



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society



Vol 35, Number 4

Jul/Aug 2016

## WAS Meetings and Happenings

### July 2016

There will be no WAS meeting.

**Tuesday, August 16,  
2016**

**7:00 p.m.  
WAS Meeting**

Annual Potluck Dinner!  
It's time 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 grill, and your dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. Meet at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

***Please join us and  
bring a friend!***

## THE SHRIKE'S GUILLOTINE

by Jay Hudson

In nature, everything eats something else. Grizzlies eat fish, cows eat grass, big things eat little things. Humans eat almost anything. The Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) is a site fidelity bird that can be seen at the picnic tables just west of the visitor's center of Antelope Island. I go there on a yearly basis. Its scientific name comes from the Latin "lanius" meaning "butcher" which gives it the folk name "butcher bird". Its common name "loggerhead" means "blockhead" or "dolt". Keith Evans states that its common name has nothing to do with its mental capabilities but simply means its head is a bit larger in proportion to its body. It is a master hunter that not only eats it's kill on the spot but stores its prey for a later meal. It eats mice, grasshoppers, beetles, small birds, lizards and horned toads.

The shrike has a weapon common with falcons although it is a predatory passerine song bird with an attitude. It has its own built in guillotine much like the killing machine of the French Revolution. It has two "tomial" teeth. Tomial is a term from the Greek "tomos" meaning "slice". This tooth is a small triangular projection on both sides of the upper mandible that helps the

Shrike surgically sever the spinal cord with a well positioned bite. Once the Shrike slides its beak over the neck of its prey, it bites down. The tooth slices through the neck and comes to a halt in a lower mandible notch. We humans have cutting teeth in the front of the mouth called "incisors" which perform the same basic cutting function.



*Photo by Keith Evans*

*Continued on page 6*



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

**Officers**

President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Katie McVey	715-216-2605

**Board of Directors**

2015/2016	Weston Smith	801-829-8689
2015/2016	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
2015/2016	Mike Hearrell	801-529-8693
2016/2017	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0686
2016/2017	Bruce Perry	801-726-9705
2016/2017	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432

**Committee Chairpersons**

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-589-2591
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
Historian		
Hospitality	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Membership	Pat Bausman	801-675-1642
Newsletter	Barbara Perry	801-721-4709
Programs	Jack Rensel	801-399-0240
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>

**President's Pipeline**

The Gila Woodpecker

by Dan Johnston

This is a bad news/good news story. The bad news is family matters have caused me to miss the last two monthly Audubon meetings. The good news is I was able to slip away for some excellent birding in different parts of the country.

Late April, Laura and I flew to Franklin, Massachusetts, for my son's wedding. We were able to go on a morning bird walk at Stony Brook Nature Center. We met other birders and saw some good birds. At Plumb Island, we saw many birds including the endangered Piping Plover. Seven miles of ocean beach was closed to protect their nesting area. We were "a week early" to catch views of many warblers and vireos at Mt. Auburn Cemetery near Cambridge. We were able to see an eastern woodpecker, a Red-bellied Woodpecker. There will be more to learn about this woodpecker at some later monthly meeting.

Late May, I drove to southeast central Arizona along the Gila River to visit my 89-year-old dad. I slipped out in the mornings to bird two of my favorite nearby sites: The Gila Box and Cluff Ranch Wildlife Areas. I was able to see many birds not available here. My favorite life bird that I spotted was the Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet. Yes, that's a real bird. Look it up. For woodpeckers, I saw the Ladder-backed Woodpecker, the Gila Woodpecker, and the Gilded Flicker.

The woodpecker for the month of June was the Gila Woodpecker. I was able to see and hear several during my Arizona trip. Both male and female Gila woodpeckers have



Gila Woodpecker

a brown face, black and white zebra striped back, and white wing patches that are visible during flight. Adult males have a red cap of feathers on the top of their head. Ranging in length from 8 to 10 inches and with an average wingspan of 16 inches, the Gila woodpecker can be found in deserts, brushy woodlands and urban parks from the American southwest to west-central Mexico. The call is a loud, rolling *churr*, often doubled. They also call short *pip* notes.

*President's Pipeline continues on Page 3*

## **President's Pipeline**

*Continued from page 2*

It feeds primarily on insects, cactus fruit and berries. In the desert, the woodpecker performs an important ecological function by removing unhealthy flesh from the saguaro cactus. Some insects on which it feeds carry diseases, harmless to the bird, which damage the cactus and leave discolorations. The marks signal "Here be larvae" to the bird, and as it excavates the insects, it also cuts away the diseased tissue. As the sap hardens, the cactus is healed, and the excavation becomes a convenient nesting site. Once abandoned, the cavities are occupied by reptiles, rodents and small birds like kestrels, elf owls, flycatchers and wrens.

Gila Woodpeckers have adapted to human populations by learning to hang onto backyard hummingbird feeders and lick up the sugary water. They also have been known to steal dog food from backyard porches.

## **Conservation Corner**

### **Climate Change Is Already Affecting Birds**

by Lynn Carroll

Earth has been warming gradually for all of our lives, but most of us didn't notice until recently. Weather is so variable, droughts come and go, and humans keep changing the landscape, so you may be surprised that effects of the changing climate on birds can be demonstrated. One type of change is movement in species' ranges. A study of 121 species in Britain looked at breeding bird atlases compiled in 1988-91 and 2008-11. There was a lot of variation, but on average, the northern boundaries of the ranges of southern birds had shifted northward by 0.68 km (0.42 mi) PER YEAR over the 20-year period. The southern boundaries of northern birds hadn't shifted southward, providing strong evidence that the reason is warmer temperature. Studies in North America have confirmed the general shift poleward, while many species in mountainous areas have moved to higher elevation.

The global rise in average temperature from the pre-industrial baseline has only been about 1° C (1.8° F), but the changes in the polar regions have been larger, so birds breeding there face greater challenges.

The chicks of shorebirds rely on arthropods (insects, spiders, crabs, etc.), many of which are available only during narrow windows closely related to temperature. Thus warming can cause the peak abundance to occur too early for the chicks in some years.

Baird's Sandpiper breeds in the Canadian "high" arctic, after a long migration from South America. The chicks that hatch during the peak abundance of crane fly larvae gain significantly more mass (29.4 g vs. 24.5 g) during their first 8 days than those that don't, a study shows. This is likely to affect survival. As the temperature rises, a mismatch between timing of egg laying and the crane fly peak will become increasingly common. Meanwhile, the White-rumped Sandpiper, another common shorebird breeding in the area, laid its eggs eight days earlier in the 2000's than in 1954, so it may compete more successfully in the warmer regime than Baird's, which laid only a little earlier. I have no data about this.

The same problem of timing may be adding to the Red Knot's woes. A report recently in the news claims that the juveniles of a sub-species that breeds in the Russian arctic are smaller and have shorter bills due to malnutrition. This is compounded by the shorter bills not reaching the best clams in their winter habitat and may be causing a steep population decline in recent decades.

At this point global warming by itself isn't likely to cause extinctions, but the goal of limiting the temperature rise to two degrees Celsius isn't likely to be achieved without a serious change in policies. It's hard to predict the effects on birds that lie ahead. To illustrate, what do you suppose is the suspected cause of reduced breeding success of the Gray Jay in Canada? The answer: warmer autumns are likely causing their hoarded food to perish.

The material for this column came mainly from "case studies" found at <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/sowb/pressure>; plus the *New York Times* on 5/12/2016



## CALENDAR July/August 2016

### JULY

**6 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am Bird Walk**  
**Swanson Environmental Center:** Meet at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N., N. Ogden) for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

**13 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**Ogden River Parkway:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:00am at the MTC Park on the Ogden River off Monroe. Note: this is also the Ogden Botanical Gardens.

**16 Saturday 8:00am Flower Walk**  
**Monte Cristo area** Due to the Pioneer Day Weekend we have moved July's trip up one week. We will be flowering and birding in the Monte Cristo area. Meet at Smith's (12<sup>th</sup> & Harrison Blvd) at 8:00 a.m. in the north west corner of the parking lot. This trip will take a good part of the day so bring a lunch and a drink.

**19 WAS Meeting**  
 There will be no WAS meeting.

**20 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**Green Pond:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:00am at Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) to carpool.

**27 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail west of I-15:** Meet at Denny's Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21<sup>st</sup> Street in the Flying J Plaza) for breakfast or on frontage road in front of Stevens-Henager College at 8:00am.

### AUGUST

**3 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**Ft. Buenaventura:** Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave) for breakfast or at the parking lot at the entrance to the park at 8:00am.

**10 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**Morgan's Mickelsen Mile:** Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Drive, South Ogden) for breakfast or 8:00am to carpool.

**16 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting**  
**Annual Potluck Dinner!** It's time 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 grill, and your dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. Meet at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

**17 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**  
**Maple CG, Snowbasin:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:00am at Smith's parking lot to carpool.

**20 Saturday 8:00am Field Trip**  
**Mirror Lake Highway**  
 Since this is a lengthy trip, we will meet earlier. Meet at the DWR offices (515 E. 5300 S. in Ogden) at 7:00 a.m. The Mirror Lake Highway is a fee area. The Golden Age Passport will waive the fee. It is good for everyone in your vehicle. We will be eating lunch at the Baldy Mountain picnic area so bring a lunch and drinks. Besides looking for birds, we will stop at the pullout at Hayden Peak and look for Mountain Goat. We will end the trip at the Nature Park in Evanston, Wyoming. This is an all day trip. We probably won't get home until around 4:00 p.m.

**24 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am Bird Walk**

Jefferson Hunt Campground: Meet at Dylan’s (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:00am at Smith’s parking lot to carpool.

**31 Wednesday 7:00/7:45am Bird Walk**

Bair Creek Trail west from Hwy 89 in Fruit Heights: Meet at McDonald’s (5745 S Harrison) for breakfast or at 7:45 at the Castle Heights Playground parking lot on 1200 Nicholls Rd., Fruit Heights.

**SEPTEMBER**

**7 Wednesday 7:00/7:30am Bird Walk**

Willard Bay SP: Meet at McDonald’s (Exit 349, I-15) for breakfast or at 7:30 to carpool. Remember this is a fee area.

**Contact Persons for WAS Outings**

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi 801-295-7738

Saturday Field Trips (the Saturday after the WAS Tuesday Meeting) - Les Talbot 801-731-4925

Other Field Trips - Mike Hearell 801-529-8693



**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*

**Tracking American White Pelicans**

Last summer DWR placed GPS tracking units on six pelicans. You can google the DWR site to track them. Google “Wildlife.utah.gov.”, in the search box type in “Pelican Webmap” scroll down to the link “Round Trip Flights”, click on it. When the map comes up you can enlarge it or decrease its size. The graphic on the left will show you which symbol represents each pelican. *If you need more info. Contact Les Talbot at [ibird2@comcast.net](mailto:ibird2@comcast.net) or at 801-731-4925.*



**THE SHRIKE'S GUILLOTINE**

*Continued from Page 1*

Once the kill has been made, the Shrike finds a sharp point on which to impale the prey such as a thorn, piece of barbed-wire or even a notch in a tree between two branches. This becomes its larder for future feedings. Every year I go the west of the Antelope Island Visitor's Center to search for a Shrike, and most years there it is hunting, impaling and eating. Shrikes have been added to the Christmas bird count here in Northern Utah so we know that some are year round birds.

Shrikes have folk tales about them from France, Madagascar and Europe. Our Zuni Indians of western America considered the Shrike a "brilliant" bird because of its hunting skills but felt it had an evil side. Regardless of its reputation, we should listen for its call in the spring as some say it warns other small birds of hunting hawks while planning its own hunt on these same small birds. Perhaps that is the "evil" side that the Zuni saw.

**BIRDING UTAH** App is now available for iPhone and Android devices. This App contains over



150 sites for birdwatching throughout Utah. Each site provides featured birds, habitat descriptions, directions, and nearby amenities. Depending on your phone, the App is available at iTunes or the Google App Store. For more information go to <http://wasatchaudubon.org>.

Sponsors for Birding Utah are: Great Salt Lake Audubon, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Office of Tourism, Utah State Office of the BLM, Wasatch Audubon Society, and Wild About Birds Nature Center. We want to thank them for their support in helping to make this project possible and hope that you will enjoy the information provided for the many sites featured in this App.

**Coming Soon!**

"heads-up" reminder

**The Big Sit**

is coming up in October. We don't really have a firm date or place, but stay tuned for more information!



It is like a **Big Day** or a **bird-a-thon** in that the object is to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard within **24 hours**.





It is with great appreciation that we say “good-bye” to Melissa Hofer, who has been our steadfast editor since July 2012. Our thanks to Melissa for all the time and energy she willingly volunteered during that 4-year period; and her unending patience in dealing with the many different authors, styles, and diverse materials involved in each issue. No matter what she encountered, the Mountain Chickadee was always a professional publication and contained pertinent and relevant information for our readers. **THANKS, MELISSA!!**

### NEST-BOX-ROUTE COORDINATOR

Wasatch Audubon is seeking someone to IMMEDIATELY fill the position of nest-box-route coordinator.

The four routes along Ant Flat Road and in the Monte Cristo Mountain Range total 115 nest boxes and offer breeding sites for Mountain Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, and surprises like Mountain Chickadees and Cassin’s Finches. Duties include coordinating people and materials for survey teams for the annual June breeding survey; September post-breeding assessment survey, repair and clean-out trip; and data collection. This long-term effort is one of the best education and nature entertainment programs offered by Wasatch Audubon.

Contact Kristin Purdy at 801-605-0328 or Jack Rensel at 801-399-0240 for more information.



### HISTORIAN

The Chapter is also searching for someone to help with organizing records and photographs containing much of the history of the group. This is a task that has no time constraints for completion of the project. It would be helpful to have a person who enjoys working with scrapbooks and/or photo albums, but neither is a necessity. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested, please contact Dan Johnston at 801-645-8633.



Wasatch Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3211  
Ogden, Utah 84409

### 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:

Wasatch Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3211  
Ogden, Utah 84409