next morning. The bird was recorded again at Alta on Apr 23, 6 days after it had left Powder Ridge for good.

A change in the study this coming season is that feeder sites will be reduced from last year’s twelve to the three successful sites and of course, Powder Ridge Village is one of them.

Feeder counts will continue to be a part of the study and volunteers are needed to visit Powder Ridge once in each of five 3-week count periods to record feeder activity, and to perform opportunistic counts on other area feeders to record data on where the birds don’t occur. Would you be willing to join the effort? Counts are easy to perform and your participation is important to making the effort a success. Please contact Kris to volunteer at kristin-purdy@comcast.net

Utah Audubon Council Report

by John Bellmon

The Utah Audubon Council held its 2020 fall meeting on-line through a Zoom meeting, because of the Covid environment. We had a good turnout for the meeting that included representatives from all the Utah Chapters, Audubon Saline Lakes Program, Gillmor Audubon Sanctuary and Audubon Rockies. Many local and state issues were discussed among chapters and our policy advocate. It was a particularly good meeting with our new Utah Audubon Council President Georgie Corkery.

Another Successful Big Sit

by John Bellmon

This year we held our Big Sit, or should I say, "The Big Windy Sit," on October 10th at the Robert N. Hasenyager Nature Reserve at Farmington Bay. We observed from a 17-foot circle in the parking lot of the Eccles Wildlife Education Center, counting all the species we could see. There were 10 participants who braved a wind strong enough to blow the lawn chairs over when they stood up! The scope and tripod had to be laid down for safety. Wouldn't you know, the wind died down towards evening, about the time the bugs came out. We did see 35 species and as a bonus, the smoke and haze were gone at the end of the day.

Another big bonus that day was meeting Steve Greenwood, photographer, who stopped by to chat for a while. He shared with us the Snowy Egret photo below, which was taken at Farmington Bay. Many thanks to Steve.



A big thank you to all who participated in this event to support Wasatch Audubon.

BIRD NAMES

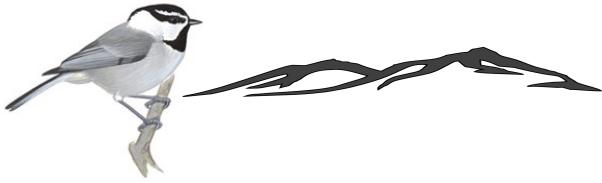
by Jay Hudson

We were eating breakfast prior to the usual Wednesday bird walk and, as always, we had a spirited discussion about the world of birds. Ruddy Ducks were the center of the conversation and, as usual, each of us had the opportunity to learn from others. Although the common name would make you think of the duck's ruddy color, the scientific name hints something else. The genus is *Oxyura* from the Greek *oxus* meaning "stiff" and *ouia* meaning "tail," thus we have stiff-tailed duck. Knowing this, I further explored on my computer the six different species, all stiff-tailed ducks, all blue-billed ducks, where they live, and more. All this started with a bird's name.

The more I travel and add to my life list, the more questions I run into. I know birders who keep lists based on a country, the back yard, a species or a genus. Maybe they only record pelagic, or desert, or birds found at certain altitudes. The longer I'm into birding the more I want to find out peculiarities, such as the fruit eaters, those with the weaver talent, or with scavenger tastes. A list of bird names is just the beginning.

The one thing that I have learned is that bird watching can give you almost anything you want, from a simple sighting to a full understanding of a single bird or why "birds of a feather flock together." I'm convinced that young students with their sharp minds and quick memories can find value in studying birds as they study flight (engineering), colors (decorating), nests (home design), and social habits (psychology, law), and, of course, bird names (languages - Greek and Latin).

So, go beyond the list of bird names. Explore a myriad of interesting topics. You will broaden your knowledge of life, geography, and now, the dangers of losing it all because of the influence of the human species.



Wasatch Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3211
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AUDUBON

Membership Application

Membership in **Audubon** automatically enrolls you as a member of **Wasatch Audubon**. When you join, you will receive four issues of **Audubon** magazine and six issues of our chapter newsletter, **The Mountain Chickadee**, each year. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of **\$20**, please go to the following website:

<http://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=W54>

(By using this special page, you give our chapter credit toward a monetary reward)

Local Chapter: Wasatch Audubon Society – W54

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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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