



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Volume 39, Number 3 May/June 2020

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Due to Utah state directives, no meeting will be held in May. The meeting listed for June will occur only if the Nature Center is open and directives allow. Keep advised at the Utah state coronavirus website.

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 - 7:00PM

Members of The Wasatch Audubon Society will lead a birding walk through the Ogden Nature Center. Bring binoculars for the best experience.

**Meet at the Ogden Nature Center located at 966 W 12th St., Ogden
PLEASE JOIN US**

Sharp-shinned Hawk



CAGE BIRD OR PROTECTOR ?

by Jay Hudson with help from Ferdinand Ossendowski - an intrepid Russian scholar and adventurer.

In the crowded bird market of Hong Kong you can buy a colorful Mongolian Lark (*Melanocorypha mongolica*). Old men keep them caged in their tiny efficiency apartments as a companion. I watched these old men take them to the local park where they hung the cages from tree limbs and listened to them sing to dozens of other caged birds.

On the grassy steppe of Mongolia, that same lark and a squirrel-sized burrowing rodent, called an "Imouran," can be seen in a dance of unlikely partners. On the Imouran's back are bothersome parasites that the lark loves to eat. A symbiotic relationship has developed where the lark skillfully rides the back of his "steed of the gay lark," picking off lunch. The Imouran goes about its running and rollicking hither and thither while the lark flaps its wings for balance holding onto the Imouran's brown back with its feet. In appreciation of the mobile larder provided by the Imouran, the lark will sing out a song. If the lark spies danger in the form of an eagle or hawk, it will call out a warning. The Imouran is more than happy to have a ride-along security system that also rids it of pesky vermin.

Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Officers

President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Vice President	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
Past President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

Board

2019/2020	Taylor Abbott	980-622-9889
2019/2020	Mike Hearrell	801-529-8693
2019/2020	Daniel Brown	801-896-8002
2020/2021	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2020/2021	Billy Fenimore	801-301-3756
2020/2021	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Field Trips	Vacant	
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-678-8065
Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
Hospitality	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
Membership	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Newsletter	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Programs	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
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>.

**Gray-crowned Rosy Finches at Kris Purdy's Feet
Winter 2020**



May/June 2020

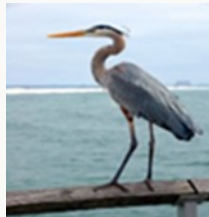
Welcome New and Rejoined Members!

Richard Austin	Newel D. Rigby
Michael Cole	Lynnette Paulson
Daniel Keiley	Carol Robins
Arvey Mc Farland	Cynthia Tait
Nancy McKay	Shauna White

SMILE!

AND SUPPORT

WASATCH AUDUBON



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purchases to Wasatch Audubon Society. Just sign in to <https://smile.amazon.com> and select Wasatch Audubon Society as the organization you wish to support, or go directly to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/87-0411832>.

Thank you for your support!

Coping with Change

by Keith Evans

Spring is here. Flowers are blooming. Leaves are appearing on barren tree limbs. And the birds are all either going north or arriving to set up nesting territories. That sounds like a perfectly normal scenario for this time of year. However, there isn't much "normal" about cancelled field trips, bird festivals, Earth Day activities, and the like. Somehow, we have become a society of bird-watchers who enjoy socializing while trying to spot the spring migrants as they first appear in the top of Utah; and that socialization has taken a beating this spring.

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One opportunity for enjoying a bird sighting is to look out the window. Bird feeders should remain full so everyone can continually look for special friends at the feeders. Not only are the birds enjoyed, but the probability of “going bonkers” or contracting cabin fever is greatly reduced. It is informing and interesting to watch the molt sequence as the American Goldfinch transform from gray to lemon yellow. And the Yellow-rumped Warblers that have blended into the vegetation are now standing out with the male’s bright black, white, and yellow summer plumage. Even the red highlights on the House Finch seem brighter. The rusty/brown head stripes on last year’s White-crowned Sparrows are now a bright black and white.

Mating and nesting behaviors are also right out many of our windows. In my yard, the juncos (in all varieties) chase each other through the trees and shrubs, White-capped Chickadees are investigating both nesting boxes in the aspen patch, the covey of California Quail that has visited the yard all winter is now splitting into pairs, and the male Downy Woodpecker is keeping a close eye on the female as they visit the suet and seed blocks in the yard. All of this variety also lends itself to great photographic opportunities if one is patient.

It’s great to call a friend and share a first-of-the-year sighting, even though the memory of sharing the actual sighting seems to always appear in the minds-eye with a small pang of regret at the missed opportunity to personally share the experience with other birders. Now, instead of seeing groups of birders enjoying a pleasant walk along a favorite trail, we hear about a solitary birder’s hike along that trail and hear second-hand about the birds, flowers, and other wildlife seen on the hike.

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Conservation Corner: Bird Conservation in a Time of Pandemic

by Lynn Carroll

This spring nature has provided beauty that raised the spirits of people anxious about contracting covid-19 or about losing their jobs. We birders may have missed out on bird festivals, but we could still enjoy our backyard birds and entice hummingbirds to visit or seek birds at local parks. Let’s not forget that nature still needs protection from the excesses of humanity.

We can help as we turn to gardening while following “stay home” orders. A larger variety of plants in your yard will support a larger variety of animals, from insects to birds. Maybe this is a good time to “rip the strip” between the sidewalk and street, replacing grass with drought-tolerant plants. Investigate Audubon’s “Plants for Birds” web page. It includes information about benefits of native plants, a native plant database that can be searched based on zip code, tips for preparing the planting site, and other helpful information. Note that you shouldn’t be putting too much effort into making things neat. “Fallen leaves and woody debris are an important habitat layer.”

As much of the nation focused on the fight against a novel coronavirus, the Interior Department has continued to rewrite rules that industry finds burdensome. Audubon has been fighting to revive

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rules made in 2015 that should be protecting the very best sage-grouse habitat from serious disturbance. If you haven't already added your name to National Audubon's letter to BLM ("Don't let the Bureau of Land Management weaken Greater Sage-Grouse conservation plans."), you still can, since the comment deadline has been extended to May 21. The point is to show that lots of people agree.

Here is some background: Under former Secretary Zinke, new management plans for Greater Sage-Grouse on public land in each state were written to "better align with states' policies." These shrank the size and number of priority habitat areas that would receive maximum protection and allowed more disturbance of those places. Public comment in the NEPA process had little effect. Last October, months after the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the BLM's new management plans were released, a federal judge issued an injunction against their implementation until a lawsuit is settled, noting, "The record shows that the 2019 Plan Amendments were designed to open up more land to oil, gas, and mineral extraction as soon as possible." In February, BLM issued six draft supplemental environmental impact statements (DSEISs) supposedly to address the problems that the judge identified in his ruling. The above-mentioned sign-on letter is in response to these. [Shortly before the original deadline I looked at the Utah DSEIS, hoping to make a quick comment. It was pointless; they had already dismissed any argument I could make as wrong, not having a significant effect, too costly, etc.]

In March, Audubon reported that "Rock-bottom oil prices also haven't stopped [BLM] from moving forward with quarterly lease sales of public lands in the West." The sales were the subject of formal protests by Audubon and others because the BLM doesn't steer energy development away from priority grouse habitat. Low oil prices have reduced the number of companies bidding in these auctions, depressing the price that is paid for the lease—such a waste!

In the midst of this pandemic, people long to get back to normal. We should remember that "normal" no longer exists; the climate is changing. In order to avoid accelerating climate change further, humanity must reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Our fight against covid-19 has shattered the economy. As we pick up the pieces, it's a fine opportunity to put it together in a different way, without fossil fuels at the foundation. We must elect leaders who have the vision and desire to see that change happen. Birds and people will be beneficiaries.

CALENDAR

Please Note: Under current Utah state directives regarding travel and distancing (at time of publishing), none of these activities will be held. Keep advised of changes to the directives on the Utah coronavirus website.

MAY

- 6 Wednesday 9:30am Bird Walk East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville:** Meet at the trailhead at 9:30.
- 13 Wednesday 8:30am Bird Walk North Arm Pineview Reservoir:** Meet at Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) to caravan at 8:30.
- 19 Monthly Wasatch Audubon meeting CANCELLED**
- 20 Wednesday 8:30am Bird Walk Two River's trail:** Meet at the trailhead under the 21st overpass at 8:30.
- 23 Saturday 7:30am Field Trip Ogden Bay North:** Meet at the Pilot gas station on 12th St. in Ogden (just west of I-15) at 7:30 to caravan. Look forward to many species of shorebirds, raptors and waterfowl. Contact Dan Johnston (danielj47@comcast.net).
- 27 Wednesday 8:00am Bird Walk Fort Buena-ventura:** Meet at 8:00 at the parking lot at the entrance to the Fort. To reach the Fort, take Ave A off 24th street. Turn left at the first street and head down towards the ball fields.

JUNE

- 2 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Board Meeting Ogden Nature Center:** All members are welcome.
- 3 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk West Extension** (West of 1900 W) of West Haven Hiking and Biking trail: Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (2400 S 1900 W), West Haven, for breakfast at 8:00. Or meet at the West Haven Cemetery at 9:00. To get to the Cemetery, go west on 1800 S off 1900 W. Make a right at 2350 West and proceed north into the Cemetery.) We'll park on the NW corner of the cemetery.
- 10 Wednesday 8:00/9:15am Bird Walk Little Mountain Railroad Trail:** Meet at Jeremiah's Restaurant (1307 W 12th street) for breakfast at 8:00am or at the trailhead at 9:15. Trailhead is west from Smith and Edward's on 4000 N.
- 13 Saturday 9:00am Bird Walk Ogden Nature Center:** Meet in the Visitor Center at the Ogden Nature Center at 9:00.
- 16 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting at Ogden Nature Center:** Audubon members will lead an evening bird walk through the Nature Center, possibly followed by a short meeting.
- 17 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Riverdale Trail South:** Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave.) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the trailhead parking lot at 9:00. Directions: from Riverdale Road to south on 700 W for one block, then left on 4600 S to parking lot at end of road.

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CALENDAR



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The take away message here is that we need to go the extra mile during this difficult period and improve our person-to-person communication skills in order to adequately share individual birding experiences with others. Let’s all remember to timely share our personal sightings with others in order to spread the enjoyment of seeing our feathered friends as they arrive “home” for another nesting season.

I encourage all of my “Audubon” friends to enjoy the activity in their seemingly small patch of habitat and keep sharing the stories with other birders until the madness passes and we get back to our more traditional activities. Stay safe and good birding in your yard and that of your neighbor.

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20 No Field Trip

24 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Drive, South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the parking lot at the Nature Park at 9:00.

JULY

1 Wednesday 8:00/9:15am Bird Walk Willard Bay State Park: Meet at Rusted Spoon (2445 US 89, Perry) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 9:15 at the pond and canal on the north side of the Park. We’ll then proceed into the Park. This is a fee area.

<p align="center">CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS</p> <p>Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi pslombard@gmail.com</p> <p>2nd Saturday ONC Walks - Dan Johnston 801-645-8633</p> <p>Field Trips on the Saturday after the WAS meeting - Dan Johnston 801-645-8633</p>
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Birding on Antelope Island Causeway January, 2020



Photo of Chukkar by Keith Evans

In these very different times when we don't have any birding activities to report on, perhaps you would like to match your isolating tendencies with those of our bird friends. Have fun!

Which self-isolator are you?



Gray Partridge

- already destroyed stash of Costco snacks
- exclusively wearing sweat pants
- "might try an online yoga class if this lasts any longer"



Clark's Nutcracker

- fires up the wood stove
- "got an elk this year, we should be good"
- all that work in the garden is paying off



Killdeer

- insufferable alarmist
- read a really good article
- knows all the facts that support their position



Townsend's Solitaire

- studies proper social distancing protocols
- corrects a lot of people online
- still goes out with friends if good food is available



American Robin

- literally every millennial mom
- "homeschooling is really enriching our daily life!"
- suddenly an Instagram blogger



Bohemian Waxwing

- ignored all risks to crowd into Target three weeks ago
- currently has 4 years' supply of toilet paper
- has not been heard from since



Great Gray Owl

- hasn't seen a soul in weeks
- doesn't hang out with anyone anyways
- maybe check in on them



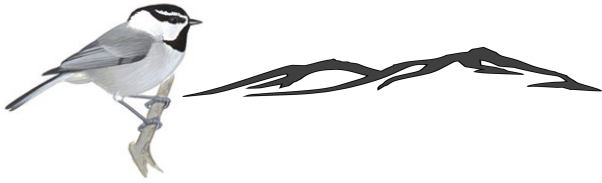
Belted Kingfisher

- well-informed and very ethical
- still enjoys a healthy amount of outdoor activity
- protects themselves and those around them



Canada Goose

- has some theories
- has never been wrong
- "SHELTER IN PLACE!?"
- What's next, OUR GUNS???"



Wasatch Audubon Society

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and click on the FACEBOOK logo.

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<http://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=W54>

(By using this special page, you give our chapter credit toward a monetary reward)

Local Chapter: Wasatch Audubon Society – W54



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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.

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