



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**



Vol 33, Number 3

May/June 2014

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Tuesday, May 20th
7:00 p.m.
WAS Meeting

Weber County Bird Quest
by Mike Hearell. Meet at Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street, Ogden). Mike will share his birding experiences and details on locations and species of birds encountered in Weber County..

Tuesday, June 17th
7:00 p.m.
WAS Meeting

Denizens of the Desert by **Susan Snyder.** Meet at Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street, Ogden). Susan will discuss Utah's Desert Tortoise and will exhibit a live tortoise that is a resident of the Ogden Nature Center.

Come and bring a friend!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: EXPIRATION DATES

by Betty Evans

Please remember that your expiration date now appears above your name on the address label of the newsletter. If you are a member of National Audubon Society (NAS), a subscription to The Mountain Chickadee is included in that membership and the date that appears on the label will be the expiration date for your membership in NAS. For those who are not members of NAS but subscribe to The Mountain Chickadee, the date will reflect the expiration of your subscription. If you have questions about the expiration date, please contact Patricia Bausman at 801-476-4620 or by email at p.a.bausman@gmail.com. We appreciate your support and hope you will continue to enjoy The Mountain Chickadee and the many activities outlined in the calendar.



HAPPY SPRING!!!!!!



Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE

by Katie McVey

Hey Sweetie! Cheeseburger! Whichever way you hear it, the Black Capped Chickadee's call is the sound of spring. Spring is a busy time of year for birds and birders alike. For birds, it's the urge to migrate, set up a territory, find a mate or ready the nest. For us, between chasing migrants, looking for FOY (first of the year) birds, cleaning up the yard and readying bird houses, it seems like there is always something to do.

Spring is also a great time of year to encourage birds to visit your yard. Consider planting bird-friendly shrubs and flowers. Mix honeysuckle with red-hot poker and zinnias for attractive red, orange and yellow blooms. When cleaning up your yard, leave a small pile of branches in one corner or under shrubs or trees. This acts as a shelter for ground loving birds like quail, junco and towhee. And nothing brings in the birds better than a water feature. Traditional bird baths work well but flowing water can attract hummingbirds too! Just one little change to your yard might bring in a new species or two for you to enjoy.

Even in this busy season, we have dedicated folks who make time to give back. I want to say a big THANK YOU to all the Wasatch Audubon members who volunteered their time, knowledge and equipment for our recent events. During Eagle Day and Swan Day at Salt Creek and Earth Day at the Ogden Nature Center, it was amazing and inspiring to watch our members sharing their passion and knowledge with interested visitors. Additionally, many folks help out by leading bird walks or giving presentations on behalf of Wasatch Audubon. We are truly lucky to have so many great bird-ambassadors.

Coming up next, our skills will be on display again during the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival. Many of our members lead tours and we will have a booth to promote Wasatch Audubon on Saturday May 17th.

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

News From the Hill

by Lynn Carroll

Those awful inversions in the winter of 2013 had the Northern Utah public demanding action and the Governor joining in. As a result a number of bills addressing air quality were introduced in the Utah legislature this year. Perhaps the most ambitious would have allowed air quality standards in Utah that are tougher than federal standards; those didn't pass. Neither did HB 41, which would have funded purchases, conversions, and maintenance of school buses that run more cleanly. (I had high hopes for that one, because it would have promoted compressed natural gas, a favorite "alternative fuel" of many legislators.) Bills allowing counties to increase sales tax for better public transit failed as well. Fortunately some bad bills failed to pass too; one such would have said that natural components of the atmosphere (e.g. carbon dioxide, ozone) aren't "air contaminants" subject to regulation.

There *is* good news for our lungs. Public education about pollution by wood burning is mandated by HB 154, and a program to help homeowners whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning stove to convert to cleaner heat is funded with \$500,000. HB 61 creates the Clean Fuels and Vehicle Technology Fund to make loans or grants for conversion of vehicles to cleaner fuels. Steve Erickson, our Policy Advocate, called these and other small victories, "a solid down-payment toward more far-reaching efforts to clear our air in future sessions."

You may be wondering what air quality legislation has to do with birds. Well, this wasn't a year when wildlife was a topic in much legislation; all animals breathe; many strategies that reduce air pollution also reduce CO₂ emissions, and rapid climate change is bad for birds. Finally, conservation groups are more effective when we work together. Steve meets with other members of the "conservation community" during the legislative session, and six of them have contributed toward retaining his services the last two years.

Speaking of money and birds, the folks who failed last year to find funds to lobby against listing the Greater Sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species were bound to try again. Steve pointed out that funding habitat conservation and restoration would be a more effective way to avoid listing, but \$2 million was quickly approved for the lobbying effort. Meanwhile, conservation groups had some funding priorities too for the Integrated Water Resources Management Model for the Great Salt Lake, water-monitoring wells in the Snake Valley, and phragmites control in wetlands. All three were funded! Plus the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) got \$4 million in new funding, the first increase in many years. Perhaps they can do more to protect our air and water for healthy people and animals.

Most of the information and some of the phrases in this article came from the *Utah Conservation Community Legislative Updates* provided by Steve Erickson each week of the legislative session. I also used the Utah State Legislature website.

REVISED BIRD LIST AVAILABLE

by Betty Evans

Get yours now! Last winter, Wasatch Audubon Society members and other area birders assisted Utah State Parks and Recreation employees in updating the Antelope Island State Park bird checklist. The "new" checklist is available **FREE** of charge at the kiosk at the entrance to the Causeway – be sure to stop and ask for a copy when you visit the Island. The latest checklist has a Loggerhead Shrike drawn on the cover, so you can easily tell the most recent version.

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 May/June 2014

May

3 Saturday 7:30 am

Field Trip

Antelope Island: Meet at the parking area east of the entrance to Antelope Island Causeway at 7:30 am. We will, hopefully, search through many different varieties of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl along the Causeway and then proceed to Garr Ranch in search of rare migrants. This trip is easy and will last until about 1:00 pm. Bring water, bug spray, and appropriate clothing. **This is a fee area.**

7 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Canal Walk North Mountain Road: Meet at McDonald's (Washington and 26th North) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool. Directions: Take 2450 North off Mountain Road and go over the canal into the small parking lot. Depending on conditions in the area, we may alter the location.

8 Thursday 5:30 pm **Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**

Ogden River Parkway: Meet in the parking lot of the MTC Learning Park, located on the east side of Monroe Boulevard north of 20th Street at the bottom of the hill. The trail is flat and paved. We'll see who is cruising the flowers around the Botanical Center, then head east on the Ogden River Parkway. The walk will last about an hour, with an opportunity to socialize afterward.

14 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am

Bird Walk

South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at Denny's (5805 South Harrison Blvd) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the park.

15 -19 Thu – Mon **Great Salt Lake Bird Festival**

Many locations and times: Information on activities and trips for all ages is available on their website, at www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com. You need to preregister and some trips fill up quickly.

20 Tuesday 7:00 pm **WAS Meeting**

Weber County Bird Quest: Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) at 7:00 pm. Many of our members reside in the Weber County area, but we believe this is the first "Big Year" for the County! **Mike Hearrell** will share his birding experiences and details on locations and species of birds encountered. Please join us and bring a friend!

21 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am

Bird Walk

Ogden Bay Wildlife Management Area South Entrance:

Meet at Village Inn (1780 West 5600 South, Roy, west of I-15 exit 338) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool.

28 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am

Bird Walk

Kay's Creek Parkway: Meet at McDonald's (5745 South Harrison Blvd) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am at the trail head.

June

3 Tuesday 7:00 pm

Board Meeting

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

4 Wednesday 7:30/8:30 am

Bird Walk

Riverdale Parkway, South: Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Avenue) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 at the trail head parking lot. Directions: From Riverdale Road, go south on 700 West for one block, then left on 4600 South and continue to the lot on the right at the end of the road.)

7 Saturday 8:00 am

Field Trip

The Hot Spots of Northern Utah: Meet at the Harmon's (on 2nd Street in Ogden) at 8:00 a.m. We'll bird the north fields in Brigham City to look for Bobolinks, then travel to Plymouth to look for Grasshopper Sparrows, and then go over the pass and drop down into White's Valley. From there we'll check at the reservoir at Howell and finish the trip at Salt Creek Wildlife Management Area. Bring lunch and water.

11 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am

Bird Walk

East Mountain Wilderness Park in Kaysville: Meet at McDonald's (5745 South Harrison Blvd) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 to carpool.

12 Thursday 6:00 pm **Birdy Thursday Evening Walk**

Willard Bay State Park: Meet at the Flying J station across I-15 from the Park entrance (Exit 357) at 6:00 pm to carpool and pool State Park passes. We'll stroll among the Cottonwoods looking for songbirds and also look for birds on the bay. Spotting scopes appreciated for this walk. As

always, there will be an opportunity to socialize afterwards. Please leave dogs and children under 12 at home.

14 Saturday 2:00 pm Afternoon Field Trip

Willard Basin: Meet at Smith and Edward's parking lot (north end) at 2:00 pm to carpool. This trip will require 4WD, AWD or ATV. Most of the birding will be done from the roadside but some will be done from well-groomed trails making this trip fairly easy. We will be birding at elevations in excess of 9000' so dress for changing weather and cooler temps. Bring drinks and snacks as the trip will last until shortly after dark. We will search for Sapsuckers and Woodpeckers (ATTW) through the afternoon and then hopefully get close looks at Poorwills and Flammulated Owls. Please contact Mike Hearell at utmarshrat@yahoo.com or (801) 529-8693 if you plan on attending, driving, or have room for other birders in your vehicle.

17 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Denizens of the Desert: Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) at 7:00 pm. **Susan Snyder**, Ogden Nature Center Naturalist, will discuss the life and times of Utah's Desert Tortoise. In Utah, this reptile is found only in the Mojave Ecosystem in the southwest corner of the state. Susan will exhibit a live tortoise that is a resident of the Ogden Nature Center. Come and bring a friend!

**IT'S HERE:
THE 16th ANNUAL GREAT SALT
LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL**

May 15th-19th is the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival

Information on activities and trips for all ages is available on their website, at www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com.

Hope to see you there!



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

Green Pond near Snowbasin: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

21 Saturday 8:00 am Field Trip

Annual Bluebird Nest Box Trip: Meet at Smith's (12th Street and Harrison Blvd.) at 8:00 am to carpool. This is a chance to do a census on Mountain Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and House Wrens. We will see eggs and young birds. Bring a lunch and water. If you have a Phillip's or regular screwdriver (or both) it is helpful for opening the boxes.

25 Wednesday 7:30/8:00 am Bird Walk

Willard Bay State Park: Meet at McDonald's (1838 West 2700 North, just east of I-15 exit 349) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:00 am to carpool. We will bird the pond and canal north of the park and then any areas that are open for birding. **This is a fee area.**

July

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

North Arm Pineview Reservoir: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe) at 7:30 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool.

10 Thursday 5:45/6:30 pm Thursday Evening Walk

Mantua Reservoir: Meet at the IFA parking lot (1069 12th Street) at 5:45 pm 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. As always, there will be an opportunity to socialize afterwards. Please leave dogs and children under 12 at home.

HELP SAVE A TREE!!

Do you prefer reading electronically or hard copy? This newsletter is available electronically at www.wasatchaudubon.org. If you would rather not receive a hard copy every other month, please send an email message to that effect to bkevans4@comcast.net or call **801-476-0232**, and we will remove your name from our hard-copy mailing list.

COMMON Nighthawk

by Keith Evans

It was a hot June afternoon as we drove east along the Strevell Road close to the Utah-Idaho border. We were returning to Ogden from three challenging and tedious Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes throughout the Northwest corner of Utah. The day seemed long as we had begun our survey one-half hour before sunrise and the starting point was more than an hour's drive from our temporary quarters – the old school house at Lynn, Utah. We had climbed in and out of the vehicle more than 150 times over the previous three days while concentrating on birdlife and filling out detailed survey forms. I was fighting sleep while driving and was sure my passengers were napping. Then, from the backseat, I heard, "I think a nighthawk was perched on that fence rail." I like Common Nighthawks, so I turned around and headed back toward the "almost" ghost town of Naf, Idaho. I stopped by the fence with the resting nighthawk and started taking photos. The others in the car proceeded to point out other nighthawks in the area. I don't remember the exact number, but it was close to two dozen. They were resting on several of the fence rails, on horizontal limbs of nearby trees, and on the roofs of buildings. What a WOW moment!

The Common Nighthawk ranges throughout the U. S. and across the Southern half of Canada. There are nine recognized subspecies. Northern Utah mostly has the *Chordeiles minor hesperis* subspecies, also referred to as the Great Basin Common Nighthawk. In Southern Utah, *C. m. henryi* can also be found.

A close relative, the Lesser Nighthawk, is found in Southern Utah. There are subtle differences in coloration and behavior that allow a birder to distinguish between the two species. Also, Lesser Nighthawks arrive earlier in the spring than Common Nighthawks.

The cryptic coloration of the Common Nighthawk is a shared characteristic with the other 8 species

of "Goatsuckers" from the family Caprimulgidae. They can be observed hawking insects at dusk or dawn. As our BBS routes begin one-half hour before sunrise, Common Nighthawks, when observed or heard, are usually at the beginning of the survey. We usually hear the whooshing sound of the display dive, or maybe the nasal territorial "peent" of the males, before we observe their characteristic erratic, bounding flight pattern. The flight pattern and the booming sound of the display dive have earned them the "bull bat" nickname.

Common Nighthawks are migratory and arrive in Utah in late May or early June. I suspect the group we saw in Naf, Idaho, on June 13 were just arriving in the area and had not yet established territories. They nest on barren ground or the roof tops of flat-topped buildings. They don't construct a nest and rely on cryptic coloration to protect them from predators. They feed their young regurgitated insects.

BBS and other bird surveys show populations of Common Nighthawks to be declining. Threats include the widespread use of insecticides (including mosquito abatement), habitat loss (grasslands converted to buildings, shrub land, or forests), and road kills. Also, very little is known about the winter habitat and winter survival rates of the Common Nighthawk south of the U. S. border. I encourage all birders to watch for and enjoy Common Nighthawks. Through the enjoyment obtained from observing this marvelous species, I hope we can encourage a sustainable life style and promote the protection of quality habitat without inflicting poisons and pollution on fragile ecosystems.



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

March 22, 2014

by Les Talbot

The migration was definitely on. We saw a lot of birds at the Refuge. The three best birds were a female Wood Duck, three Buffleheads, and two American Pipits.

The Tundra Swans were still there. We saw large flocks on the Northwest corner of the Refuge and on the far side of Unit 2. Two Sandhill Cranes flew by as we were walking into the Education Center. Three Grebe species were in Unit 2, Eared, Western, and Clark's, and one lone Bald Eagle was sitting on a stump. There were quite a few American Avocets across from the Million Dollar Duck Club.

Ana Jonas, from Naples, Florida joined us for the trip. She is the CBC compiler for Naples. She wanted to see a Yellow-headed Blackbird. It would have been a lifer for her. We heard one but could not find it. She was really impressed with the trip. Other members on the trip were Jeannette and Brian Nosker, Sharen Perry, Garry Mowery, and I.

Since the trip, I have been to the Refuge twice and new birds are still coming in. By May, all of the birds that will spend the summer in the Refuge will have arrived.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Pat Bausman

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

George Hales
Michael Hamblin
Cheryl L. Henley
Sandy Walker
Leona Yocom
Peggy Allred
Doug Anderson

Shary Cunningham
Kim Dohrer
Juliane K. Glander
Ethel Needler
Carol Rotunda
Diana L. Velis

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

Volunteer Opportunity Can You Help?

The Great Salt Lake Nature Center at Farmington Bay needs volunteers to help with visitors. It involves helping lead nature walks on trails that have been established for bird and wildlife viewing. The visitors will be from young school age children to adults. The Nature Center is located on West Glover Lane at the Northwestern edge of the Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area.

If you are interested please contact the center director, Diana Vos at 801-589-2373. She can provide you with more information. Thank you for volunteering for Utah's Wildlife.

Wild About Birds Nature Center is happy to facilitate and carry on the Wasatch Audubon Society winter bird feeding fundraiser.



WASATCH AUDUBON SOCIETY

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED
40 lb bag
\$24.95

Wild About Birds Nature Center will make a \$1.25 donation to Wasatch Audubon for each bag purchased. Expiration date is 31.03.14. Last chance to buy these bags before we're gone.

Please call
Wild About Birds Nature Center
at 801-379-BIRD (2473)
to place your order.



Wild About Birds
Nature Center
1980 N. Hill Field Rd, Suite 7B
Hill Field Rd & Antelope Drive
Logan, UT 84341



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 \$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: _____

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