



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**



Vol 32, Number 4

July/Aug 2013

## WAS Meetings and Happenings

No meeting in July

Tuesday August 20<sup>st</sup>

POTLUCK DINNER

It's time once again for our annual potluck. The grills will be fired up and soft drinks will be provided. Bring a dish to share, your own meat to barbecue, dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>).

Also check out the calendar for details on our field trips:

Saturday July 20<sup>th</sup>  
Silver Lake at Brighton

August 17<sup>th</sup>  
Oquirrh Mountains  
Space is limited on this trip. RSVP to Les Talbot at 801-589-2591.

## INSPIRATION

by Jay Hudson

Where do people with creativity find inspiration? Some mathematicians see numbers as colors and this helps them in their computations. Michelangelo stated that he simply chipped off the unwanted marble until the object he envisioned appeared. When Ansel Adams was asked his secret to such stunning photography, he answered, "Knowing where to stand!" I once woke up on a remote Scottish island with a poem in my head that I had to immediately scratch out on a piece of paper before it was gone. I have no idea what was my inspiration, other than my mother's MacLeod ancestors came from a close-by island. One analyst stated that the Beatles' success only came after practicing 10,000 hours. That alone is inspiring.

So what's this got to do with birds? It seems that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is accused of using his pet starling's singing as inspiration for some of his concertos. He called his pet bird "little fool," but I find inspiration, from wherever it comes, is nothing foolish. The metallic starling's (*Aplonis metallica*'s) iridescent colors were an inspiration for Nicolas Day's rendition of the bird when he watched them in the early morning light in Cairns, Australia. Nicolas did all the illustrations for the [Birds of Australia](#) and was a wonderful back country traveling companion for my wanderings.

What's your inspiration for birding in the dawn's early light? Is it the ethereal anticipation of seeing a rare visitor on the Causeway to Antelope Island? Is it sitting around a rude, wobbly, wooden table in some foreign back-country telling tales to a like-minded crowd of new friends? Is it standing on the gently swaying deck of a 50-foot boat and trying to identify a sea bird at 100 yards through unsteady bins? My inspiration for pushing through the lowland forests of Costa Rica, up to my knees in water, was the faint possibility of seeing the impossibly rapid movements of the male red-capped manakin dancing to impress a seemingly uninspired female. Each of us has been inspired by the thought that there is no greater feeling than to inspire a child to see the wonders of the forever fascinating world of birds. Perhaps your inspiration is adding another "lifer" to your inventory of sightings, thinking you only have 9,500 more species to go? Whatever your inspiration, keep the lens clean and the field guide handy!



**Wasatch Audubon Society**  
 Website: [wasatchaudubon.org](http://wasatchaudubon.org)

**Officers**

President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Paul Merola	801-731-4815

**Board of Directors**

2011/2013	Scott Baxter	801-540-9417
2011/2013	Katie McVey	435-734-6436
2011/2013	Dan Johnston	801-731-4573
2011/2012	Weston Smith	801-829-4183
2011/2012	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
2011/2012	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216

**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
Mailing List	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
Membership	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Newsletter	Melissa Hofer	801-544-1453
Programs	Jack Rensel	801-399-0240
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

**PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE**

*by Arnold Smith*

We have been attracting birds for about 30 years by placing feed, nest boxes and other things that are of interest to our flying friends in our yard. This spring, we were happy for the return of the female Black-chinned Hummingbird that has nested in a front yard Boxelder Tree for the past seven years. She raises two broods and her second nest always overlaps the first. We were uncertain if she was still alive when she disappeared last summer, leaving a half-finished nest and causing her two near-to-fledging young to die from starvation. This happened about a week after our yard became inundated with hummingbirds on their return south migration. The invading Rufous and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds would normally have been using high mountain wildflowers – but last year there were none. This year's nest is near the location of last year's unfinished one. With spring starting out to be very dry again, I wonder if our little hummingbird friend will have any luck raising her family this year.

I may now have some insight into the abandoned Robin's nest mystery that I wrote about last year. Since then, we have found several robins with BB or pellet gun holes in them – it's hard to return to a nest when you are dead! In a couple of years, we have gone from four or five pairs of nesting robins competing for a section of our yard, to absolutely no Robins.

Then there is the plight of the swallows. Tree Swallows use six or seven of the dozen or so nest boxes in our yard. Every spring it is a battle to keep the local House Sparrows from taking up residency in most of the boxes. When the Tree Swallows return North, they immediately look for suitable nest cavities. They will try to claim the boxes where many of them nested or were fledged the previous year. The House Sparrows often trap and kill the swallows inside the boxes.

At the apex of spring migration, our yard fills with Lazuli Buntings looking for millet seed. It is not uncommon to count fifty or more on peak days. Lazuli Buntings and sometimes other birds go through the one-inch diameter wire on our coop runs to get the feed placed there for the chickens. The small birds often panic when trying to leave, sometimes dying in the process.

Then there are all those birds the dozen or so free-ranging neighborhood cats kill. Of course, the hawks get far more birds than the cats, but there's an unwritten law that says since cats are not part of our ecosystem they can only catch House Mice because the latter are not part of the system either. Where are the cat police when you need them?

Backyard bird watching has become more popular and more expensive over the years. I think we can all relate to the high price we pay to entice birds into our yards. However, I think sometimes we don't comprehend the high price they might pay to be a yard bird!

**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>

**CONSERVATION CORNER**

**“If You Build It, They Will Come”**

*by Lynn Carroll*

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the new north-south highway they expect to build in a few years to serve the western part of Davis County and southern Weber County (as far north as 4000 South). You can read the text at: [http://www.udot.utah.gov/westdavis/documentation#draft\\_eis](http://www.udot.utah.gov/westdavis/documentation#draft_eis) (Start with the Executive Summary.) The public comment period ends August 23. Details about how to comment are on the UDOT website.

I attended some of the “stakeholder” meetings sponsored by UDOT to keep people informed about the process. These were well done and allowed some early input. However, the UDOT folks were unwavering in their conclusion that the project is needed to relieve traffic congestion in the area. That’s where a big question arises. Does building more roads really reduce congestion and minimize pollution by making travel more efficient? Or does it encourage people to depend on their cars and reduce the demand for public transportation, resulting in more carbon emissions and other pollution? How you answer this will influence how you view the DEIS.

For those who believe that building the highway will increase the number of cars on the road and gallons of gas burned, you should consider joining the opposition, called “Save Farmington.” They are promoting a “Shared Solution” in which UDOT works with Utahns for Better Transportation and others to obtain grants and come up with a plan that includes more public transportation and no “freeway.”

Beyond the big question above, there is the question of which route to follow. Great Salt Lake Audubon is especially concerned about the choice of the Glover Lane alternative for the south end. It comes very close to the Farmington Bay Nature Center. Farther along, I believe it encroaches on Nature Conservancy property. I would prefer that they connect to I-15 at Shepard Lane, but this displaces more homes. What do you think? Share your best ideas with UDOT.

**FIELD TRIP REPORT**

**Henefer Lek & East Canyon Reservoir Trip**

April 20, 2013

*by Les Talbot*

On a Wednesday Walk along the Weber River, it was rainy, cold and rather miserable. A fellow birder said to me, “My father always said, ‘The chickens had enough sense to come in out of the rain’.” His comment was very appropriate for this trip. When we arrived at the lek, there were only 15 male grouse that were strutting, and they were a long way west of the road. As we arrived, we saw a gentleman getting back into his car. His presence out of the car would have been enough to move the grouse away from the road. After a while, a Raven flew over the grouse, going north. It circled around, flew back over the flock, made a swooping dive towards grouse and continued southward. At that moment, the grouse moved so far away that we could no longer see them.

Upon arriving at East Canyon Reservoir, we found Common Loons scattered all over the lake. On the West Shore of the South Arm, we saw a Bald Eagle, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, and Western Grebes. We also saw American Kestrels, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Mourning Doves, American Robins, European Starlings, and a Song Sparrow.

As we pulled into the Spring Chicken Inn, we saw seven Turkey Vultures in a tree across the street from the restaurant. Several of them had spread their wings to warm up.

Trish Turner, Patricia Jaquith, Jack Rensel, and I were the participants on the trip.

**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





## CALENDAR July/August 2013

### July

**3 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Ogden River Parkway:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) at 7:30 for breakfast and carpool or at 8:30 at the MTC Park on the Ogden River (the east side of Monroe north of 20<sup>th</sup> Street).

**10 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**North Arm of Pineview Reservoir:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) at 7:30 for breakfast or in Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) at 8:30 to carpool..

**11 Thursday 5:45/6:30 pm** **Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**  
**Mantua Reservoir:** Meet at 5:45 in the IFA parking lot (1069 12<sup>th</sup> Street) to carpool or at 6:30 in the reservoir main parking lot by the boat launch and swimming area. Depending on the birds, we will drive to the north end or the south end. Likely sightings include Grebes and other water birds, buntings, orioles and warblers. The terrain is flat with some shade. There is an optional social gathering afterward at El Toro Viejo in Brigham City. Please leave dogs and children under 12 at home. Contact Katie McVey for information 715-216-2605.

**16 Tuesday** **No WAS Meeting**  
 There will be no Wasatch Audubon Meeting in July.

**17 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Morgan's Mickelsen Mile:** Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) at 7:30 for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool.

**20 Saturday 7:00/8:00 am** **Field Trip**  
**Silver Lake at Brighton:** Meet at the Village Inn in Roy (just off the 5600 S Exit of I-15) at 7:00 for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool. We'll be observing both the bird life and the flowers. The terrain is a flat boardwalk with partial shade. Bring a lunch and water.

**24 Wednesday** **No Bird Walk**  
**Pioneer Day State Holiday**  
 There will be no Bird Walk on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the day!



**31 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Jefferson Hunt Campground:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) at 7:30 for breakfast or Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) at 8:30 to carpool.

### August

**6 Tuesday 7:00 pm** **Board Meeting**  
**Ogden Nature Center:** All members welcome to attend. 966 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden.

**7 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Fort Buenaventura:** Meet at McDonald's (900 W Riverdale Rd) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool.

**8 Thursday** **No Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**  
 We are taking August off, please catch us in September.

**14 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Bird Song Trail Area:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> & Monroe) at 7:30 for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

**17 Saturday 6:50 am** **Field Trip**  
**Oquirrh Mountains:** Rio Tinto biologist, Valerie Frojker, has offered to lead this trip to the Oquirrh Mountains. Rio Tinto will provide the transportation, which is limited. There will be room in the van for Valerie, Les Talbot and eight (8) other adults. Everyone attending the trip will need to be an adult WAS member and have already signed a waiver of liability. Make reservations by calling Les Talbot at 801-589-2591. Reservations will begin on August 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 am and continue until the slots are filled. **You must RSVP!** Only if you have RSVP'd and are sure you have a slot, meet at the parking lot next to Wendy's in Roy (1900 W. 5600 S.) at 6:50 a.m. (We need to meet Valerie in Magna at 8:00 a.m.) Bring a lunch and water. This is an all day trip.

**20 Tuesday 7:00 pm** **WAS Meeting**  
**Annual Potluck Dinner at Ogden Nature Center:** It's time once again for our annual potluck. The grills will be fired up and soft drinks will be provided. Bring a dish to share, your own meat to barbecue, dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup>). Come and bring a friend!

**21 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Maples Campground at Snowbasin:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) at 7:30 for breakfast or at 8:30 in Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) to carpool.

**28 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Mantua Reservoir:** Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West just east of 1-15 exit 349) at 7:30 for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool.

## September

**4 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Willard Bay State Park:** Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West just east of 1-15 exit 349) at 7:30 for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool. We'll check to see if the campground is open and bird there. If the campground is closed, we'll try the South Marina area. **This is a fee area.**

# LOL

## LAUGH OUT LOUD

If it looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, we have at least to consider the possibility that we have a small aquatic bird of the family anatidae on our hands.

*Douglas Adams*



## Coming on Sept 14th

### Utah Audubon Council Meeting

Utah Audubon Council's semiannual meeting at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Brigham City. Birding from 8:00 - 9:00 am will be followed by the business meeting. Lunch and refreshments will be provided by the host chapter, Wasatch Audubon. The business meeting continues after lunch with more birding at the end of the day. Everyone is invited but please **RSVP to John Bellmon (801) 444-3704.**

Save the Date

### WASATCH AUDUBON OUTDOOR ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Wasatch Audubon sponsors many outdoor activities. Our main goal, of course, is bird watching. We take our time and most walks are not strenuous. Water and binoculars are recommended equipment. Please do not bring dogs. They frighten the birds.

We meet for breakfast (optional) prior to our Weekly Wednesday Morning Walks. These walks usually last about 2 hours. All ages are welcome. Contact Paul Lombardi for more information at [801] 295-7738.

We meet for coffee or drinks (optional) following our Monthly Birdy Thursday Evening Walks. These walks usually last about 2 hours and are for ages 12 and up. Contact Susan Snyder for more information at [naturescall@gmail.com](mailto:naturescall@gmail.com) or [801] 388-4201.

Saturday Field Trips are more rigorous, and we are often out until 3:00 to 5:00 pm. In addition to water and binoculars, bring a lunch and dress for changing weather. All ages are welcome. Contact Les Talbot for more information at [801] 589-2591.

Wasatch Audubon encourages conservation in the form of carpooling. When birding in remote areas, it is often necessary to carpool or caravan to keep the group together. On longer trips and/or trips to hard-to-find places, members use walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 to communicate between cars.

## MY “BUDDY” THE HORNED LARK

by Keith Evans

It’s approaching mid-day and time to turn on the vehicle air conditioner when a small bird with a gray back and a black tail flies from the unimproved road near Whitewater Bay on Antelope Island and lands on the top wire of a fence – it’s a Horned Lark. It doesn’t go far and lands in plain sight, therefore, not following the pattern of the Island sparrows that seem to always fly a long distance and disappear in heavy cover. Utah’s low elevation desert habitats with short, sparsely vegetated areas are often called “bird-free zones,” especially during mid-day heat. Therefore, the antics of the Horned Lark are an enjoyable distraction. Horned Larks can be observed on Antelope Island all year long. I often greet them with a “hi buddy” comment, although they show no sign of recognition. Betty listens to their high-pitched song, but they are silent to my aging ears.

Many birders tend to concentrate their efforts on the larger, more colorful birds, or the rare birds. However, the Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) is one of my favorites and is a relatively plain-colored bird that barely tops one ounce on the scale. And, they are common (in their preferred habitat) throughout the year. Even though Horned Larks are common, they are the only member of the family Alaudidae in North America. Their preferred short, sparsely vegetated, prairies, deserts and alpine habitats are scattered over an expansive range. Ornithologists have identified many subspecies, but most of these populations integrate and the different subspecies can’t be separated by looks. Utah even has its own subspecies, *E. a. utahensis*, which is a medium-sized and light-colored bird. During the winter months, we often observe larger and darker individuals with bright yellow throats from more northern populations. Also, during winter months, I spend considerable time searching through flocks of Horned Larks for the occasional Snow Bunting or Lapland Longspur. Horned Larks walk instead of hopping, so when an individual within one of these winter flocks is hopping it demands a closer look.

Horned Larks are Holarctic (occurring in North America as well as Europe and Asia). They go by the common name of Shore Lark in Europe and Asia. The northern-most populations and populations nesting at high elevations are migratory, but Utah is in the area of permanent residence. Horned Larks are territorial during the breeding season, but they form large flocks in the winter. In Utah, these flocks may be composed both of local breeding individuals and migrants from the northern or high elevation populations. Horned

Larks are monogamous, and the males and females look similar. The adults eat mostly weed and grass seeds, but feed their young insects. Their nest is a hollowed-out cup on the ground and a clutch is normally 3-4 eggs. The female incubates the eggs for approximately 12 days, and then both parents feed the undeveloped “naked” young (altricial) for about 12 days. Horned Lark populations have been stable for the last 25 years.



### ARE YOU A TECHNOPHILE?



### Opt Out of a Paper Newsletter.....

If you prefer to do your reading online and forego a hard copy, this newsletter is available electronically on our website: [www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org). If you choose this option, please send an email message to that effect to [bkevans4@comcast.net](mailto:bkevans4@comcast.net); and we will remove your name from our hard copy mailing list.

### .....and Follow WAS on Facebook

Our Facebook page has upcoming field trip information and the ‘B3B’ – the best three birds viewed on each field trip. You can view this information without joining Facebook, but you won’t be able to participate in games and posts. Just go to the WAS website (<http://wasatchaudubon.org/>) and click on:



**MEET A WAS OFFICER:**

**Jack Rensel**

**Jack Rensel** is Program Chair for the Wasatch Audubon Society and is the only person to ever hold that position. He is also one of the founding members of the organization.

Originally from Pennsylvania and a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, Jack and his wife moved to Utah in 1956 and raised their three children in the Ogden area. In 1994, he retired from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, as the Northern Region Supervisor.

Jack is a lifelong birder, with a commitment to environmental stewardship and conservation. For 30 years, Jack has volunteered untold hours in managing the sunflower seed fundraising project for Wasatch Audubon. In addition, he has led field trips and presented workshops during the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival and spent many early morning hours listening for birds on Breeding Bird Survey routes in Northwest Utah. He also currently volunteers at the Ogden Nature Center.

**NO SUNFLOWER SEED FUNDRAISER**

**Remember, there won't be a Wasatch Audubon Society sunflower seed fundraiser this year. We appreciate your past support of this program.**

**PLEASE BE SURE TO PLAN AHEAD FOR YOUR WINTER BIRD FEEDING NEEDS.**

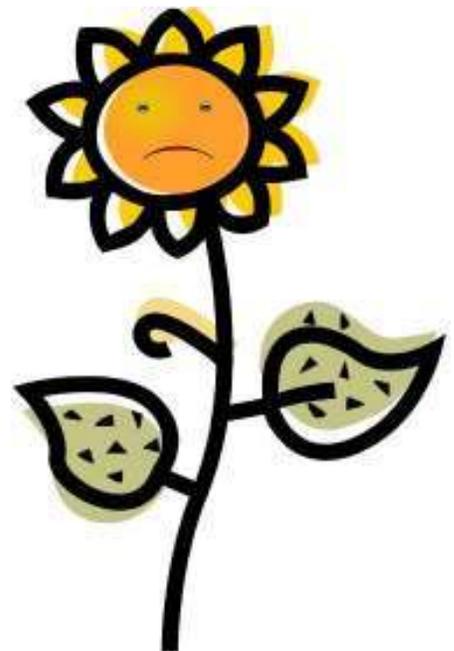
**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

*by Paul Lombardi*

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

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Bowden                 | Richard Miller    |
| Darlene Bridwell       | Korinne Nelson    |
| Liz Bryant             | Rita Oliver       |
| J. Chamberlin          | Rusty Rawson      |
| Donald Chantry         | Shanna L. Sanford |
| Mario A. Chovil        | Beverley Simmons  |
| Charles T. Cuthbertson | John Tanner       |
| Mike Harlin            | Dana J. Taylor    |
| Cynthia Johnston       | Dona Testi        |
| Donna Liljenquist      | Joyce M. Tolliver |
| Victoria Lohr          |                   |

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





*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:** \_\_\_\_\_

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