



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**



Vol 32, Number 3

May/June 2013

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Meeting
7:00 p.m.

"Update on the Ecology and Behavior of Snowy Plovers on the Great Salt Lake"

Snowy Plovers are a unique and charismatic species popular with birders. Dr. John Cavitt, Professor of Zoology at Weber State University, has been conducting research on the Snowy Plover for several years and will bring us up-to-date on his research. We are fortunate to have an internationally important ecosystem in our backyard – come and learn about it and the plovers! At the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

Meeting
7:00 p.m.

"Threatened and Endangered Species in Utah"

Lee Jacobson, Threatened and Endangered Species Program Manager for the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service, will discuss the status of threatened and endangered species in Utah. We are blessed with Federal lands that offer protection and security for the habitats of a wide variety of wildlife in Utah and the West. Come and bring a friend! At the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

COURTSHIP DISPLAY

by Keith Evans

Spring and early summer are the seasons for birders to observe, enjoy, and learn from the many forms of courtship that birds display. Birds are very diverse and almost every imaginable form of courtship and mating behavior can be found. Let's look at a few examples displayed by local birds to illustrate this diversity.

Brown-headed Cowbirds are polyandrous and parasitic nesters - each female is courted by several males and the female lays its eggs in the nests of other birds. Cowbirds don't participate in raising their young. Red-winged Blackbirds are polygamous, so a male will establish and protect a territory with several females nesting within the territory. Canada Geese are monogamous - their pair bond often lasts a lifetime. Greater Sage-Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse are considered "lek" birds. The males establish a display area (lek) and defend small territories on the lek. The females visit the lek and select a male for mating. The female selects the nest site, constructs the nest, incubates the eggs, and raises the young without the help of the male. American White Pelicans and California Gulls are colonial nesters; therefore, they only defend a small territory around the nest within a colony. Pelicans and gulls often fly long distances for food - the "kitchen" being a long way from the "nursery."

Generally speaking, both male and female feed and care for altricial young (undeveloped at hatching), but only the female cares for precocial young (well developed at hatching and capable of mobility and feeding). All birds are vulnerable during the nesting season and should not be disturbed. A bird's survival is often linked to how well it blends in with the environment, but finding a mate often requires displaying, singing, and increased exposure. Also, once a nest location is selected, it cannot be moved until the young fledge - providing predators more opportunities to locate a meal. When you are birding this summer, take a look at courtship and nesting behaviors and see how many varieties you can identify.



Wasatch Audubon Society
Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
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Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
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PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE

by Arnold Smith

I would like to thank all the Auduboners who helped with the Wildlife Resources Eagle Day and Swan Day at the Salt Creek WMA. Eagle Day, the 9th of February, was snowy and miserable weather-wise. On the flip-side of that, Swan Day, the 16th of March, was a beautiful, enjoyable day. The only similarity between the two days was the wind - it's always windy at Compton's Knoll.

I sometimes think we underestimate the importance of Audubon member support at such events. You never know how helping people interpret what they are seeing at a wildlife viewing event such as these might play forward. It could be making a positive difference to our natural environment in the future. Besides, it is always fun to see someone's eyes light up when they witness wildlife behavior in the outdoors.

Don't forget the Davis County Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 16 -20. It's a great time to learn about the birds in our state and have fun in the process.

I would like to personally thank Jason St. Sauver for assisting Wasatch Audubon while in our area working for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. We will all greatly miss him, but wish him the best with his new job in Texas.

MEET A WAS OFFICER: BETTY EVANS

Betty Evans is currently Treasurer for the Wasatch Audubon Society. She retired from the United States Forest Service in 2010, after 21 years as a Paralegal Specialist for the agency and a total of 28 years of Federal service. Her background includes over 20 years as a legal secretary, income tax preparer, and office manager in the private sector. Raised on a farm/ranch in southeastern Colorado, Betty has been married to an avid birdwatcher for over 52 years and her interest in birds, plus other animals, plants, etc., is primarily a result of that relationship.

She served as Treasurer for the Black Hills Audubon Society in Rapid City, South Dakota; and while living in Ithaca, New York, thoroughly enjoyed the many walks through Sapsucker Woods at the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology. She enjoys the variety of outdoor birding activities in Utah; and, more specifically, spending time at Antelope Island State Park and birding the Causeway.

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>

CONSERVATION CORNER

2013 Utah Legislature

by Lynn Carroll

Conservationists and nature lovers have learned not to expect the Utah legislature to do much that we like. Nevertheless, the Audubon chapters of the state pay to have a policy advocate, currently Steve Erickson, promote habitat preservation and other policies that favor wildlife diversity. We believe it's important to make it clear that Utahns value nature and a healthy environment. Like-minded folks at the capital meet and share information, and through Steve's *Legislative Updates*, all can keep track of what's going on. Let's take a look at results of the 2013 Utah legislative session from a conservation perspective.

Much of the drama this year took place early in the session. A bill introduced by Rep. McKiff, HB 68, was related to another of his that was passed in 2010. That law favors rights of property owners over the right of the public to use streams for recreation, and is being challenged in court based on the public trust doctrine. This is the common law principle that certain uses of land and water must be protected for the public by the government. It was first used to keep navigable waters open for commerce but has been expanded to protection of natural resources as well as access to some beaches and water. HB 68 sought to limit the public trust obligations of the state. It said that the state fulfilled its obligations by enacting laws regulating use of its water and public lands, and that the public trust doctrine couldn't be used to limit the amount of water that can be used by the holder of an approved water right. Conservationists worried how the law would affect our attempts to keep water in lakes and streams and to strengthen environmental protections.

Meanwhile, anglers and recreational boaters came out in force against the bill. HB68 was withdrawn in return for an agreement by the opposition to withdraw a competing bill.

Another expected fight, this one over funding for water projects like the Lake Powell Pipeline, ended early. SB 154 would have made water delivered to homes and businesses subject to state and local sales taxes starting in 2015. The Senate Revenue and Taxation committee didn't like it and the bill died.

Students from USU fought hard for HB77, allowing the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands to "develop and implement a long-range fire suppression strategy that responds to climate change," but to no avail. It died in committee.

There was a little progress against air pollution. Rep. Arent's HB 168 passed, so state agencies and school districts in several counties, including the Wasatch Front, will have to plan how they can reduce the air pollution they produce and report on actions taken. One of Governor Herbert's priority air quality initiatives advanced with the passage of SB 275, which promotes the conversion of UTA buses to run on compressed natural gas and development of infrastructure for CNG. This doesn't sound promising for clearing the air, and the costs will likely be borne by home natural gas customers. In contrast, the bill creating a pilot program of free transit passes for the months of January and July failed.

The Department of Environmental Quality is still seriously underfunded. On the other hand, one million dollars for the fight against invasive species made it into the budget. At the last minute, \$25,000 (of \$150,000 requested) was added for the Integrated Water Resource Management Model for the Great Salt Lake that we were pushing. Steve says it will help with getting funding next year.

So, you see, the news is not ALL bad.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Bald Eagle Count 2/23/13

by Les Talbot

It started out as a fairly nice day; cloudy, a little cold, and no precipitation. As we were enjoying breakfast, it started to snow and the road became bad in a hurry as we started up East Canyon. We turned around and went to Weston Smith's home in Croydon. The Smiths were kind enough to let us enjoy the birds in their warm, dry home. We want to give them a special thank you for allowing us to do that.

We then drove around the loop in Croydon, went part way up the road towards Lost Creek, drove to Henefer, and then took the frontage road to Echo. From Echo, we went back through Croydon, which was in whiteout conditions by then. Traffic was bumper to bumper from Devil's Gate to the mouth of Weber Canyon.

The following participated in the trip: Trish Turner, Paul Lombardi, Susan Snyder & Doug Murray, Joyce & Jim Peters, Jeanette & Brian Nosker, Sharen Perry, Patricia Jaquith (a new member from back east - welcome to the group, Pat) and I.

We saw 33 Bald Eagles (17 adults, 12 immature, and 4 unknown), one Golden Eagle, 49 Turkeys, European Starlings, Red-winged Blackbirds, House Sparrows, Rock Pigeons, Black-capped Chickadees, Black-billed Magpies, Eurasian Collared Doves, American Kestrels, American Dippers, Common Ravens, Mallards, Canada Geese, American Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, and one Redpoll.

Salt Lake County Hotspots 3/23/13

by Les Talbot

Only three members, John Bellmon, Paul Lombardi, and I participated. We were sorry that more members did not enjoy the day with us. For a March trip, which has unpredictable weather, it turned out to be a great one.

We started out at Lee Kay Ponds. There was a plethora of gulls there. We scanned the group closely for uncommon birds but only saw California and Ring-billed Gulls, along with two Franklin Gulls. In addition, we saw Double Crested Cormorants, Canada Geese, a Song Sparrow, Great Blue Herons, Mallards, American Coots, Canvasbacks, Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Northern Shovelers, Hooded Mergansers, White Crowned Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, American Avocets, Pied-billed Grebes, Ring-necked Ducks, and a European Starling.

The International Peace Gardens were a non-productive stop. Paul warned us that this can be a dangerous spot for lone birders, as there is gang activity in the area. We did see some Rock Pigeons, Black-billed Magpies, American Robins and a Red Squirrel that was either very fat or had puffed itself up to keep warm.

Paul then directed us to the Redwood Trailhead for the Provo-Jordan River Parkway. He had been told that both Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes could be found there and, indeed, both were seen. We got a close look that helped us see how to differentiate and identify them. We also saw Gadwalls, Rock Pigeons, American Coots, Black-billed Magpies, and American Robins.

Decker Lake was our next stop. We saw California and Ring-billed Gulls, Avocets, Redhead Ducks, Lesser Scaups, Wood Ducks, Cinnamon Teals, Killdeers, and Domestic Geese.

After lunch, we went to the Salt Lake City Cemetery. The cemetery was quite dead as far as bird life went. There were three funerals going on in the area and the birds were not very active. However, we did see American Robins, Northern Flickers, Townsend's Solitaires, a Red-tailed Hawk, Black-billed Magpies, and an American Kestrel.

Our final stop was City Creek Canyon. We walked one mile up the canyon and didn't see any birds. On the way back to the car, we saw a Red-tail Hawk. It swooped down and plucked something off the ground. Two Magpies started after it, but soon gave up. When we left the canyon, there were two Gadwalls swimming in the creek.

Over all, we saw 37 species. That is the highest number we have seen on trips, except for our bird counts.

WOOD DUCKS AT BEUS POND

by Keith Evans

Normally at this time of year, birders are talking about migrants – those species that we have seen for the first time this year and those we are still anticipating. Instead, I'd like to talk about a favorite resident – the Wood Duck. We know about the bright colors and intricate patterns of the male Wood Duck. But do you know the history of Wood Ducks at Beus Pond, in northern Utah, or in North America? Read on, and if you have questions, send me an email at bkevans4@comcast.net.



Male Wood Duck

Wood Ducks are now common throughout the east and along the west coast but they are uncommon in Utah and adjoining states. They nest in cavities – usually natural cavities created by broken limbs or abandoned woodpecker holes – or in manmade nesting boxes. As natural cavities are limited in Utah, most of our Wood Ducks nest in boxes. If you want to provide a nest box, build a 12 X 12-inch box that is 22 inches high and drill a 3.5 x 4-inch entrance hole. Place the box on a post over water or close to water. The preferred habitat of Wood Ducks is a wooded area near water. To observe Wood Ducks and good habitat, walk around Beus Pond in Ogden.

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Wood Ducks continued from Page 4

Wood Ducks are omnivores -- they eat seeds, fruits, and invertebrates. A clutch of eggs is usually between 9 and 15; however, several different females will lay eggs in one nest, resulting in nests with over 20 eggs. The female does all of the incubation, which takes about 30 days. Wood Ducks are strongly philopatric, which means they tend to return to the same nesting location each year.

Throughout their range, Wood Duck populations were very low during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some authors predicted their extinction within 30 years. The population decline was caused by overharvest and loss of habitat, including the drainage of forested wetlands. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 stopped the exploitation of many species of birds (including market hunting) and led to better conservation programs and ethics which resulted in increases for the depleted Wood Duck population.

Wood Ducks were rarely seen in the Ogden area prior to 1990. In 1989, Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) asked for donations for Wood Duck introduction at Beus Pond – eight couples responded with donations. From the generous donations, \$90.00 was spent to buy three pair of Wood Ducks (Redheads, Gadwalls, and Pintails were also purchased). The Wood Ducks came from a park near Logan and were pinioned (rendered flightless). The original nest boxes were built with a ramp so the ducks could gain access. From 1989 to 1991, 14 Wood Ducks were released at Beus Pond. In the spring of 1991, only one female Wood Duck nested and her 11 eggs were destroyed by high water. However, in 1993, there were two Wood Duck broods (10 young in one and 20 in the other). Since this initial effort, waterfowl production on Beus Pond has been a great success.

We don't have survey or monitoring data for summer (nesting season) production or population levels for Beus Pond or Utah. Therefore, a quick look at Utah Christmas Bird Count (CBC) results provides an indication of Wood Duck numbers. For the past 20 years, Wood Duck numbers on Utah CBC circles have been increasing. To level out individual year variability, I've averaged the numbers in 5-year blocks. The average count for 1993-97 was 59.2; 1998-2002 was 66.4; 2003-07 was 110.6; and 2008-12 was 126.8 birds. Wasatch Audubon members and leaders should congratulate themselves on this remarkably successful program. We not only enhanced Beus Pond, but Wood Ducks have spread and increased over a wide area of northern Utah.

**BEST WISHES TO JASON ST. SAUVER**

Wasatch Audubon and Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge said a bittersweet goodbye to Ranger Jason St. Sauver in April. Our favorite bird-nerd has accepted a position at the Audubon Education Center in San Antonio, where he will serve as the center's Education Manager. Travel safely on eagle's wings and please come back to see us as soon as you can!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Paul Lombardi

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

Beverly N Bird	Bill McLain
Peggy Burke	Harvey R. Morgan
Anne Engebretsen	Ernest Perkins
Coleen Ivey	Marylyn Rands
Patricia Jaquith	Sharon H. Young

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 mah3338@msn.com or call [801]-388-0800.



CALENDAR May/June 2013

May

- 1 Wednesday 8:00/9:00/9:15 am** **Bird Walk**
West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail (west of I-15): Meet at Denny's Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21st Street in the Flying J Plaza) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool. Alternatively, join the group at 9:15 am on the frontage road in front of Stevens-Henager College to start walk.
- 8 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**
South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool.
- 9 Thursday 6:15 pm** **Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**
Riverdale Parkway: Meet at 6:15 pm at the trailhead in Riverdale City. From Riverdale Road, drive north on 700 West for two blocks, turn right on 4300 S, then right on 600 West to the parking lot. Bring water. Paved path, mostly flat. We will walk as far along the 2.5-mile stretch from the trailhead to Fort Buenaventura as birders desire. Social gathering afterward decided upon by the group. Please leave dogs and children under 12 at home.
- 11 Saturday 10:00 am-3:00 pm** **Migratory Bird Day**
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: Not only is May 11th International Migratory Bird Day, it will be the Awards Ceremony for the 2013 Utah Jr. Duck Stamp program! The amazing art will be on display from all of the K-12 winners of the Duck Stamp competition, including the Best of Show entry which will be sent on to compete in the National Jr. Duck Stamp competition. We will also have some open house activities like crafts, movies and Jr. Ranger activities to continue the celebration of migratory birds around the world. We hope you'll join us, or consider helping out at the event! Jr. Duck Stamp Awards Ceremony is at 1:00 pm.
- 15 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**
East Mountain Wilderness Park (Kaysville): Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool.
- 16 –20 Various** **Great Salt Lake Bird Festival**
Enjoy the trips for which you preregistered. There will be no WAS Saturday Field Trip due to overlap with GSL Festival.

21 Tuesday 7:00 pm

WAS Meeting

Ogden Nature Center: "Update on the Ecology and Behavior of Snowy Plovers on the Great Salt Lake." Snowy Plovers are a unique and charismatic species popular with birders. Dr. John Cavitt, Professor of Zoology at Weber State University, has been conducting research on the Snowy Plover for several years and will bring us up-to-date on his research. We are fortunate to have an internationally important ecosystem in our backyard – come and learn about it and the plovers! At the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

22 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Ogden Bay South Entrance: Meet at Village Inn (1780 W 5600 S, Roy, west of Exit 338 off I-15) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool.

29 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am

Bird Walk

Sherwood Hills: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, just east of Exit 349 on I-15) for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool.

June

4 Tuesday 7:00 pm

Board Meeting

Ogden Nature Center: All members welcome to attend. 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

5 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am

Bird Walk

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, just east of Exit 349 on I-15) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool. We'll bird the paved road (West Forest Street) and then drive the auto tour loop.

12 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Green Pond (Snowbasin Area): Meet at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am at Smith's parking lot (12th & Harrison) to carpool.

13 Thursday 6:30 pm

Birdy Thursday Evening Walk

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at 6:30 pm in the parking lot of MTC Learning Park, located on the east side of Monroe Boulevard north of 20th Street at the bottom of the hill. Bring water. Paved pathway. We'll see who is cruising the flowers around the Botanical Center, then head east on the Ogden River Parkway. Social gathering afterward at Slackwater Café, Ogden. Please leave dogs and children under 12 at home.

18 Tuesday 7:00 pm**WAS Meeting**

Ogden Nature Center: "Threatened and Endangered Species in Utah." Lee Jacobson, Threatened and Endangered Species Program Manager for the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service, will discuss the status of threatened and endangered species in Utah. We are blessed with Federal lands that offer protection and security for the habitats of a wide variety of wildlife in Utah and the West. Come and bring a friend! At the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

19 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am**Bird Walk**

Perry Nature Center (Brigham City): Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, just east of Exit 349 on I-15) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool. If time permits, we'll also check out Mayor's Pond and Brigham City Cemetery.

22 Saturday 8:00 am**Field Trip**

Blue Bird Nest Box Census: Meet at Smith's (12th & Harrison) at 8:00 a.m. for a great opportunity to see Mountain Bluebird, Tree Swallow, or House Wren babies or eggs. Bring a lunch and water. This trip is an opportunity to provide service to the Chapter.

26 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am**Bird Walk**

Fernwood Trail/Kay's Creek: Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool. Directions: from U.S. 89 in Layton, turn east on Cherry Ln. Take Valley View Rd north. Turn onto Fernwood Drive (2000 N) heading east. Turn right at first "T" intersection. Stay on Fernwood Drive to parking area.

July**3 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am****Bird Walk**

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am at the MTC Park on the Ogden River off Monroe.

11 Thursday**Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**

Place and Time to be announced: Trip leader will be Katie McVey.

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 (<http://wasatchaudubon.org/>) 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 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.

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.



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.

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



Wasatch Audubon Society

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

My contribution to Wasatch Audubon: _____

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