



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Volume 39, Number 5 September/October 2020

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 - 6:45PM

Meet in front of the visitor center at 6:45. We will take a bird walk in the Nature Center as dusk approaches. Bring insect repellent.

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 , Evening

To be announced. Check Facebook page (go to www.wasatchaudubon.org and click on the FACEBOOK logo). Active members will be notified by email.

Masks required and distancing will be practiced.

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

Don't Let the "Chickadee" Disappear!

by Nancy Arnett



Is it time to renew your annual newsletter subscription?

If you've forgotten your renewal date, simply check the last page of this issue of the Mountain Chickadee. The

expiration date is located above your name and mailing address. It's easy to renew by clipping the renewal form on the last page and mailing it with your payment.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Carroll (phone: 801-392-8216) or Nancy Arnett (phone: 801-388-0637).

Join us Saturday, October 10 at Wasatch Audubon's 7th Annual "The Big Sit!"

WHERE: the Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Reserve at Farmington Bay (the west end of Glover Lane in Farmington).

WHEN: Any length of time between 4:00am and about 8:00pm.

WHY: The Big Sit! is held all over the country, so join in the fun! It is our major fundraiser. You can get sponsors - count on seeing 40 to 45 species, so a donation of \$.50 per species would equal \$20 to \$22.50. Or they can donate a flat amount. Donations can be made by sending a check to the PO Box on the last page of this newsletter.

DETAILS: Bring a chair. Restrooms available. Mask wearing and social distancing will be observed.

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

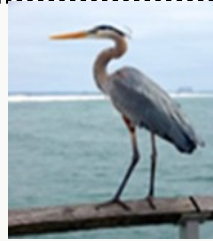
| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| 2019/2020 | Taylor Abbott | 980-622-9889 |
| 2019/2020 | Mike Hearrell | 801-529-8693 |
| 2019/2020 | Daniel Brown | 801-896-8002 |
| 2020/2021 | Lynn Carroll | 801-392-8216 |
| 2020/2021 | Jeane Taylor | 801-394-2813 |
| Vacancy | | |

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>.



**SMILE!
AND SUPPORT
WASATCH AUDUBON**

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible 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!

For a good bird story and a few laughs, see Robert Kirby's column in the Salt Lake Tribune, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. It is titled "Binge-watching birds during the coronavirus pandemic."



BEAUTIFUL BIRD-THEMED MASKS FOR SALE OR AVAILABLE TO ORDER AT ALL ACTIVITIES - \$5.00

Welcome New and Rejoined Members!

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Bruce Anderson | David Lundstrom |
| Mary Behrens | Greg MacCarthy |
| Paul Byrd | Joshua Miller |
| Chris & Ashley Cross | Lisa M. Mullin |
| Don Eardley | William Murray |
| Darby Frederick | Deborah Nicoll |
| Michael Harper | Robin Reed |
| Jo-Ann Hidrogo | Pauline Simon |
| Kay Hoogland | Lincoln Stone |
| Connor Johnson | Sarah Tibbitts |
| William Kirshner | Joanne Waters |

Membership News

By Lynn Carroll

National Audubon has struggled with membership problems—a system that handles chapter rosters as well as the magazine is bound to be complicated—and recently hired an IT specialist to better communicate with the vendor that handles the system. He got off to a rocky start last year, but a big improvement in 2020 has been better communication with chapters.

When members pay to renew, their expiration date should be exactly one year later than it had been; but for several years, when payment was received late but within the grace period, the year has been added to the date the payment was received. Members didn't complain, but I'm sure it cut into Audubon's revenue. At the end of 2019, expiration dates were recalculated based on records since 2015. Without explanation, about a quarter of our members got new expiration dates, most earlier, some later. A few members dropped off our roster because the new date had passed. I didn't know why.

Since then, the whole system was reviewed, revised and shared with chapters. I'll share what I've learned about the five types of membership.

Contributing Membership is the traditional membership that most of us have. A one-time contribution of \$20.00 or more entitles the donor to membership lasting a year and four issues of the quarterly magazine. At the end of the 12-month period, there is a 3-month grace period (formerly 2 months), during which you are still considered a member and you might receive another magazine issue. To renew, you must "donate" again **during the last 6 months before your expiration date** or during the grace period. The best way is online (www.Audubon.org). Your expiration date will be a year from the former one. You **cannot** renew for multiple years at once. When the grace period is over and no payment has been received, you are dropped from the membership roll until you "rejoin."

Sustainer Membership You agree to make monthly payments of \$5 or more. It lasts, and you get *Audubon* magazine sent to you, as long as the payments continue. An expiration date used to be assigned, but this was confusing, so Sustainers now have no expiration date. This membership ends when either the donor contacts Audubon to cancel or 3 months have elapsed since the last payment was received. If at least \$20 has been paid at this point, the Sustainer membership is converted to a Contributing membership extending one year from the date of the last payment.

Gift Membership This has the same benefits as a Contributing membership, but it can only be arranged by phoning Customer Service with the information about the recipient and paying at least \$20. If the Gift member makes a donation during the year, they become a Contributing member, and their expiration date will be a year from that donation.

Grinell Membership is a lifetime membership given to people who name National Audubon Society as a beneficiary in their estate plan. It can be inherited by a surviving spouse. The expiration date on the roster is 100 years in the future.

Complimentary Membership is designated by National Audubon, typically for VIPs, volunteers, and members of the Great Egret Society (donors of \$500 or more annually). Renewal rules do not apply.



**BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
NANCY ARNETT**

I was born and raised in Ogden, UT. I graduated from Ogden High School and enrolled at Weber State College the same year. I have always enjoyed the outdoors and included a natural science class in my schedule each quarter. I transferred to the University of Utah for my sophomore year and graduated with a B.S. degree in Geography.

My favorite places to visit are Jackson Hole, WY, and the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks. I have many childhood memories of these places and always wanted to work in Yellowstone. While in college, I did work in Yellowstone, not for the park service, but for the concessionaire, during the summer of 1988 - the same summer as the forest fires. On my days off, I enjoyed exploring the Park and participated in as many ranger-led hikes and evening talks as I could until the fires closed most of the Park.

The next summer, I worked for the Bureau of Land Management in range management in Kanab, UT. I traveled the back roads and remote places to monitor the vegetation on cattle grazing allotments. I learned to drive a four-wheel drive truck and operate a winch, which I had to use on several occasions. On my days off, I hiked Angel’s Landing and the Narrows in Zion National Park, the “Wave” in Paria Canyon and Bryce Canyon National Park.

The summer of 1990, I worked for the Forest Service in range management in Susanville, CA. Four others and I did a riparian survey to restore a streambed and provide the native cutthroat trout a perennial habitat. We walked thirty miles of the streambed and recorded its condition every 100 feet. My summer with the Forest Service turned into a one-year appointment.

I first heard of Wasatch Audubon Society in high school. I knew Keith Evans and about his involvement in Audubon, since I was high school friends with his daughter, Susan. He invited me to join the field trips. My first Wasatch Audubon experience was Eagle Day. I met John Bellmon, who was so welcoming, and the group was so enthusiastic and passionate about bird watching. I saw my first bald eagle and remember thinking how beautiful and majestic our national symbol is and what a wonderful opportunity to be involved with such an amazing group of people.

I currently work at a bank. Even though I don’t have the right degree to have a profession in the natural sciences, I always have Wasatch Audubon.

President’s Pipeline

by Dan Johnston

With only two more newsletters to do this year, I am not going to be able to finish my reports on all the Corvids. So, I am picking a couple of unusual species that appeal to me.

Our August field trip to City of Rocks in Idaho takes us in pursuit of the sole Idaho endemic species, the Cassia Crossbill. Formerly one of the “call types” of Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) in North America, the Cassia Crossbill (*Loxia sinesciuris*) was, in 2009, granted species status by the American Ornithological Society. The Red Crossbill “call types” are distinguished by their vocalizations, especially their contact calls, but also by bill and body sizes, associated conifer preferences, and the areas where they most commonly reside.

The Cassia Crossbill (pronounced CASH-uh) is a medium-sized finch (5.5-6.5 inches). The male has a red-orange body, brighter red rump and crown, and gray-brown on face, wings, and tail. The female has olive plumage. The bill is dark and crossed at the tip. The tail is notched.

Most Crossbills are nomadic, but the Cassia Crossbill is sedentary, as it relies on the year-around stable seed production of Rocky Mountain lodgepole pine in the South Hills and Albion Mountains of Idaho. Here, Cassia Crossbills are about 20 times more abundant than Red Crossbills in similar forests in the Rocky Mountains. The small area of lodgepole pine in the South Hills and Albion Mountains of Idaho limits the distribution of the Cassia Crossbill to about 70 square kilometers of forest. Even with relatively high densities, they number only about 6,000 individuals. This limited distribution and small

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CALENDAR

Please note: For the time being, we will NOT be meeting for breakfast at the Wednesday bird walks. We will meet at the trailheads at the time indicated. At all events we will observe social distancing and wear face masks. Bird themed masks will be available for \$5.00.

SEPTEMBER**2 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk**

Two Rivers Trail: Meet at 8:00 am under the 21st street overpass.

9 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk

Wilkinson Reservoir Area, Mountain Green: Meet at the upper end of the reservoir at 8:00am. From Old Highway 30, take Sliver Leaf Road for about 0.6 miles. Reservoir on your left.

15 Tuesday 6:45pm WAS Meeting at Ogden Nature Center:

Meet in front of the visitor center. We will take a bird walk in the Nature center as dusk approaches. Bring insect repellent.

16 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk

Fort Buenaventura: Meet at parking lot at 8:00 am. Take Ave A off 24th Street. Take first left down towards the ball fields.

19 Saturday 8:00am field trip

Nest Box Cleanout: It's time to clean out the nest boxes so they will be ready for blue bird nesting next spring. This is very important as the birds will not use old nests. We will meet at Smiths (12th and Harrison Blvd., Ogden) at 8:00am. We will divide into teams, if needed, and then head up to Monte Cristo. You need no skills, just enthusiasm! Wear hiking shoes and bring lunch and a drink, if wanted, for a picnic afterwards.

23 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk

Little Mountain Railroad Trail: Trailhead is west from Smith and Edwards on 4000 N.

30 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk

West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail, west of I-15: Take frontage road from Flying J Plaza, 21st street north to parking in front of Stevens-Henager College.

OCTOBER**6 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Board Meeting:**

Held remotely.

7 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Morgan Mickelsen Mile: Turn east at Larry's Spring Chicken Inn and meet east of ball field in Morgan, Utah.

10 Saturday 4:00am to 8:00pm special event

THE BIG SIT! Wasatch Audubon's annual fund raiser: Robert N. Hasenyager Nature Reserve at Farmington Bay, just south off the western end of Glover Lane (in the parking lot of the Eccles Wildlife Education Center). Bring a chair, lunch, water and your binoculars. See more details on Page 1.

14 Wednesday 8:00am bird walk

Kay's Creek Parkway: Meet at the parking lot. To reach parking lot, take 2000 E off Hwy 193. Continue on Deere View Drive to 2125 E and continue to the parking lot.

20 Tuesday, Evening WAS Meeting at Ogden Nature Center:

To be announced. Check Facebook page. Active members will be notified by email.

21 Wednesday 9:00am bird walk

South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at parking lot south of the Ogden Athletic Club. Take 1050 E off Hwy 89 and follow signs to park.

24 Saturday 8:00am field trip

Antelope Island: Meet in the parking lot outside the toll booth at the entrance to Antelope Island State Park. Bring lunch and water. This is a fee area.

28 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk

Willard Bay State Park: Meet at pond north of the park. After checking the canal, we'll head into the park. This is a fee area.

NOVEMBER**4 Wednesday 9:00 am bird walk**

Riverdale Trail South: Take 700 W off Riverdale Road. Left on 4600 S to lot at end of road.

Continued from pg. 4 (President’s Pipeline)

population size makes them especially vulnerable to environmental change, such as more frequent and larger fires. Fortunately, pine beetle outbreaks have been more limited here than in other lodgepole pine forests, perhaps because of the higher densities of insectivorous birds, including the very abundant Hairy Woodpecker.

The Cassia Crossbill eats lodgepole pine seeds, insects and caterpillars. Older and more open stands of lodgepole pine are preferred by Cassia Crossbills because they forage on the old grey pinecones on fallen branches by the edge of the forest or on those which accumulate for 10, 20 or more years on the branches. Sunlight and fire cause such pinecones to open up and become more accessible. They are attracted to leaks in campground water faucets in this generally dry area.

I will report on the results of our search for the Cassia Crossbill in the next newsletter. Meantime, I hope all is well with everyone in this time of Covid-19. Some of us have found the bird walks and field trips to be a great way to get out of the house. Even masked up and maintaining six feet apart, we are still able to make the time enjoyable and observe our feathered friends. May you be able to get out and enjoy.

Good Birding, Dan

Report on July Field Trip to Randolph, Utah

By Dan Johnston

The July 25th field trip to Randolph was mostly successful in finding target birds. Six of us caravanned up and over Monte Cristo, spotting some woodpeckers (Downy) and a Green-tailed Towhee. We had lunch in the park in Randolph, spotting 2 sleeping Common Nighthawks. On the way back, around Curtis Creek Road, we got a couple quick sightings of a flying Purple Martin. We also saw a family of 9 Dusky Grouse along Beaver Creek. In total, we identified 54 species. Not a bad day, and, as a bonus, the temperature was cool.

CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS

by Lynn Carroll

John Bellmon and I make up WAS’s Conservation Committee. We hear about new threats to wildlife daily—dams, subdivisions, pollution, etc. Lately government agencies are ignoring environmental impacts in these cases and reducing the length of comment periods. It’s hard to keep track of them, let alone do anything to stop any. Fortunately, Audubon’s new Saline Lakes program based in Salt Lake City helps with issues involving Great Salt Lake, and other conservation organizations often take the lead on other issues. This spring and summer, Wasatch Audubon Society has signed on to letters written by other groups with superior knowledge of an issue. Here are the items we reported in the last board meeting.

William Pendley has been acting Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for about a year and was finally nominated in June for Director. He doesn’t believe climate science, calls the Endangered Species Act “a joke,” and has advocated for the nation’s public lands to be sold. WAS and Audubon Rockies are among over 300 organizations, businesses and tribes that signed a letter opposing his confirmation written to the Senate committee that will consider his nomination.

In July Audubon Rockies was able to beat the deadline for public comment to BLM regarding a planned sale of leases in Utah for oil and gas development. Some parcels are close to Canyonlands NP, Arches NP, or Bears Ears NM, and some are in sage grouse habitat. The letter details legal and economic arguments against the sale. The Utah Audubon Council signed on.

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Continued from pg. 6 (Conservation Corner)

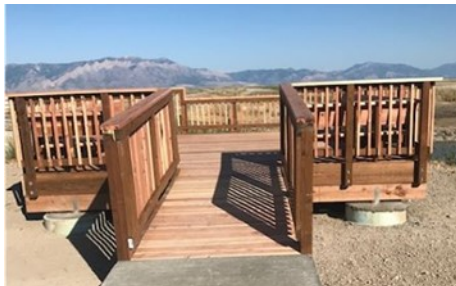
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge recently released a draft Habitat Management Plan for the refuge. WAS signed on to a comment letter written by the Saline Lakes program, in which they expressed approval of the planning effort, asked for more details in several vaguely worded sections, and questioned the plan to reduce the amount of water level management. They are concerned that “restoring sheetflow hydrology” on the former Canadian Goose Club and Unit 4 may lead to Phragmites taking hold by reducing salt, washing away soil, and destroying shorebird habitat.

The Saline Lakes Program has proposed a new federal program called the “Saline Lakes Ecosystems in the Great Basin States Program.” The USGS (US Geological Survey) would “assess, monitor, and benefit” saline lake ecosystems. We signed on to their letter asking Senator Romney to support legislation to create the program. He agreed and co-sponsored it. We also signed the letter thanking him.

Steve Erickson, Utah Audubon legislative liaison, reported good news about Snake Valley water. This valley, which crosses the border between northern Nevada and Utah, is one of those where the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) planned to drill wells and pump the groundwater to the burgeoning Las Vegas area. After losing a couple of important legal battles, SNWA has withdrawn its applications for water in this and other Great Basin valleys. Steve warned though that Cedar City is looking at Great Basin groundwater for its future use.

BEAR RIVER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE NEWS

A beautiful new viewing platform is available at the Refuge! It is located on the South-east corner of the auto loop.



BIRDING TRUTH VS GUESSWORK

by Jay Hudson

Is birding a virtue or a wisdom? Is it a truth incapable of bending? Is it so compelling that even the thought of constant guessing will bring down the wrath of every birder you ever met? Are photographic evidence and/or two witnesses the only way to defend yourself against guessing? I’ve come to the indisputable conclusion that beginning birders are cut a lot of slack by the old timers when it comes to statements of sightings. Older, wiser eyes and ears know that a novice’s statement about colors or shapes of tails or beaks is often simply a description of a bird of mystery, which experienced members of a bird walk have to interpret to conjure up the truth.

Sometimes I still describe a bird and may even say, “It looked like a” But an observation about my description may be, “It was probably.....” This is because my walk-along friends know the habitat, species of birds seen in the area, the level in the tree that it was seen and, to cap it off, its song. My truth is many times flawed! My feeble attempt to wow the crowd falls flat. My reputation as a self-identified level six birder falls a couple of points. It is sometimes better to keep silent, listen to others say what they saw, and file away facts for later application.

I have learned that statements of fact are many times guesses and convoluted attempts at moving up a notch on the level of skill scale. These attempts are usually taken by the people on the top of the scale as a great learning experience and, fortunately, this can go on for years out of the goodness of their hearts. But eventually we novices are expected to move up the scale where birding truth becomes a badge of honor. Continued corrections and gap filling by others becomes an albatross hanging heavy around our necks along with a pair of binoculars. But, I have heard my heroes of bird identification argue over hawks and sparrows and accidental visitors. This alone gives me hope. Still, I depend on my friends at the top hanging in there while I practice my meager spotting skills.



Wasatch Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3211
Ogden Utah, 84409

AUDUBON

Membership Application

Membership in **Audubon** automatically enrolls you as a member of **Wasatch Audubon**. When you join, you will receive four issues of **Audubon** magazine and six issues of our chapter newsletter, **The Mountain Chickadee**, each year. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of **\$20**, please go to the following website:

<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



**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:
WASATCH AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 3211
OGDEN, UT 84409