The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society



Vol 32, Number 2

Mar/Apr 2013

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tues, March 19, 2013 Meeting 7:00 p.m.

"Antelope Island through the Seasons"

Keith Evans, Vice President of Wasatch Audubon Society, will share photos he has taken during frequent visits across the Causeway and throughout Antelope Island State Park. Bring a friend and come enjoy the evening as Keith shares his experiences with the variety of species found at one of the "treasures" in northern Utah. At the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

Tues, April 16, 2013 Meeting 7:00 p.m.

"Pure Fun"

Paul Higgins, renowned local photographer, will share his passion for birds through photos taken during his many forays into various habitat types (including backyards) in search of his new "favorite" bird. Join us for an evening of truly marvelous photos and stories. At the Ogden Nature Center 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 16-20, 2013.

Registration begins March 1 at 9:00 a.m. MST. Go to: GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com or call 801-451-3286. SHOREBIRD MIGRATION FLAGS

by Jay Hudson with help from John Cavitt

Migration is upon us. For those who don't follow the complex rules of banding and flagging migrants, here is information to get you started. When you spot a colored flag on a bird's right leg above the "knee," the flag color denotes the country where the bird was first captured. The physical difference between a band on the left leg and a flag on the right is that the flag is rectangular and sticks out horizontally, just enough to spot from a distance. Banding is a centuries old practice, but colored flagging is a relatively new technique designed to allow information to be gathered quickly. The web site of the Pan American Shorebird Program will show you all the color combinations in the western hemisphere. Here at the Great Salt Lake (GSL), the colors you might see are: white/Canada, dark green/USA, and red over yellow/Mexico.

The Great Salt Lake lies within both the Pacific and Central Flyways. These flyways are traveled by millions of birds, primarily in spring and fall. If you see a colored flag, you can instantly become a scientific researcher by recording the sighting. Record the date, location, species and flag color. If you can see inscriptions, even better! Be aware that there are likely other bands on the bird and all provide important information on the migratory movements and ecology of the species. Ornithologists typically record flags/bands in order, from top to bottom and left to right. Identifying a flag color may be a catalyst for your continued birding expertise. If desired, you can take your scientific observations further and become an official observer at www.bandedbirds.org.

Because of loss of habitat along the migration routes, many shorebird populations are falling. The good news is that recording migration populations has, in some instances, prevented the loss of habitat. Data can prove to governments that development and extraction of resources has a profound effect on the future. A few of the birds that you may see with flags on the Great Salt Lake are Marbled Godwits, Avocets, Blacknecked Stilts, and Long-billed Curlews -- green or white flag. They usually migrate between Canada and Mexico.

More information can be found on the internet. Call up <u>Utah birds.org</u> and go to "Utah Listing Records." Birds listed with an "A" for "accidental" are rare sightings. When there is a "Big Year" competition (where birders compete for the most species seen in one year in the USA), the winner could well be the birder that has seen the most "A" birds. This usually means the winner was in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska when a west moving storm blew in "A" birds from Russia.



Wasatch Audubon Society Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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| | | | | |
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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 Arnold Smith

This last unusually cold winter, thousands of Common Redpolls came farther south than normal for an unknown reason. They were seen foraging in Utah mountain valleys and desert areas. Some Hoary Redpolls were observed among the Commons, making it one of the best winter bird watching phenomenons in recent years. The Redpolls visited numerous bird feeders and feasted on readily available seeds like sunflower and nyjer; sometimes hanging upside down like Goldfinches and Pine Siskins.

From one to several dozen Redpolls were observed on different occasions by bird watchers at Weston and Louize Smith's bird feeders in Croyden. The Redpolls were first seen there on November 12, 2012, and have remained as of this writing on February 14, 2013.

On January 21, 2013 Paul Higgins photographed a rare yellow-color-phase Redpoll at the Smith's feeders. This yellow color variation is very common in House Finches but can also be seen in Cassin's Finches and other birds which normally have red feathers.

SUNFLOWER SEED FUNDRAISER COMES TO AN END by Jack Rensel

Many of you are aware that for the last 30 years Wasatch Audubon Society has sponsored an annual fundraiser that provided black-oil sunflower seeds for our feathered friends throughout Weber, Davis, Morgan, and Box Elder counties. The proceeds covered some of our expenses related to our educational program for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. During most of this time, this specialized crop was grown for us by one farm family who believed in our program.

Recently, changing agricultural economics resulted in our supplier having to put their resources into other crops. We appreciate our past association with this family and wish them well in future endeavors. However, this change means we will no longer be selling sunflower seeds or sponsoring the fundraiser. We greatly appreciate those of you who consistently supported this effort over the years. We hope you will continue to enjoy feeding the birds in your yards and possibly join us on a bird walk or field trip during the next year.

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lynn Carroll

Water Pipeline News

Both Utah and Colorado have been looking at taking more water from the Colorado R. Basin to provide for future development. The Flaming Gorge Pipeline proposal is to take water from the Green River at Flaming Gorge and pipe and pump it east across Wyoming, then south to Denver suburbs, over 500 miles total. An e-mail I received this week from Save the Colorado celebrates a decision by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to discontinue funding to study the idea. The group believes that the Colorado public's attitude that conservation is better than costly projects will keep the pipeline from being resurrected.

Here in Utah, conservationists are cautiously optimistic that another bill aimed at funding water projects, such as a pipeline from Lake Powell west to St. George and vicinity has died. SB 154—Sales and Use Tax of Water—was heard by the Senate Revenue and Taxation committee, which declined to vote on it.

REMINDER: As you prepare your Utah income tax return, please consider a contribution to the Utah Nongame Wildlife Account, code 01.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Ogden Hot Spots January 19, 2013 by Les Talbot

This trip should really be called the "Ogden Cold Spots" trip. The temperature was 11 degrees when we met at Smith's. We saw three birds at the Cemetery. I told an acquaintance this and she said, "The birds have enough sense to get out of the cold." The three were a Black-capped Chickadee, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a Townsend's Solitaire.

Along the Ogden Parkway behind the Stadium, we saw Mallards, a Green-winged Teal, a Belted Kingfisher, Cedar Waxwings, and American Robins.

At the Nature Center there was bird activity at the feeders. We saw White-crowned Sparrows, Oregon Juncos, a Spotted Towhee, a Northern Flicker and a Mule Deer. We saw two more Mule Deer and California Quail northwest from the Observation Tower.

I said that January would be a good month to visit the Utah Natural History Museum. At least it would be much warmer.

John Bellmon, Lynn Carroll, Jack Rensel, Lori & Jamus Wangsgard and I were the trip participants.

WASATCH AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

by John Bellmon

"**Birding that counts.**" The Christmas Bird Count this year was free for all of those that participated for the first time since 1955. This winter, an estimated 65,000 people in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere took part in the 113th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Participants counted from Alaska to Antarctica, with groups in Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands. The Christmas Bird Count is the longest continual wildlife survey in the world. Its data is very valuable in analyzing bird population trends within the Western Hemisphere. A big **thank you** to all who participated and made this year's Christmas Bird Counts such a success. (*continued on page 5*)

GET TO KNOW A WAS OFFICER:

Keith Evans

Keith Evans is Vice President of the Wasatch Audubon Society. He has been interested in birds and nature since his elementary school days in Southeastern Colorado. Keith obtained Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Wildlife Management from Colorado State University. He went on to earn a Ph. D. in Wildlife Science from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

After a 35-year career with the USDA, Forest Service, he retired as an Assistant Director with the Rocky Mountain Research Station. Prior to his work in research administration, he conducted research on various aspects of wildlife management on the Northern Great Plains and bird-community structure in the Ozarks of Missouri.

Keith supports citizen science through participation in Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, Great Backyard Bird Counts, and eBird (ebird.org). He is currently the Regional Editor for Christmas Bird Count data collected in Utah and Wyoming.

Keith has authored or co-authored over 60 publications and spends time in retirement as a freelance writer and photographer. His most recent book is <u>Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites: A</u> <u>Conservation Platform for IBAs and BHCAs</u>, which he co-authored with Wayne Martinson, Utah IBA Coordinator for National Audubon Society.



If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come. – Chinese proverb



Black-capped Chickadee by Keith Evans

REMEMBER.....

Wasatch Audubon is now on Facebook! "Like" us on Facebook and have the chance to participate in bird games, ID quizzes, and caption contests. Plus, the Facebook page has upcoming field trip information and the 'B3B' – the best three birds viewed on each field trip.

You do not have to join Facebook to view WAS's site. Just go to the WAS website (<u>http://wasatchaudubon.org/</u>) and click on:



It will take you right to the Facebook page! You can view the Facebook page without joining Facebook. If you want to comment or try your hand at the ID quizzes, you will need to make a Facebook account.

WASATCH AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS continued

On the **33**rd **Ogden Christmas Bird Count**, we broke our record for the number of species seen, even though we missed some common birds like Killdeers, Barn Owls, Long-eared Owls, and Rock Wrens. Some highlights were a Swamp Sparrow, Red Crossbills, Ring-necked Ducks, Cackling Geese, and a White-throated Sparrow sighted in the circle. Our totals were 28,298 individuals counted and a **record total of 88 species** reported.

On the **Bear River Refuge Christmas Bird Count**, we had some overcast skies. The big surprises were a Thayer's Gull, Least Sandpiper and Ring-necked Duck at the refuge. Our totals were 8,443 individuals counted and 59 species reported.

On the **Morgan Christmas Bird Count**, we had the highest numbers of species seen since this count was started in 2001. Some of the unusual birds were a Pacific Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow and a flock of Common Redpolls. Our totals were 4,170 individuals counted and a **record total of 63 species** reported.

On the **Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count**, the weather was clear but cold. We had 32 observers, the highest number of any of our counts. Some of the unusual birds observed were Least and Western Sandpipers, a Great Egret, a Sage Sparrow, a Harlequin Duck, and a Bonaparte's Gull. Our totals were 4,274 individuals counted and 70 species reported.

We will post all of the totals on our chapter's website. As always, everyone that came out had a really good time. Again, thanks to everyone for making all of our counts a success!

ATTRACTING ORIOLES

by Melissa Hofer

Four or five years ago, I noticed a very lovely but exhausted bird trying to drink out of my hummingbird feeder and identified it as a female Bullock's Oriole. The same day, I purchased an oriole feeder, which has larger port openings than those designed for hummers and depressions for holding jelly. Orioles enjoy the rather expensive variety of grape jelly that is made with real fruit and naturally sweetened. I have seen a special bird jelly in wild bird stores, but have not tried it. They also like oranges cut in half. My birds definitely did not like either cheaper "squeezable" grape jelly or a change of flavor to blackberry jam.

I originally put a squirrel guard umbrella over my feeder, but later removed it because the orioles like to grip the stem of the feeder and hang upside down to eat. Possibly they do not like to get their toes sticky.

Other birds use the oriole feeder, too. Western Tanagers visited one year and Black-headed Grosbeaks come regularly. The Grosbeaks have a black/white/orange coloring and can look like orioles at a distance but are much less sleek and have a different bill. Even some resident house finches have tried the grape jelly and decided it's pretty good. And, predictably, a territorial hummingbird will usually lay claim to the "cornucopia flower of infinite nectar" and try to buzz everyone else away.

Last summer, there were no less than five orioles at my feeder at one time, and I was lucky enough to observe a daddy bird teaching his baby to eat.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS by Paul Lombardi

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

Kaitlanclint Allen Carrie Clayton Darlene Cook Janice Dalley William A. Evans Josephine Faulkner Sue Fuller Terry Fullwilley Roberta Glidden Nikki Hansen Willard Z. Maughan Tom McPartland Mark Miller

Sandi Norlem Beverly Oleson Michelle Peterson Kenneth Pollett Marlyn Rands Brandi Rawson Kiley Rawson Vickie Richeson Coleen Simonton Gena Strickland Henry Stutman Faye Winkelcotter Gloria Wurst

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

Call for Submissions

We welcome articles written by any member of Wasatch Audubon. Some of our most entertaining and original stories come from your trips, sightings, and backyards. Please send submissions to *The Chickadee* editor, Melissa Hofer, at <u>mah3338@msn.com</u> or call [801]-388-0800.



CALENDAR Mar/Apr 2013

March

6 Wednesday 8:30/9:00/9:30 am Bird Walk Antelope Island Causeway and Fielding Garr Ranch: Meet at McDonald's (Riverdale Rd and 900 W) at 8:30 for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool. Alternatively, meet the group at the parking lot near the entrance kiosk at 9:30. We'll bird the Causeway and then head for the Ranch. THIS IS A FEE AREA.

9 Saturday 10:00 am-3:00 pmTundra Swan DayBear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Wildlife Education Center.Fun family activities. Visit www.fws.gov/refuge/bear_river_migratory bird refuge for more information.

13 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 amBird WalkKay's Creek Parkway:Meet at McDonald's (5745 S. Harrison)at 8:30 for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool.

14 Thursday 5:15/5:20 pmEvening Bird WalkBeus Pond:Meet in the Smith's parking lot (42nd Street andHarrison Blvd., Ogden), to carpool. Otherwise, meet at 5:20 inthe Beus Pond parking lot. Trail is flat and paved, but could beslushy or snow-packed and slippery. Wear proper foot gear.Walk will last about an hour, with opportunity to socializeafterward. No dogs or children under 12.

16 Saturday 10:00 am-3:00 pmField TripTundra Swan Day at Compton's Knoll (Salt Creek WildlifeManagement Area):Come to Compton's Knoll to see TundraSwans and various other waterfowl. You could possibly seeSnow Geese. The date was changed to the 16th, so the lategoose hunt will not interfere. Wasatch Audubon memberswill be assisting DWR personnel there. Bring a lunch andwater.

19 Tuesday 7:00 pm

WAS Meeting

Ogden Nature Center: 966 West 12th Street, Ogden. "Antelope Island through the Seasons"

Keith Evans, Vice President of Wasatch Audubon Society, will share photos he has taken during frequent visits across the Causeway and throughout Antelope Island State Park. Bring a friend and come enjoy the evening as Keith shares his experiences with the variety of species found at one of the "treasures" in northern Utah.

20 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am

Bird Walk

<u>Riverdale Parkway</u>: Meet at 8:30 am at McDonald's (900 W Riverdale Rd) for breakfast or at 9:00 am at trip start: From Riverdale Rd., drive north on 700 W for two blocks, right on 4300 S, right on 600 W to the parking lot.

23 Saturday 7:30/8:30–2:00 pm

Field Trip

Lee Kay Ponds: Meet at the Village Inn in Roy (1780 W. 5600 S. – just off I-15) at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast or meet at the Inn at 8:30 a.m. to join the group. We will visit the ponds, the International Peace Gardens, the Salt Lake Cemetery and check out City Creek Canyon. Bring a lunch and water. We will finish about 2 in the afternoon.

27 Wednesday 8:15/9:15 am

Bird Walk

<u>Ogden Cemetery</u>: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:15 for breakfast or at the cemetery entrance at 20th and Jefferson at 9:15.

April

2 Tuesday 7:00 pmBoard MeetingOgden Nature Center: All members welcome to attend. 966West 12th Street, Ogden.

3 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 amBird WalkRiverdale Parkway:(North from 31st street): Meet atMcDonalds (900 W Riverdale Rd) at 8:00 for breakfast or at
trailhead parking lot (From Riverdale Rd, north on 900 W to4400 S. then left to Parker Drive, right on Parker Drive just
past Riverside Storage on right) at 8:30am.

6 Saturday 5:30 am/9:00 amSage Grouse DayDeseret Ranch:Wasatch Audubon will be assisting in a SageGrouse Conservation Project installing fence-marking devicesnear Sage Grouse leks. These help the grouse see the fence,preventing collisions that cause injuries and some fatalities.Arrive at Ranch headquarters at 5:30 a.m. to view displayinggrouse or at 9:00 am to participate in the fence-markingproject alone.Bring gloves and wear clothing that may getdirty or be torn on barbed wire.We need to have a count ofvolunteers.Please RSVP to John Bellmon (801)-444-3704 byApril 1st so that we plan correctly.It should be a great day onDeseret Ranch and a great place for some birding.

10 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Willard Bay: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, just east of Exit 349 on I-15) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool. THIS IS A FEE AREA.

11 Thursday 5:30 pm

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: Meet in the Refuge Education Center parking lot. We'll check the center trail, then head out to the loop and bird until sunset. The trip should take about 90 minutes with an opportunity to socialize

Evening Bird Walk

afterward. Some walking on flat trails. No dogs or children under 12.

13 Saturday 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Sense of Wonder Day Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: Earth Day Celebration. Fun family activities sponsored by BRMBR. Visit www.fws.gov/refuge/bear river migratory bird refuge for more information.

16 Tuesday 7:00 pm

WAS Meeting

<u>Ogden Nature Center</u>: 966 West 12th Street, Ogden. Pure Fun

Paul Higgins, renowned local photographer, will share his passion for birds through photos taken during his many forays into various habitat types, including backyards, in search of his new "favorite" bird. Join us for an evening of truly marvelous photos and stories.

17 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am

<u>**Two Rivers Trail**</u>: meet at 8:00 am at Denny's Restaurant for breakfast (North on 1100 W from 21st street, in the Flying J Plaza on your left) or meet there at 9:00 am for carpooling.

20 Saturday 5:30 am

Field Trip

Bird Walk

Leks and Loons by Les: Meet at DWR Office (515 E. 5300 S. in Ogden) at 5:30 a.m. This is our annual trip to the Greater Sage Grouse Lek. We'll also look for loons on East Canyon Reservoir. A rest stop at East Canyon State Park will be to our advantage. We'll finish the trip with brunch at Larry's Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan. THIS IS A FEE AREA.

20 Saturday Noon-4:00 pmEarth DayOgden Nature Center:Fun activities sponsored by ONC.Visit www.ogdennaturecenter.org for more information.

24 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Ogden Nature Center: (North) at 2450 N., North Ogden. Meet at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N, North Ogden) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30am to carpool. Take 2450 N off Mountain Rd, over canal into a small parking lot. Depending on conditions in the area, we may alter the location.

27 Saturday 8:00 am Utah Audubon Council Meeting <u>Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Center</u> (formerly Farmington Bay Nature Center): Utah Audubon Council's semiannual meeting. Birding from 8:00 – 9:00 am will be followed by the business meeting. Lunch and refreshments will be provided by the host chapter, Great Salt Lake Audubon. The business meeting continues after lunch with more birding at the end of the day. Everyone is invited but please **RSVP to John Bellmon (801) 444-3704**.

May

1 Wednesday 8:00/9:00/9:30 amBird WalkWest Haven Hiking and Biking Trail:west of I-15: Meet atDenny's Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21st Street in theFlying J Plaza) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.Alternatively, join the group at 9:30 on the frontage road infront of Stevens-Henager College to start walk.

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 16-20, 2013

On-line registration begins March 1 at 9:00 a.m. MST. Go to: www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com or call 801-451-3286.

WASATCH AUDUBON OUTDOOR ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Wasatch Audubon sponsors many outdoor activities. Our main goal, of course, is bird watching. We take our time and most walks are not strenuous. Water and binoculars are recommended equipment. Please do not bring dogs. They frighten the birds.

We meet for breakfast (optional) prior to our Weekly Wednesday Morning Walks. These walks usually last about 2 hours. All ages are welcome. Contact Paul Lombardi for more information at [801] 295-7738.

We meet for coffee or drinks (optional) following our Monthly Birdy Thursday Evening Walks. These walks usually last about 2 hours and are for ages 12 and up. Contact Susan Snyder for more information at naturescall@gmail.com or [801] 388-4201 or Jason at saintjaybob@gmail.com.

Our Saturday Field Trips are more rigorous, and we are often out until 3:00 to 5:00 pm. In addition to water and binoculars, bring a lunch and dress for changing weather. All ages are welcome. Contact Les Talbot for more information at [801] 589-2591.

Wasatch Audubon encourages conservation in the form of carpooling. When birding in remote areas, it is often necessary to carpool or caravan to keep the group together.



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

