



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Vol 35, Number 6

Nov/Dec 2016

WAS Meeting and Happenings

November 15, 2016

7:00 p.m.

WAS Meeting

“**Bird Banding in Ecuador**” is the topic for this meeting. **Mr. Howard Browers**, Wildlife Biologist for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, recently participated in an overseas research project and will share his experiences with us. Tropical habitats harbor a wider variety of birds than those found in any other habitat. Please plan to join us for this unique opportunity to learn more about this project.

December 20, 2016

7:00 p.m.

WAS Meeting

Dr. Frank Howe coordinates wildlife research projects for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) with Utah State University in Logan. This long partnership has resulted in valuable information and guidance for the Division in its Utah wildlife management programs, as well as providing field experience for graduating wildlife biologists. The most recent project involved a study of **Daily and Seasonal Movements of American White Pelicans** at the Gunnison Island breeding colony on the Great Salt Lake.

Both meetings are at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden

Please join us and bring a friend!

Christmas Bird Count Season is Upon Us!

By John Bellmon

Along with all of the other holiday festivities, it is that special time of year when birders venture out into the winter weather to count birds. This will be the 117th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season, now worldwide, and is the longest continuous wildlife survey in the world. The Ogden CBC was started in 1980; and soon after that our Audubon Chapter was started, largely because of the positive interest in birds from that bird count. Some of our current members were on that first count and are still participating in the counts.

Our chapter now hosts four Christmas Bird Counts. The Christmas Bird Counts are a lot of fun and the information provided to the bird population data is very important. Please plan on coming out to one or more of our Christmas Bird Counts: Dec. 14 - Bear River CBC; Dec. 17 - Ogden CBC; Dec 27 - Morgan CBC; and Jan. 1 - Antelope Island CBC. Details for meeting places are in the Calendar section of this newsletter.

Our own Keith Evans has been the Christmas Bird Count editor for Utah for 18 years. He also was the editor for Colorado for 8 years and Wyoming for 17 years. Following are some highlights from his 2015 analysis.

Twenty-six counts were conducted in Utah, with 194 species reported; only two counts reported more than 100 species. For the most part, the theme last year concerned the species that forgot to migrate south by the end of December. The weather was mild and most water sites were not frozen, which resulted in many counts reporting late migrating species. Statewide, there were over 30 species that could fit into this category (some that are usually only reported on the southern Utah counts showed up on the northern counts, like Burrowing Owl and Say’s Phoebe); however, the most notable late migrants were Western Grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Sora, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Franklin’s Gull, Bewick’s Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and six species of Sparrows (most notably Vesper and Lark).

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Wasatch Audubon Society
 Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
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Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
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Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-589-2591
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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 Dan Johnston

Birders measure coming of fall not so much by the change of leave's colors and dropping of temperature, but by which of our feathered friends are around. Gone are the hummingbirds, warblers, vireos, buntings, etc. We say hello to the flickers, juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, goldfinches, etc. Keep those feeders full so our feathered friends don't go hungry.



The woodpecker of the month for September was the Red-breasted Sapsucker. Red-breasted Sapsuckers inhabit moist coniferous forests, mixed and deciduous forests, coastal areas, mountains, orchards and parks.

They are found in the coastal area from Alaska to Mexico. The Red-breasted Sapsucker has a red head, throat and breast; white "mustaches" on the face; black back; light yellow belly; white patch on the wings; and white rump. Its tongue is covered with stiff hairs which facilitate collecting of sap from the surface of trees.

The Red-breasted Sapsucker is an omnivore (it eats both plants and meat). Its diet is based on plant sap, fruit, seed, berries, insects (such as ants, beetles, weevils, aphids, flies and mites) and spiders. It drills holes (arranged in neat horizontal rows) on the trunk and branches of various plants (willow, birch, oak, mountain ash and commercially important plants such as pear, apple, peach, apricot and walnut). It licks sap which drips from the holes and eats insects which are attracted by sap. Several species of hummingbirds and warblers follow Red-breasted Sapsuckers and feed on the sap and insects found near the drilled holes.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers communicate via mewing, high-pitched and squealing calls and through drumming (they drum various surfaces using their bills). The female excavates a cavity in a dead tree or branch, where she lays 4 to 7 white eggs. Both parents participate in the incubation of eggs during a period of 14 days. Red-breasted Sapsuckers can survive less than 5 years in the wild.

October's woodpecker was the Lewis's Woodpecker. The Lewis's Woodpecker is medium-sized woodpecker with a dark red face, gray collar, and a dark iridescent green-black back. The belly is pinkish or salmon red. The wings and tail are all dark, without spots or patches. The cap, bill, and legs are black. Males and female look alike.

President's Pipeline

(Continued from page 2)

They breed from southeastern British Columbia southward to central California and New Mexico, eastward to western South Dakota. This species is common in open forests and woody riparian corridors.

Flying insects make up the majority of the woodpecker's spring and summer diet. In fall and winter, they feed mainly on acorns, other nuts, seeds, and fruits. The Lewis's Woodpecker seldom, if ever, excavates wood for boring insects. Instead, it gleans insects from the tree surface, or most commonly, fly catches. It spends long periods of time watching for flying insects from the top of a pole or dead tree, and then flies out to catch them in flight. They have a steadier, buoyant flight than most other woodpeckers, with slower wing-beats and longer glides. In flight, they can often be mistaken for crows. Lewis's Woodpecker was named for Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Lewis was one of the explorers who, in 1806, surveyed the areas bought by the USA in the Louisiana Purchase.

Here's my trip list numbers from my Alaska Cruise. Total trip is 113. Alaska species is 85, mostly ocean birds seen from the bow of the Maasdam. I also logged 34 life birds, bringing my ABA list to 498. We searched real hard to find those 2 more to get to 500. Three highlight birds were South Polar Skua, Buller's Shearwater, and Laysan Albatross.

Good Birding All, Dan

Christmas Bird Count Season is Upon Us!

(Continued from page 1)

Every year Keith looks for count trends for selected species statewide. For 2015, he analyzed 10-year trend counts for Wild Turkey, Northern Harrier, Ferruginous Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, White-crowned Sparrow, and Song Sparrow. Keith marveled at the ease of data analysis with computer speeds, internet connectivity, and the unbelievable CBC database. Here are a few details about some of these 10-year statewide count trends: 1) Wild Turkey populations have been increasing; 2) Northern Harrier populations have remained stable; 3) there was a low count for Ferruginous Hawks on the 2006 CBC, but the 2015 CBC was close to average with 45 reported from 10 counts; and, 4) although it seemed more Belted Kingfishers had remained in the area, the 68 counted statewide on 13 circles was only slightly above average. White-crowned Sparrows were one of only two species found on all 26 count circles (the other was the Common Raven). However, in 2015, White-crowned Sparrow numbers at 6,442 were below the 10-year average of 7,520. Some species (like Lesser Goldfinch, Great-tailed Grackle, and Eurasian Collared-Dove) have recently moved into northern Utah count areas.

This is a great time to get out and go birding -- a highlight of the birding year for many.

Hope to see you on our Christmas Bird Counts!

The Third Big Sit of Wasatch Audubon

By John Bellmon

We had a great day for our third annual Big Sit of the Wasatch Audubon Society. This is our main fundraising event now because we no longer have Black Oil Sunflower Seed Sales. The weather was great, although cool in the morning. The event was held at the Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Center at Farmington Bay. Roberta Beverly and Les Talbot started the day at 4:00 a.m. in the dark early morning. A total of 27 individuals came throughout the day and helped in the bird count and fundraising. The first birds on the list were Mallard, Canada Goose and Ring-necked Pheasant. A total of 47 species were sighted from within our 17 - foot diameter circle, the point from where The Big Sit is based and all observations are made. The last species recorded on the count was a Great Horned Owl heard from the East side of our circle. The closing crew at 8:00 p.m. in the dark of night was Katie McVey, Lynn Carroll and myself. A great time was had by all that came out on this great cause and day. A big thank you to Jay and Lucy for the donuts and Betty for all of the cookies! Plan to come out next year for our next Big Sit and have a Big Time birding with us.



CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

2 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk
East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville:

Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Dr, South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00am or at the trailhead at 9:00am.

9 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk

Two Rivers Trail: Meet at Denny's (North on 1100 W from 21st street in the Flying J Plaza) for breakfast at 8:00am or at the trailhead at 9:00am

15 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting

"Bird Banding in Ecuador" is the topic for this meeting. **Mr. Howard Browsers**, Wildlife Biologist for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Please plan to join us for this unique opportunity. Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden

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

Ogden City Cemetery: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:30am for breakfast or at 9:30 at the NE corner of the cemetery.

19 Saturday 8:00am Field Trip

The Ponds We will meet at the parking lot on the Southwest corner of 1900 W. and 5600 S. (next to Wendy's) at 8:00 a.m. and carpool from there. We will visit the following ponds: Meadow Creek, Clinton, Jensen, Farmington Bay Resting, and Kaysville. We may make a stop at Farmington Pond. Bring a lunch and drinks.

23 Wednesday No Bird Walk Today

30 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am Bird Walk

Mantua Reservoir Area: Meet at McDonald's at 8:30am for breakfast (I-15 Exit 349) or at 9:00am to carpool, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden

DECEMBER

6 Tuesday 7pm Board Meeting

All members welcome. Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden UT

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

Pineview Reservoir Area: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 8:30am for breakfast or at Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) at 9:30am to carpool. Depending on the weather, we may need to change the location.

14 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am CBC

Bear River Christmas Bird Count: Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West – just east of 1-15 exit 349) at 8:00am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars.

17 Saturday 7 am CBC

Ogden Christmas Bird Count: Meet at Denny's (Take 21st Street to 1100 West, on north side by Flying J Plaza, Ogden) for breakfast and to get your assignment. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars. Potluck dinner at 6:00 pm at UCC Church (3350 South Harrison Blvd.) for compilation of data. Bring table service and a dish to share.

20 Tuesday 7:00 PM WAS Meeting

Dr. Frank Howe coordinates wildlife research projects for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) with Utah State University in Logan. Join us to learn more about Pelicans. Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden

DECEMBER (cont)**21 Wednesday 8:30/9:30am Bird Walk**

Willard Bay State Park: Meet at The Rusted Spoon, 2645 US89, Perry, Utah at 8:30am for breakfast or at the Pond on the pond north of the State Park at 9:30am. We'll bird the pond, then check out the canal on the north side of the park then head into the park. Remember this is a fee area.

27 Tuesday 7:30/8:00am CBC

Morgan Christmas Bird Count: Meet at the Utah DWR (515 East 5300 South, South Ogden) at 7:30am to carpool for breakfast at Larry's Spring Chicken Inn (4 North State Street, Morgan) at 8:00am. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11- 22 will be used to communicate between cars.

JANUARY 2017**I Sunday 8:00am CBC**

Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count: Meet at the parking lot outside Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00 am. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars. This is a fee area.

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

Fort Buenaventura Park: Meet at Moore's Family restaurant (3558 Wall Ave) for breakfast at 8:30am or at the entrance to the park at 9:30am

Contact Persons for WAS Outings

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi
pslombard@gmail.com

Saturday Field Trips (the Saturday after the WAS Tuesday Meeting) - Les Talbot 801-731-4925

Other Field Trips - Mike Hearell 801-529-8693

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR**

We are searching for someone to handle updates to our membership list and prepare an updated list for our mailing service prior to publication of a bi-monthly newsletter. Internet access and familiarity with spreadsheets are required for this task. The current Membership Chair has indicated it generally takes 4-6 hours every two months to update the spreadsheets and prepare a new mailing list. If you are interested in this volunteer position, please contact any of the officers or board members listed on page two of this newsletter.

Mirror Lake Highway Trip Report

By Les Talbot

We did well until we reached Kamas. At Kamas, we ran into a bike rally and pretty much followed them to Mount Baldy. They were riding 5 abreast on the highway and would not move over so we could pass. In a few places, we were able to go around some of them, but not very often. There were only a few people at the Upper Provo Falls, but we only saw two birds. We stopped at Trial Lake but there were no parking spots available. We then tried to stop at Mount Baldy. Again, there were no places to park. People were riding around on ATVs and one person was flying a Drone. We realized that birding was nil there, so we moved onto the parking area at Hayden Peak. Paul spotted 3 Mountain Goats; so we watched them, had lunch, and moved on to the Bear River Ranger Station. We took a short hike east of the station and saw several Dark-eyed Juncos. We were planning on stopping at the State Park in Evanston, but it was 4:00 p.m. when we arrived there so we bagged it and came home. Besides the Juncos, the highlights of the trip were a Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a Downy Woodpecker. They were basically the only birds we saw. The weekend before the start of school is definitely not the time to do the Mirror Lake Highway.

NEST BOX PROJECT: FIRST 32 YEARS

By Keith Evans

In August of 1984, members of Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) held a workshop to construct nesting boxes for use by cavity nesting birds; then, in September of 1984, 168 boxes were installed along UT-39 from Limestone Springs over Monte Cristo pass into Rich County. In 1992, the route was modified to move away from the busy highway that posed safety hazards for the birds and for WAS members visiting the boxes. The original route was primarily in aspen habitat, with the boxes attached to aspen trees; whereas the “new” boxes were placed on a route in non-forested rangeland with the boxes primarily attached to fence posts. This change in habitat favored Mountain Bluebird and Tree Swallow use while decreasing House Wren use. The route has always been referred to as a “bluebird box trail”; however, the boxes have been used primarily by three species: Mountain Bluebird, Tree Swallow, and House Wren. In past years, from 99-175 boxes were available each year. The use rate varied from a low of 47% in 1991 to a high of 93% in 2005. In past years, changes have occurred on some of the routes and for 2016 there were a total of 99 boxes available for use.

We believe these boxes in the Ant Flat and Monte Cristo area have contributed significantly to the productivity of the three cavity nesting species. The use rate indicates that natural cavities are scarce in the area. For the 15 years when productivity was measured by estimating the number of young fledged, the results are as follows: (1) estimated Tree Swallow productivity ranged from 29 to 221 with an annual average of 85 young; (2) estimated Mountain Bluebird productivity ranged from 39 to 91 with an annual average of 66 young; (3) estimated House Wren productivity ranged from 38 to 288 with an annual average of 150 young. By extrapolating these numbers over the 32 years of box availability, we estimate there have been just under 10,000 young birds (approximately 300 per year) fledged from this project.

What does the future hold for this project? First, WAS is without a dedicated leader/coordinator for maintenance of the boxes and is actively seeking a volunteer to fill this position. Second, a decision must be made as to whether the boxes should be visited both in the summer to determine use and in the fall for cleanout – box availability requires the fall cleanout and maintenance phase. However, the summer “data collecting” phase could be discontinued. Third, the boxes are located on four fairly strenuous walking segments and require a minimum of two people for each route. Over the years, various WAS members have undertaken this task but there is a need for individuals to assist in this effort. If you are interested in assisting WAS in the continuation of this citizen science project, please contact one of the officers or board members.

Nest Box Cleanout

September 17, 2016

By Les Talbot

I would like to thank the following who participated in the nest box cleanout. They were: Arnold and Weston Smith, Lynn Carroll, Jay Stretch, Betty and Keith Evans, Jack Rensel, Tyler Talbot and myself. We had just enough people to complete the task. So our appreciation goes out to those who participated. If we are to continue this project, we need more helping hands and younger participants. Those of us who do it are getting along in years and we need younger people to take over for those of us who struggle to get the job done.

HELP WANTED!

NEST-BOX-ROUTE COORDINATOR

The four routes along Ant Flat Road and in the Monte Cristo Mountain Range total 100 nest boxes and offer breeding sites for Mountain Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, and surprises like Mountain Chickadees and Cassin’s Finches. Duties include coordinating people and materials for survey teams for the annual June breeding survey; September post-breeding assessment survey, repair and clean-out trip; and data collection.

Conservation Corner

Seabirds Challenged by Warming Oceans

by Lynn Carroll

In my last column, I discussed changes that excess carbon dioxide causes in Earth's oceans. One is acidification, which makes life difficult for shell-forming organisms like clams, oysters, and pteropods (tiny swimming mollusks). Another is transfer of heat from the air to the water at the surface and gradually to greater depth. These have significant effects on important small sea creatures, seriously disrupting food webs. For example, coral reefs, renowned as diverse marine habitats, are harmed by both warming and acidification.

Phytoplankton form the base of most ocean food webs, using photosynthesis to grow and multiply, consuming CO₂ and adding oxygen, and being eaten by marine animals from krill to whales. This can only happen near the surface where sunlight reaches. However, ocean warming reduces "vertical mixing," when cooled surface water sinks and brings nutrient-rich water up where it can be used by phytoplankton. At the poles, fresh water from melting ice or permafrost further reduces vertical mixing by forming a layer atop the saltwater.

Seabirds tend to have specialized diets, relying on a small number of prey species. A number of seabird species have already been shown to suffer losses when ocean warming reduces the availability of their preferred prey. Krill don't do well at temperatures outside a 6°C range. They're also sensitive to acidification. Colonies of Emperor Penguins in Terre Adelie declined by 50% during an abnormally warm period with low krill production. Other Antarctic penguins are also affected. A study of Southern Fulmar showed that they don't breed during such warm water anomalies, also likely due to reduced krill.

Birdlife International reports that "Seabird communities are declining in the Southern Californian Current System." The California Current brings cold water south from British Columbia to the California coast. The combination of nutrient-rich water and abundant sunshine results in high phytoplankton production, so the current can support a large seabird population. However, in recent decades a significant increase in surface water temperatures has led to a serious decline in phytoplankton and the fish that eat it. Sooty Shearwater numbers found off the Southern California coast fell by 90% between 1987 and 1994. As a diving bird, the shearwater needs high prey density, since diving uses a lot of energy. Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets also declined with the rising temperature off southern California. Birds can search out new places with adequate food, but the effects of global warming added to other threats like over-fishing and oil spills will make good habitats increasingly hard to find.

*The information for this and the previous Conservation Corner was found mainly in the Birdlife International site, birdlife.org/datazone/sowb/case_studies and "Climate Change, Evidence and Causes, An overview from the Royal Society and the US National Academy of Sciences," online at dels.nas.edu/resources ... and *Earth, the Operators' Manual* by Richard B. Alley*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Pat Bausman

Please join us in welcoming those who recently joined or rejoined National Audubon:

Lin Brown
 Jeanne Carver
 Judy K. Doud
 Marshal Givens *Transferred In*
 Barbara Hudson
 Mary Mckinley
 Joyce L. Wally



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 National 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 \$12, 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: **\$12.00**

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