

The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Vol 33, Number 1

Jan/Feb 2014



WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tuesday, January 21st
7:00 p.m.
WAS Meeting

BIRDING IN BELIZE with Katie McVey, WAS president. She will share photos and stories from her trip to Belize. The diversity of birds was amazing. Come out for some cheerful warm images and keep the winter blues away!

Tuesday, February 18th
7:00 p.m.
WAS Meeting

CRAZY, CURIOUS CORVIDS with Susan Snyder, Teacher-naturalist at the Ogden Nature Center. The corvid family includes crows, ravens, and jays, which have often been described as some of the most intelligent birds.

Both at Ogden Nature Center
966 W. 12th Street - Come and bring a friend!

**MORE INFORMATION ON
THE CALENDAR INSIDE**

TALBOT RECEIVES JOHN NELSON AWARD

by Betty Evans

The John Nelson Award is presented to a member of Wasatch Audubon Society whose commitment to conservation, volunteer service to the community, and dedication to the Audubon ethic is outstanding.

The 16th John Nelson Award was presented to Lester Talbot at the November meeting. Les has been the leader for our monthly field trips since 2001 and assists with the Wednesday morning bird walks when needed. In addition to his duties as Field Trip Chair, he has devoted many hours as a volunteer at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, chaired the field trip committee for the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival, and led many field trips in conjunction with the Bird Festival. In addition to many hours as a volunteer for Wasatch Audubon, he has also supported our nest box trails program, both spring surveys and nest box clean out and repair in the fall. Congratulations to Les for this well-deserved award!





Wasatch Audubon Society
 Website: wasatchaudubon.org

Officers

President	Katie McVey	715-216-2605
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383

Board of Directors

2013/2014	Weston Smith	801-829-4183
2013/2014	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
2013/2014	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2014/2015	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
2014/2015	Scott Baxter	801-540-9417
2014/2015	Dan Johnston	801-731-4573

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-589-2591
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
Historian		
Hospitality	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Membership	Pat Bausman	801-476-4620
Newsletter	Melissa Hofer	801-544-1453
Programs	Jack Rensel	801-399-0240
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

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

Well, another year has passed and each one that goes by is a little different from the last. December 2013 was extremely cold and the birds flocked to the goodies we put out for them. With all the seed bells and wreaths, you would have thought it was the holiday season or something.

Along with the holiday birds, a new hawk appeared on the block. It was a first-year male Sharp-shinned Hawk and, for a time, I didn't think he would make it. The first prey I saw him catch was an Oregon Junco which I inadvertently flushed into a corner of our chicken run. The little Sharp-shinned flew down and sort of fell on the trapped Junco. The small hawk with bird in talons passed within arm's length of me as he struggled to get into the lower branches of a Blue Spruce about 15 feet away. I could walk within 5 feet of the starvation-stressed bird. I went to the house to get my camera and minutes later when I returned he had already eaten every scrap of that junco, legs, head and all.

A few days later the little hunter seemed to be doing better. However, his window-stun-to-capture bird success ratio was the lowest for any hawk we have had in our yard. He ran plenty of birds into the windows but didn't latch on to any of the easy prey. I even tried to throw him a window-killed bird but he didn't seem to grasp that concept either. It has usually worked with most of the hawks foraging in our yard in past winters. Maybe he was just too proud to take a handout!

One day, I heard a small thud and then a larger thud on the sliding glass door. I walked to the door, realizing that I had forgotten to pull the screen over the door when I came in the last time. The small Sharp-shinned hawk was lying on the deck, wings out and head slumped over. A fright-frozen American Goldfinch was sitting motionless but upright about a foot from the hawk's beak.

I thought the hawk was a goner, but when I opened the door to offer assistance he sprang to life and flew into a nearby tree. On the other hand, the goldfinch never moved a feather until the hawk cleared the deck and I stepped out near it. It is the first time we have known of a bird of prey to crash into any of the glass in our house and we have had many that were skilled at taking birds off our sliding glass doors. Maybe hitting the door knocked some

sense into this hawk because I saw him with prey birds in his talons on two consecutive days after his off-the-glass experience. I hope this little hawk figures it all out and makes it through the whole winter.

I would like to thank all those who have helped to keep Wasatch Audubon's programs running the past two years while I have been president. You are a great bunch of people and I appreciate all of you greatly. I would also like to wish the new president and officers the best in their efforts to maintain Wasatch Audubon as an outstanding organization.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Sage Grouse in the Middle

by Lynn Carroll

We know that birds are being affected by choices humans make all over the world, especially choices about energy. After all, whole ecosystems are being affected by the climate change that's driven by burning carbon-based fuels. Lately, more direct effects of energy development on birds have put sage-grouse in the middle of controversy close to home.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), analyzing whether the Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) should be listed under the Endangered Species Act, reported that this bird's habitat is significantly threatened and that "existing regulatory mechanisms" are inadequate to protect the species from decline. As a result, amendments to land use plans of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service are being written to protect GRSG habitat. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement analyzing five alternative plans for the "Utah sub-region" has been released, and comments are due January 29. I will probably submit a letter on WAS' behalf telling the agencies that they need to adopt a plan that protects sage-grouse better than the one they have designated "preferred", Alternative D. We encourage individuals (you!) to add your own ideas in a message to BLM. More information can be found at

http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/planning/SG_RMP_rev.html (Try the Executive Summary).

Processes that threaten GRSG habitat in Utah include:

- 1) loss of large areas of habitat due to wildfire; which is related to
- 2) conversion to cheatgrass-dominated plant communities;
- 3) encroachment of pinyon and/or juniper into GRSG habitat;
- 4) fragmentation due to development activities;
- 5) loss of habitat components due to improper livestock grazing and wild horses;
- 6) cross-country motorized vehicle travel; and
- 7) the one of most concern to our government—extraction of natural gas, oil, and coal.

As a matter of fact, conservation groups have been concerned that the proposed expansion of the Alton Coal Mine in Kane County will ruin the clear blue sky near Bryce Canyon. Additionally, the expansion would occupy part of the southern-most habitat known to have GRSG present, including a lek. The Preferred Alternative doesn't treat this as an Area of Special Concern. It protects only part of the identified grouse-occupied habitat statewide.

A hint of what we may be up against in the 2014 legislature was provided during one of the interim meetings of the Executive Appropriations Committee. Senator David Hinkins brought energy company lobbyist Jeff Hartley to explain why the state should form a new "Environmental Protection Defense Fund." Hartley expects the USFWS to list the GRSG under the Endangered Species Act in a year or two and suggested that the "feds are trying to stop all energy development" in eastern Utah. So, he warns the state will need to sue or risk losing hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. The proposed fund would support data collection and attorneys to sue the USFWS over listing of the GRSG or other species.

If you want to receive weekly information about the 2014 legislative session as it relates to conservation, please send an e-mail to bradlynnc@comcast.net.



CALENDAR Jan/Feb 2014

January

1 Wednesday 7:00 am Antelope Island Bird Count

Meet at 7:00 am in the parking lot outside Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk. This is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars.

8 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am Bird Walk

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the MTC Park on the Ogden River off of Monroe.

9 Thursday 5:30 pm Birdy Thursday Evening Walk

Ogden Nature Center: Audible Owling. Join us at the Ogden Nature Center at 5:30 p.m. for a discussion about owls and owling by ear. We'll meet in the L.S. Peery Education Building and listen to some calls inside. Then we'll hit the trails to listen for the Great Horned Owl that often hunts there. The trails aren't paved or cleared. Footing could be snowy or slick. Dress accordingly. Opportunity to socialize at a local eatery.

15 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am Bird Walk

Mantua Reservoir Area: Meet at Moore's Café (2645 U.S. 89, Perry, Utah) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am to carpool. There is ample parking behind the café.

18 Saturday 8:00 am Field Trip

Utah Natural History Museum: This is an activity that you should have on your BUCKET LIST! If you have been before you know that it takes several visits to see everything. They have changed some of the exhibits since WAS visited last time. This is a great family activity with lots of hands-on for younger members of the group. **This is a fee area. Adults are \$11; Seniors (65 and older) are \$9; Youths (13-24) are \$9; Children (3-12) are \$8; 2 and under are free.** Meet in the parking lot that is west of and behind Wells Fargo Bank in Roy (the southwest corner of 1900 West and 5600 South, where Albertson's used to be, near Wendy's). There is a snack bar at the Museum with reasonable prices. The WAS Field Trip is scheduled one week earlier than usual this month.

21 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Birding in Belize with Katie McVey: Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) at 7:00 pm. Katie is a Wildlife Refuge Specialist at the Bear River Migratory Bird refuge in Brigham City, UT. She has held a variety of positions in raptor research and rehabilitation, owl research,

and environmental education. Katie is the new president of Wasatch Audubon. Her presentation will allow us to enjoy her experiences while birding in Belize.

22 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am Bird Walk

South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Dr, South Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 to carpool.

29 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am Bird Walk

Fernwood Trail/Kay's Creek: Meet at Denny's (5805 S Harrison Blvd) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am to carpool. Directions: From U.S. 89 in Layton, turn east on Cherry Lane and take Valley View Road north. Turn onto Fernwood Drive (2000 North) heading east. Turn right at the first "T" intersection and stay on Fernwood Drive to the parking area.

February

4 Tuesday 7:00 pm Board Meeting

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

5 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am Bird Walk

Riverdale Trail (South): Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the trailhead parking lot. Directions: From Riverdale Road, go south on 700 West for one block, then left on 4600 West to the parking lot on the right at the end of the road.

8 Saturday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm Eagle Day

Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area: Located 4 miles west of Corinne on UT-83, to 6800 West, follow signs to the landfill. Wasatch Audubon has a long-standing tradition of providing interpretation at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Eagle Day. For many years, Wasatch Audubon members have volunteered at the Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area, providing scopes and talking to visitors about eagles, other local birds, and conservation. The date for this viewing at Salt Creek WMA is February 8, 2014. Call Keith Evans (801-476-0232) if you have questions.

There are viewing sites at several other locations on this date. Contact the Division of Wildlife Resources for information.

12 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am **Bird Walk**
Antelope Island Causeway and Fielding Garr Ranch: Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (2490 S 1900 W) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at the parking lot at the entrance to the Causeway at 9:30 am. **This is a fee area.**

13 Thursday 5:15 pm **Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**
Ogden City Cemetery: This is a lively spot for birds! Meet at 5:15 in the northeast corner of the cemetery. Hopefully we'll spot a Red-breasted Nuthatch and a Red Crossbill or two. Paved roads, but ice could be present. There is an optional social gathering after the walk.

18 Tuesday 7:00 pm **WAS Meeting**
Crazy, Curious Corvids with Susan Snyder: Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) at 7:00 pm. Susan Snyder, teacher-naturalist at the Ogden Nature Center, will explore the clowns of the bird world. This bird family includes crows, ravens, and jays, which have often been described as some of the most intelligent birds. Susan will talk about Utah's members of this fascinating group, exploring the places they hold in our language, folklore, and society.

19 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am **Bird Walk**
Beus Pond: Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison Blvd) at 8:30 for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool. If time permits, we may also check out Glasmann Pond near McKay Dee Hospital's parking lot.

22 Saturday 8:00 am **Field Trip**
Bald Eagle Count: Meet at the Division of Wildlife Resources Office (515 E. 5300 S. in Ogden) at 8:00 am to carpool to Morgan. We will stop at the Spring Chicken Inn for breakfast and then proceed from there. Bring a lunch and water and dress for the weather.

26 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am **Bird Walk**
Perry Nature Park: Meet at Moore's Café (2645 U.S. 89, Perry, Utah) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am to carpool. There is ample parking behind the café.

March

5 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am **Bird Walk**
North Arm Pine View Reservoir: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:30 am for breakfast or in the Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) at 9:30 am to carpool. Depending on conditions in the area, we may alter the location.

DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED **Swan Day**
Wasatch Audubon Society is unable to confirm this date for viewing Swans at **Salt Creek WMA**. Information will appear in

our next newsletter, but please feel free to call one of the officers or check our website / Facebook page as March approaches.

OWL DAY, EAGLE DAY, SWAN DAY AND MORE....

Upcoming events at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Looking for a great way to spend a Saturday? Want to learn more about Utah's most iconic bird species?

The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge is offering free nature-themed events on the second Saturday of every month January through April. Each event will have interactive displays, crafts, activities, and movies from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Consider visiting the Refuge's Wildlife Education Center for one of these great events.

January 11th is Owl Day, February 8th is Eagle Day, March 8th is Swan Day and April 12th is 'Sense of Wonder' the Refuge's Earth Day Celebration. Check out the Refuge's website for more information.

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/bear_river_migratory_bird_refuge/

HEADS-UP: GREAT SALT LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL

The 16th Great Salt Lake Bird Festival will be held May 15-19, 2014. Registration will begin on March 1, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. More information is available at



www.greatsaltlakebirdfestival.org.

The website will be updated in mid-January to provide registration details and a list of field trips. Plan to register early, since many field trips fill very quickly.

Hope to see you there!

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Don't forget the **Great Backyard Bird Count**
February 14-17, 2014

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

FIELD TRIP REPORT

**Farmington Bay
November 23, 2013**

by Les Talbot

It started out a cold, windy day. There were waves on all of the water at Farmington Bay. We started out at Glover Pond and the water was choppy. We then drove down the dike at Farmington Bay. By the time we finished there, the wind had calmed down. There were hundreds of ducks in the resting area. We then visited the Kaysville Ponds. There were a lot of ducks on the north pond. There were seven Hooded Mergansers on the pond that is south of the building.

Altogether we saw 26 species which were: Canada Geese, Gadwalls, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Redheads, Lesser Scaups, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, Hooded mergansers, Pied-billed Grebes, Eared Grebes, Western Grebes, Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrels, American Coots, Greater Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gulls, Ring-billed Gulls, an unknown immature gull, Rock Pigeons, Eurasian Collared Doves, White-crowned Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Western Meadow Larks.

Trip participants were: John Bellmon, Sharen Perry, Martha Ann Albretsen, Julie Svare, Marie Fullmer, Marily Gren and I.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

by Dennis Collins

I use the word "committee" lightly as this one, like most of our committees, consists of one person. These are the best committees to chair! For almost 25 years, I had the pleasure of coordinating the Audubon Adventures program in local elementary schools. As of this school year, our chapter is no longer sponsoring this program due to cost and more rigid school curriculums.

So now, as a retired person, I visit elementary schools and conduct a class on owls. The most enjoyable part of this endeavor is watching and helping students dissect owl pellets. Recently I worked with Weber State University students and faculty to produce really neat posters to aid in my talks on owls. I also help teachers and students participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). This is an enjoyable time for all as the students identify and count all the birds on the school property and then the students compile the data and enter it on the GBBC website.

If you would like to help with any of these activities, know of any teachers that might be interested in owls or the GBBC, or if you find any owl pellets please contact me at (801) 393-1115 or sarden4@comcast.net.

Happy Birding, Dennis

HELP SAVE A TREE!!

Do you prefer reading electronically or hard copy?

This newsletter is available electronically at www.wasatchaudubon.org. If you would rather not receive a hard copy every other month, please send an email message to that effect to bkevans4@comcast.net or call 801-476-0232 and we will remove your name from our hard-copy mailing list.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Pat Bausman

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

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Linda Crismer | Gilbert Paquet |
| Diana Lea | Helen Proctor |
| Richard Livingston | Debra Siegel |
| Merrill | Dickson Smith |
| Peggy Morgan | Susan Weese |
| Micheal Nye | |

OWL PELLETS WANTED

If you happen to discover any owl pellets while out birding, please collect them for me or let me know the location and I will get them.

I do a lesson in elementary schools on owls and the students enjoy dissecting the pellets.

Thanks for your help and happy birding.
Dennis Collins (801) 393-1115



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



Wild About Birds Nature Center is happy to facilitate and carry on the Wasatch Audubon Society winter bird feeding fundraiser.



Wild About Birds Nature Center
1986 N. Hill Field Rd, Ste 7B
(Hill Field Rd & Antelope Drive)
Layton, UT 84041

**BLACK OIL
SUNFLOWER SEED
40 lb bag
\$24.95**

Wild About Birds Nature Center will make a \$1.50 donation to Wasatch Audubon for each bag purchased. Expiration date May 31, 2014. Call ahead if purchase is 3 bags or more.

**Please call
Wild About Birds Nature Center
at 801-779-BIRD (2473)
to place your order.**



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: _____

Total enclosed: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

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