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
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
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 geotek@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**

*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.

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**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.

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**Welcome New Members**
by Paul Lombardi

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>W. Allen</th>
<th>Phyllis Powers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce Barton</td>
<td>Dale Rowell</td>
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<td>Bonnie Bushaw</td>
<td>Michael Speight</td>
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<td>Marilyn Corbridge</td>
<td>Brian K. Smith</td>
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<td>Michelle D. Dobson</td>
<td>Terra Smith</td>
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<td>Dennis Donoviel</td>
<td>Marilyn Swartwout</td>
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<td>Michele Erskine</td>
<td>Helen Torman</td>
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<td>Drew Johnson</td>
<td>Irma Ward</td>
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<td>Rhonda Lehr</td>
<td>Melissa Weber</td>
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<td>Edith Lorenz</td>
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Hope to see you at our next meeting or field trip.
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

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.
**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.

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<th>ZIP</th>
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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

**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

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<th>My contribution to Wasatch Audubon:</th>
<th>Total enclosed:</th>
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</table>

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

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