Please note: For the time being, we will NOT be meeting for breakfast at the Wednesday bird walks. We will meet directly at the trailheads at the time indicated. At all events we will observe social distancing and wear face masks. Board meeting will be held remotely in August.

JULY
1 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Willard Bay State Park: Meet at 8:00 am at the pond and canal on the north side of the park. We’ll then proceed into the Park. Remember this is a fee area.

8 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Wilkinson Reservoir area, Mountain Green: Meet at the upper end of the reservoir. Directions: Proceed for 1.6 miles east of Trappers Loop turnoff on Old Highway 30. Turn left onto Silver Leaf Road and continue 0.6 miles. Reservoir is on your right.

15 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Canal Walk: North Mountain Rd. at 2450 N., North Ogden. To reach the parking lot, take 2450 N off Mountain Rd over the canal into the small parking lot.

22 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Kay’s Creek Parkway: Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 am. To reach the parking lot, take 2000 E off of Hwy 193. Continue on Deere View Drive to 2125 E and continue down to the parking lot.

25 Saturday 7:30 am field trip
Monte Cristo/Woodruff: Heading to higher elevation to beat the heat, we will search for high elevation species along SR39. We will go on to Woodruff area in hopes of seeing Common Nighthawks and Black Terns. There will be a little easy hiking and will run into early afternoon, so bring a light lunch and water. Meet at North end of Smith’s (12th and Harrison) parking lot at 7:30 am to caravan.

29 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at the parking lot south of the Ogden Athletic Club. To reach the parking lot, take 1050 E off of Hwy 89 and follow signs to the Nature Park.

AUGUST
5 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville: Meet at parking lot at 8:00 am.

12 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Riverdale trail (South): Meet at parking lot at 8:00am. To reach the parking area, take 700 W of Riverdale Rd for one block. Turn left onto 4600 W to lot at end of road.

18 Tuesday 7:00 pm Membership Meeting
Possible evening bird walk at the Ogden Nature Center. As August approaches, check our Facebook page or call Dan at 801-645-8633 to make sure this event is able to be held.

19 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
North Arm, Pineview Reservoir: Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 am.

22 Saturday 7:30 am field trip
City of Rocks National Reserve: We will head to southern Idaho in search of the Cassia Crossbill, made a distinct species in 2009. Scenery, unique rock formations and lodgepole pine forest will be of interest. Possible easy hiking. It will run into early afternoon, so bring a lunch and plenty of water. Meet at the Park and Ride (I-15 north) exit 349 (2700 North) at 7:30 am to caravan.

26 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Ogden City Cemetery: Meet at the NE corner of the Cemetery at 8:00 am. Cemetery can be accessed off of Monroe Blvd.

SEPTEMBER
2 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Two Rivers Trail: Meet at 8:00 am under the 21st Street overpass.

CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi
pslombard@gmail.com

Field Trips on the Saturday after the WAS meeting - Dan Johnston 801-645-8633
Aviculturist
by Jay Hudson

Could you guess what an aviculturist is? Ok: avi = bird, culturist = profession of understanding and keeping care of something. Many years ago I reached into a Puffin den and got bitten. If I had been an aviculturist or had better sense, I would have missed the experience. I was on an island off the coast of Iceland where they have puffins by the tens of thousands and I wanted to see, touch, smell and eat puffins.

It all goes back to 1953, when I started college and thought I would like to work in the world of nature. I wanted to be a zoologist and teach. But the first test involved identifying dozens and dozens of common name animals with their Latin names. After the results came in, I changed my major. I hadn’t lost my wonder of the natural world; I just had to find something that was not in Latin.

Recently I was looking for a way to spend my time quarantined because of the Covid-19 threat to humanity. My doctor now calls me old and fragile so I’m down to remembering what it was like when I roamed the world. I ran into a web site that talked about how puffins change their beak configuration and colors for the mating season. It talked about how they hunt down sand eels and line them all up in their beaks to take back to hungry babies. It talked about the beak and its “casque” or helmet that along with their sad eyes make the puffin a favorite for kids and adults alike. I remember, when I was on the small open boat going around the island, how the captain stopped, opened a cooler and brought out a fledgling puffin. He handed it to me. How many of us mere mortals get to hold a wild creature? A creature that has its own culture! I got to release a wild puffin and immediately forgave the one protecting its den for biting me.

I looked up what an aviculturist made. They can top out at $75,000 a year. The title “culturist” has a nice ring to it. You can learn until you wonder if you know more than they or if they have you just where they want you. Now I wonder if I shouldn’t have learned Latin.

Conservation Corner
Healthy Soil Matters
by Lynn Carroll

I love to dig in dirt, especially to go after the deep runners (rhizomes) of Bermuda grass. Then I hear about “no till” gardening. Tilling is done to break up compacted soil and to mix in the dead plants, live weeds, and maybe some compost, aiding water penetration and returning nutrients to the soil. That makes sense until you learn about mycorrhizal fungi. These microbes occupy the roots of plants, sending out tiny filaments that help plants access water and nutrients. The filaments are also sticky and form networks that bind soil particles together in clumps, leaving space for water to percolate around them. Plants return the favor by secreting a sugary substance through their roots, feeding the fungi and other soil microbes. Tilling tears apart the delicate, beneficial fungal networks and spoils the healthy soil structure. So perhaps I am doing my lawn no favors, disturbing the soil to remove what I consider weeds.

On the other hand, “no-till” is only beneficial if you already have pretty healthy soil to begin with. Here in the West, our soils can use help. I found some recommendations in blogs from the Isaac Walton League.

Diversity is one key, right down to those soil microbes that plants feed with carbohydrate secretions from their roots. It takes microbes to recycle the nutrients from dead plants and added compost. Some bacteria take nitrogen from the air and add it to the soil. Different plants support different microbes, so variety spices up the microbial mix. You can spread the microbes that live with your annual plants to other parts of your yard by moving the beds each year. Add...