

The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**



Vol 36, Number 3

May/June 2017

WAS Meeting and Happenings

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

WAS Meeting 7:00 PM

Troy Burgess, with the **Wasatch Wigeons** conservation group. He is going to talk about their successful wood duck box program.

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

WAS Meeting 7:00 PM

Buz Marthaler, with the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah**. Buz will discuss the group's wildlife rescue efforts.

Both meetings are at the

Ogden Nature Center,

966 West 12th Street, Ogden

Please join us and bring a friend!

IT'S BIRD FESTIVAL TIME IN NORTHERN UTAH

By Betty Evans

The 19th Great Salt Lake Bird Festival will be held May 18-22, 2017. Utah has many great birders and birding spots. Last year, 202 bird species were seen during the Festival by about 3,000 participants. Most bird watchers attending the Festival are local; however, the Festival has attracted visitors from 18 different states and several foreign countries. The number of bird watching field trips has expanded from 6 to 66 over the past 18 years.

Noah Stryker, Associate Editor of *Birding* magazine, the author of two well-regarded books about birds, and a regular contributor of photographs and articles to major magazines, is the keynote speaker and guest for the Bird Festival this year. Stryker set a world Big Year record in 2015 and his book about the experience will be released in the fall of 2017. He has studied birds on six continents and works as a naturalist guide on cruises to Antarctica and Norway's Svalbard archipelago. His first book, *Among Penguins*, chronicles a field season working with penguins in Antarctica; and his second, *The Thing with Feathers*, celebrates the fascinating behaviors of birds and human parallels. He is based in Oregon, where his backyard has hosted more than 100 species of birds.

Our Utah State Parks, sites for many field trips, are celebrating their 60th anniversary. This would be a great time to visit the Bird Festival and at least one of Utah's State Parks to create a "Big List" of birds for 2017! Although some of the field trips have already filled, there are still spots on great birding trips this year. Plan to bring family and friends to the festival, participate in the many workshops being offered, and share an evening with Noah Stryker after a great dutch oven dinner. For more information on the schedule for workshops, field trips, and the banquet, visit the Festival website at GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com or call 801-451-3286.



Photo by Janice Vander Molen
from 2016 Great Salt Lake Bird Festival.



Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
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2017/2018	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201

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Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
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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

The Woodpeckers for the months of February and March can both be found in Utah. The American Three-toed Woodpecker and the Acorn Woodpecker are uncommon, but in the correct habitat can readily be found. The Acorn Woodpecker can be found in southern Utah.

The American Three-toed Woodpecker is a medium-sized black-and-white woodpecker, more black than white. It is found in boreal forests and montane coniferous forests across North America. It likes mature forests with an abundance of insect-infested snags or dying



Photo by Corrine Lindorff ©Connie Lindorff

trees, and spruce forests, disturbed by disease, fire, or other disasters. Because of its choice of habitat, it is seen infrequently. Often quiet and inconspicuous, it may perch motionless against a tree trunk for minutes at a time, making it easy to overlook.

Most woodpeckers have four toes on each foot. The Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers have only three. The loss of the fourth toe may help deliver stronger blows, but at the expense of climbing ability. Diet is mostly insects, wood-boring beetle larvae, moth caterpillars and various other insects; but it eats some fruit and may visit sapsucker diggings to feed on sap.

The Acorn Woodpecker is a conspicuous clown-faced woodpecker of western oak woodlands. It is remarkable for its social habits, living over much of its range in communal groups of up to 4 or more breeding males and as many as 3 breeding females. These groups maintain and protect impressive granaries in which thousands of acorns are stored in holes drilled in tree trunks or utility poles for future consumption. In one study, a single tree contained more than 50,000 acorn-storage holes. The woodpecker then collects acorns and finds a hole that is just the right size for the acorn. As acorns dry out, they are moved to smaller holes and granary maintenance requires a significant amount of the bird's time. The acorns are visible, and the group defends the tree against potential cache robbers like Steller's Jays and scrub jays. Acorn woodpeckers also feed by sallying for flying insects and gleaning tree trunks for ants.

(Continued on page 3)

President's Pipeline

(Continued from page 2)

The Acorn Woodpecker is a boldly patterned black-and-white woodpecker with a white patch at the base of the primaries, a white rump, black chest, streaked black lower breast, and white belly. The head pattern is striking, with a ring of black around the base of the bill, a red crown patch, a white fore crown narrowly connected to the yellow-tinged white throat, and black sides of the head setting off a staring white eye.



Photo by Barb Perry

It's Spring! Our summer feathered friends are coming back.

Good birding. Dan

Conservation Corner

2017 Legislative Summary

By Lynn Carroll

Those of you who received our e-mailed legislative updates can skip this column. For the rest, I summarize here selected actions of the 2017 Utah Legislature related to environmental protection. Passages in quotes are lifted directly from our Policy Advocate's updates.

"On the positive side, SB 197 ... passed and will provide about \$2 million/year in a tax break/ incentive for Utah's refineries to produce clean Tier III gasoline."

"A big disappointment was that HB 134 did not pass." It would have required Utah County to test emissions in many diesel vehicles, as other Wasatch Front counties have begun to do. Income tax credits for residential solar will be phased out, ending after 2021, and energy-efficient vehicle credits won't continue. The Division of Air Quality may not prohibit commercial cooking with wood even on red air days. A mildly-worded climate change resolution promoted by high school and college students was not even allowed a committee hearing.

"More bad public lands bills were enacted, including HB 407," which "states that a county sheriff is the primary law enforcement authority on public lands and describes the process to sell or exchange a parcel of public land," among other provisions. Three House Concurrent Resolutions aim to increase state control over public lands.

On the other hand, HCR5 "urges the state to use \$20 million of the approximately \$32 million from the Volkswagen settlement to begin replacing dirty diesel school buses with clean energy school buses."

Some good budget news: "funding was found" in the final week "for new air quality monitors to replace old, deteriorating monitors (\$1.3 m. one-time, \$150,000 on-going) and for air quality research (\$200,000 one-time)." Also "the Senate defeated HB 207 (for studying federalism), which freed up \$350,000" for more important things. Conversely, \$1.5 million was budgeted this year to have Big Game Forever "lobby for state control over sage grouse restoration/ protection" as was "\$500,000 for sage grouse litigation. Funding for the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Program held firm at \$500,000."

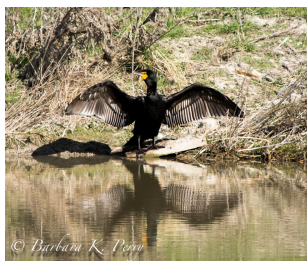
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge photos.

April 15, 2017

Lots of water this year!



© Barbara K. Perry



Double-crested Cormorant - Warm Sunshine at last!

© Barbara K. Perry

Western Grebes - Love was in the air.



© Barbara K. Perry

MARCO POLO – BIRDER?

By Jay Hudson

Marco Polo joined his father on their journey to Cathay (China), came home, got thrown in jail and supposedly dictated his “travels” to a cell mate. When his dictated notes were finally written down, his comments are not of an experienced birder, but a cursory observer. Polo left his home on the canals of Venice with little to show for his bird watching experience except for the ubiquitous mobs of pigeons in St. Marks Square. He was born to a Venetian merchant father which means that he likely spent his early travels on water with probably little interest in land birds. When he joined his father on his father’s second visit to the land of Kublai Kahn he was not likely trained in the art of observation and the tedious job of making records. He was seventeen years old in 1271 and the middle or medieval ages (5-15th centuries) are not known for its literary teen aged world travelers. What his jail mate secretary used as a medium, be it rare paper or common velum is speculative, for the original is lost.

Marco’s first recording is a reference to the king of Armenia who hunted “fowl”. When he arrived at Kublai Kahn’s (grandson of Genghis) Mongolian capital of Xanadu, Marco relates that the Great Kahn kept 200 Gyrfalcons. The Kahn visited his mew with a leopard riding alongside him on his horse. The Great Kahn had “many eagles trained to take wolves and foxes...and deer.” Even today there is a tradition in Mongolia of hunting fox with the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), that same eagle so common to western America. Marco tells of the Great Kahn’s winter hunts with 10,000 falconers and 5,000 Gyrfalcons, Peregrine and Saker falcons. Although Marco did not record the fact that this is the nesting season for Cranes, the Great Kahn had, in fact, exempted himself from his own no hunting rule. Impressively, each hunting bird had a silver tablet attached to a leg identifying its minder. Marco makes reference to “birds of many sorts” but gives neither, in most cases, their local or European names.

Marco traveled the steppes of Mongolia and later dictated of a prey for falcons called locally *bargherlac*. Five hundred years later, the German naturalist Peter Pallas gave this wide ranging pigeon sized grouse a more scientific definition for which it was later referred to as the Pallas’s Sandgrouse. Marco does recognize the importance to commerce of the “partridges and quail”. He calls out the abundance of Turtle-doves, pheasants and a “race” of birds called “francolins” which are different from the francolins of other “lands”. He recognized the pheasants as being twice as large as those in “our country” with tails “ten palms in length”. In India, Marco, notices the differences between the birds and those of “ours” except for the quail.

He compares fruit bats in size to “Goshawks”. He identifies “game birds” in Madagascar, and praised the birds of Zanzibar as “marvelous”. Marco described a 24 lb. “goose” that had a “big swelling under the throat and a sort of protuberance on top of the bill next to the nostrils”. Was he describing a pelican in the breeding season?

Can Marco Polo be called a “birder”? Yes and no! Obviously almost every bird he saw was new to him. If he dictated, in his gaol cell, more about the birds he saw but it got lost in his secretary’s inability to write down new words, we are doing Marco an injustice. There is no evidence Marco made written notes on his observations so we can’t compare him to today’s trained ornithologists. What we can say is that regardless of whether Marco’s “Travels” are authentic, or not, the story has flamed the imagination of adventurers for centuries.

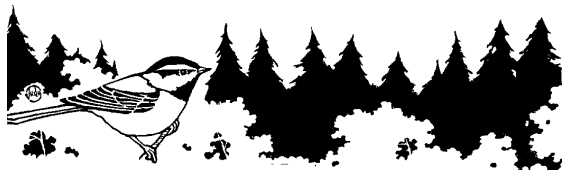
Jay Hudson with help from Marco Polo’s “Travels” and approval from Professor Greg Lewis of Weber State University.

Intro to Bird Watching Class

Wasatch Audubon members John Bellmon and Susan Snyder are teaching a three-session “Intro to Bird Watching” class in June, through Weber State University’s continuing education program. Learn about bird identification along the Wasatch in this workshop designed for both those new to birding as well as existing birders interested in honing their skills. This series will include one indoor session and two outdoor sessions. Participants will learn how to choose bird guides and equipment, in addition to learning tips and tricks to identifying birds by sight and sound. Participants must be able to engage in physical activity as outdoor field sessions will involve a considerable amount of walking.

The class will meet over three Saturdays, June 3, 10, and 17. The June 3 session will run from 9-11 a.m. June 10 and 17 will be conducted from 8-10 a.m. Cost is \$69. Classes will meet at Weber State University, Tracy Hall Science Center, Room 433, 1369 Edvalson St, Ogden.

To register, go to <https://continue.weber.edu/communityed/>.



CALENDAR

MAY

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

Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Center at Farmington Bay: Meet for breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville (185 Main Street) at 8:00am; then drive to the Nature Center (West on Glover's Lane).

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

Weber River/South Ogden Area: Meet at Denny's (5805 S Harrison) for breakfast then at 9:00am carpool to the trailhead near Adams Ave exit off I-84. Take Exit 85, Adams Ave, and then proceed to the frontage road on north side of I-84. Go east about 0.1 mile to the Angler's Access parking lot. We'll bird down river.

16 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting

Troy Burgess, with the Wasatch Wigeons conservation group. He is going to talk about their successful wood duck box program. The meeting is at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

17 Wednesday Bird Walk

No bird walk this Wednesday. Enjoy the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival starting May 18 and running through May 22.

20 Saturday Field Trip

Due to the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival we will not have a field trip in May.

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

East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville: meet at Village Inn, (1765 E. Skyline Dr., South Ogden) for breakfast or at the trailhead at 9:00am.

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

Little Mountain Railroad Trail: Meet at McDonald's (Exit 349, I-15) for breakfast or at 8:30am to carpool. Trail begins off 4000 N. (this is the road leading west from Smith and Edward's).

JUNE

6 Tuesday 7pm Board Meeting

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

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

Ogden Nature Center: Meet at Village Inn (322 W. 12th Street) for breakfast or at the Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) for the walk at 9:00am.

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

Snowbasin Maple Grove CG: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) for breakfast or at Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison Blvd.) to carpool at 9:00am. We will be looking for Flammulated owls in the nest boxes along the trail.

20 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting

Buz Marthaler, with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah. Buz will discuss group's wildlife rescue efforts. The meeting is at The Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

21 Wednesday 8:00/9:15am Bird Walk

Lagoon Trail: Meet at Dylan's in Kaysville (185 Main St., Kaysville) for breakfast or at the trail parking lot. Note: to access the trail, we'll use the parking area located at the dead end street (200 W., South off 600 N. in Farmington). This parking lot has ample parking. Plan on starting the walk at approximately 9:15am.

24 Saturday 8:00am Field Trip

Bear River Migratory Wildlife Refuge: We will meet at the Shopko parking lot (12th & Washington) in Ogden. Just south of the Golden Corral Buffet. We will meet at 8:00am and carpool to the refuge. Bring snacks and drinks. A spotting scope would be helpful. All of the spring migrants should be at the refuge then. After we do the loop we'll stop at the Education Center and check out the Cliff Swallows.

JUNE (cont)

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

Swanson Environmental Center: Meet at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N., North Ogden) for breakfast or at 8:30am to carpool.

JULY

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

Willard Bay SP: Meet at Rusted Spoon (2645 US 89, Perry) for breakfast or at the pond to the north of the SP at 9:00am. Note: The State Park is a fee area.



Photo by Barb Perry

Morgan County Bald Eagle Trip Report

By Les Talbot

February 25, 2017

This was a good trip. We saw 53 Bald Eagles (28 of them were immature) and 10 Golden Eagles. Four of the Golden Eagles were immature. The Turkey numbers were really low this year. We only saw 76. All of them were seen in East Canyon. Normally we see a lot in the Croydon area, but none were seen there this year. There were 11 birders in the group. Two of them, Brenda Burchard and Tom Wuenshell were new to our group.

We stopped at the bridge, by the cement plant, to check out the Dipper nest. It was there, but looked weather beaten. A dipper was on the south end of the west side. Hopefully it and its mate will repair it and use it again this year. I plan on checking on it when we do the trip to the Grouse Lek.

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

Loveland Living Planet Aquarium Field Trip

By Les Talbot

March 25, 2017

I was really impressed with the aquarium when it was located on 90th south in Salt Lake. Because of this, I was looking forward to seeing the present one. When we exited the aquarium I said, "I can cross it off of my bucket list and I have been there and done that."

First of all I thought it was very pricey. They have raised their prices. Seniors now have to pay \$16.95 to get in. If you don't see any of the videos, it takes about one and a half hours to walk through it. The Jellyfish tank had a large number of good sized Jellyfish in it, but it was really dirty and it was hard to see the Jellyfish. The water was the same color as the Jellyfish.

In the old aquarium, they had a tank with a large number of June Suckers in it. They only had one in the new one. The old tank had an interesting story about how the early pioneers used the fish. There was no interpretative material on the new tank. The suckers are indigenous to the Provo River Drainage. I would think that the aquarium would point out the importance of these fish.

There was very little interpretative information for any of the exhibits. There were aquarium representatives throughout the aquarium but they were too inexperienced to give out a lot of information. What interpretation there was said very little about the conservation aspect of the exhibited animals.

I was impressed with the shark tank. It is large and they have a variety of sharks and a sea turtle in it. Also the South America exhibit had a good collection of the poisonous frogs that are found in South America.

JACK RENSEL RETIRES AS PROGRAM CHAIR

By Keith Evans and John Bellmon

Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) enters a new era as our “lifetime program chairman” has retired. A big **THANK YOU** to Jack Rensel. Jack’s first program was in 1981, when he arranged to show a National Audubon Society film entitled, “It Began with Birds”, at the first WAS meeting. Jack arranged for all WAS programs from 1981 until April of 2017, ending with a program by Neka Roundy, Chair of the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival Committee. The diversity of programs has made WAS the stellar organization it is today. These programs have defined our “education” goal.



Photo by Bruce Perry

Programs have spanned the range of subjects from art and wood carving to the complexity of the Great Salt Lake ecosystem. We’ve learned about bird and plant identification; snakes and amphibians; wildlife habitats, including our backyards, and their importance to an abundance of life; photography, both in the film and the digital world; travel adventures from foreign countries to climbing the highest peak in every Utah county; and citizen science projects, such as eBird, Great Backyard Bird Count, Breeding Bird Surveys, and Christmas Bird Counts. Jack has participated in all 38 Ogden Christmas Bird Counts. Above all, Jack has set a fine example by giving back to the community through his volunteer service to Wasatch Audubon Society and the Ogden Nature Center.

So, after making the arrangements for more than 350 programs, Jack leaves this job behind; but we look forward to his continued participation in and presence at WAS activities. Please let Jack know how much we all appreciate his work and dedication; and if you had a favorite program, feel free to send an email message to either of us so we can pass along your message to Jack. Keith’s email is bkevans4@comcast.net and John’s email is belmonj@comcast.net.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

By Lynn Carroll

Please join us in welcoming those who recently joined or rejoined.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Frank Alberts | Debra Marin |
| Nora Arias | Donald Mathewson |
| Jeanne Ashby | John Mayer |
| E. Austin | Claudia Petersen |
| Anthony Baker | Victoria Ramirez |
| Daniel Bergman | Shanna Sanford |
| Joan Diamond | Tiffany Shapiro |
| Sheila Harper | S. Thompson |
| Marcia Harris | Sandy Walker |
| Judith Keime | Bruce Wallace |
| Diana Lea | Gerald Wimer |
| Mona Maggio | |





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**

___ My contribution to Wasatch Audubon: _____

Total enclosed: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

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