



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Volume 40, Number 5    September/October 2021

## **WAS MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS**

**Tuesday, September 21 - 7:00PM**

Our program will focus in on an issue that is in the news frequently. S. C. Dabney, from the League of Women Voters in Moab, will inform us on the history of public lands in Utah and the West. Join us on Zoom (\*see below).

**Saturday, October 10 - 8:00AM-4:00PM**

**THE BIG SIT!**

This involves a 17-foot circle, chairs, scopes and birders of all skill levels, and some friendly chatting, all in the great out-of-doors at Farmington Bay. For details see page 3.

**Tuesday, October 19 - 7:00PM**

Our own, Jay Stretch will entertain and educate us on bird feet and beaks. We will also have a prize drawing for those who attend this Zoom meeting (\*see below).

### **\*Keep in Touch With Us!**

Do we have your email address? We often want to communicate with our members in between newsletters about Zoom links, changes in plans, new opportunities, or conservation action. If you want to know what's up and haven't been getting emails from WAS or want a Zoom link, please send a message to Lynn at [bradlynnc@comcast.net](mailto:bradlynnc@comcast.net).

For timely information, you can also go to our Facebook page by searching for Wasatch Audubon Society or clicking on the Facebook logo on our website ([www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org)).

## **President's Corner**

Little Known Facts About Lesser Known Things

by Jay Stretch

What do Loons, Hummingbirds, and Kingfishers have in common? *They cannot walk (well, the kingfisher with great difficulty—so does not).*

Know how you regulate your body temperature? Largely through digestion keeping your body cavity, thus your blood, warm. When that does not work you start to shiver. Well, birds just skip the first step and use muscle twitch (shivering) to regulate their temperatures. Works, too. The average bird core temperature is 106 degrees F.

Don't peek without taking a guess . . . which species has the most individuals in the United States? I guessed starlings, they certainly were prevalent in places I've lived. But . . . the most individual birds of a single species in the US are Red-winged Blackbirds—you just don't get many in your backyard.

Birds do not have larynxes, so how do they sing? Besides for whistles, birds have a dual chambered 'voice box' called a syrinx and each chamber can be used independently of the other. (Choir members are jealous!) The other thing this does is allow the bird to sing with food in its mouth, or like the Wood Thrush, to sing two different melodies at the same time.

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**Wasatch Audubon Society**

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

**Officers**

President	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
Vice President	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
Past President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

**Board**

2020/2021	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2020/2021	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
2020/2021	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
2021/2022	Abigail Johnson	
2021/2022	Leah Johnson	
2021/2022	Mike Hearrell	801-529-8693
2021/2022	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201

**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	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Bird Walks	Vacant	
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>.

*President's Corner continued from pg. 1*

Not all birds are melodious. Yet they do have volume and purpose. For example, the Sandhill Crane's voice carries over 2 ½ miles on a calm day.

We know that evolution favors those who survive. For vision, that makes peripheral recognition and attention to movement lifesaving. It often makes for dinner, too. For example, a golden eagle can see a hare or rabbit moving from a mile and a half away—great but not as exacting as a peregrine falcon, which can see a flying pigeon from five miles! It all comes down to the density of visual receptors (rods and cones for people), and the fact that birds have three or four types of receptors. We humans have about 200,000 light receptors per square millimeter, small birds have about double that, and raptors more than a million per square millimeter. Talk about eagle eyes!

Remember that third grade teacher who had 'eyes in the back of her head'? Her last name must have been Woodcock. For this bulging eyed bird has the greatest field of vision for any bird in the world—they really can see 360 degrees, as well as straight up. Beats chameleons lids down.

Remember that presentation on color and vision a couple of months ago? One of those vision sensors, that birds have that we do not, sees in the ultra-violet portion of the light spectrum. Handy for finding nectar and favorite flowers. Handy, too, for raptors hunting rodents, whose urine reflects UV light. (But not many puppy owners are jealous.)

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***Join us Saturday, October 10 at  
Wasatch Audubon's 8th Annual  
"The Big Sit!"***

The Big Sit! is held all over the country, so join in the fun right in your own backyard! From within a 17-foot circle between 8AM and 4PM, we identify as many species of birds as we can. An added aspect of The Big Sit! is that it is an important fundraiser for Wasatch Audubon Society. Participants get sponsors to donate a certain amount per species seen. We usually see 40-45 species, so a donation of \$.50 per species would equal \$20 to \$22.50. Of course, a flat amount can be donated as well. (Donations can be made by sending a check to the PO box on the last page of this newsletter or bringing it to the "Sit.")

This will be held at the Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Reserve at Farmington Bay (the west end of Glover Lane in Farmington).

Bring a chair. Restrooms are available. Masking and social distancing are encouraged.



**SMILE AND SUPPORT WASATCH  
AUDUBON**

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://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!**

**Conservation Corner**

**The Salton Sea: A History**

by Lynn Carroll

The Salton Sea in southern California is similar to Great Salt Lake in some ways, being a saline lake that is polluted and shrinking yet important to birds. It is unique in its geology and its relationship to the Colorado River. It occupies part of a long trough that formed through the tectonic spreading that caused Baja California to separate from mainland Mexico and the land between to subside (sink). Ocean water entered the trough, forming the Gulf of California. The Colorado River began delivering sediment to the gulf, forming a delta. While the gulf continued to subside, the material transported by the river to the delta built up faster than the land to the north subsided, so the ocean probably never entered the northern part of the trough. This "Salton Trough," which extends from Indio, CA, to the Colorado R. delta in Mexico, sank below sea level like the gulf had.

Over a couple million years, the Colorado's delta extended rapidly south and covered 3300 sq. mi. The river's path through the silt of the delta varied, most often taking it south to the gulf, but periodically north into the Salton Trough. The Trough would fill partially or fully, depending on the flow, then dry up when the river's course changed again, leaving salts behind. Naturally the lowest part, the Salton Sink, is the saltiest. The last time a substantial lake formed there was in the 1700s.

In the late 1800s, people who came to the area recognized that the nutrient-rich delta soil would make good farmland if it could be irrigated. The California Development Company was formed to bring water to part of the basin via canals from the

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*President's Corner continued from pg. 2*

Do your eyes tear up in bright light? Must be related to birds...but, their tears are more purposeful. They have a tear gland that produces a light polarizing oil—instant sunglasses, and they're free!

Just be glad that your sense of smell is not as good as a vulture's! They can smell a rotting corpse from a mile high in the air.

Many of these amusing bits were gleaned from "Bird Trivia: Funny, Strange, and Incredible Facts about North American Birds." © 2018 by Stan Tekiela, Adventure publications.

*Conservation Corner continued from pg. 3*

Colorado River. and in 1900 another company was formed to attract farmers. They named that area north of the border the Imperial Valley.

By 1901 the first farms were being irrigated and within a couple of years the population and acres being farmed were booming. Then in 1905, heavy precipitation in multiple parts of the Colorado River watershed caused major floods in the delta that turned the canal into a torrent. The Salton Sea was born as all of the excess water flowed into the Salton Sink. The full flow of the Colorado entered the valley for long periods before it was successfully forced back into its southward route in early 1907. The new lake had reached a depth of 76 feet, flooding a salt mining company, a railroad siding, and the Desert Cahuilla Indian Reservation.

The Imperial Valley is a hot dry place that deserved its former name, the "Colorado Desert."

The annual rainfall there is 3 inches, so the evaporation rate is high. No irrigation water was allowed to enter the Salton Sea, and by 1920 the depth was down by 50 ft. and acreage cut almost in half. A few years later President Coolidge issued an executive order reserving the area of the sea for disposal of irrigation wastewater, and the lake gradually gained several feet.

From its beginning, the Salton Sea attracted birds, as previous lakes in that location must have always done. Mullet, a kind of fish that migrates up rivers from estuaries, found the lake and were harvested for regional consumption during the world wars, as well as feeding pelicans and cormorants. A wildlife refuge was established at wetlands on the southern end of the lake in 1930. Attempts to establish a recreational fishery succeeded when salt-water species from the gulf were brought in. In the 1960s the Salton Sea became a popular tourist destination, hotels and yacht clubs were built on its shores and whole communities developed.

Meanwhile, trouble was brewing. The copious runoff from five hundred thousand acres of irrigated farmland was carrying salts, selenium, and fertilizers to the lake where they were concentrated by the constant evaporation. More salt was being leached out of ancient salt beds. These were about to make the lake increasingly inhospitable for wildlife.

**To be continued, next edition ...**

**Welcome New and Rejoined Members**

Leila Agoora	Sing Lee
Joseph Barker	John Mayer
Ronald Clay	Leslie Nixon
Andrew Duncan	Zbigniew Jan Piotrowski
Chad Gardner	Carol Rotunda
Susan A. Garland	Adeke Sandman
William Hanson	John Schmid
Mary Hoover	Marci Webster
Marilyn Jackson	John V. Welge

**CALENDAR**

*Please note: In accordance with the current Covid situation, social distancing and masking are encouraged. Carpooling for field trips will be your own decision.*

**SEPTEMBER****1 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Maples Campground:** Meet at Snowbasin at the lower parking lot.

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

**Willard Bay State Park:** Meet at the pond north of the park. This park is a fee area.

**15 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Antelope Island Causeway and Fielding Garr Ranch:** Meet at the parking lot just before the toll both. Antelope Island State Park is a fee area.

**18 Saturday 8:00 am field trip**

**Blue Bird 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 Smith's (12<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

Our program will focus in on an issue that is in the news frequently. S. C. Dabney, from the League of Women Voters in Moab, will inform us on the history of public lands in Utah and the West. Join us on Zoom.\*

**22 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Kay's Creek Parkway:** Meet at the parking lot for the trail. To get there, take 2000 E off State

Highway 193. Then, turn left onto 2125 E and continue down the hill to the parking lot.

**29 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk****Swanson Environmental Center, Eden, Utah:**

Meet at the North Arm Trail parking lot of Pineview Reservoir. We will caravan to the Swanson Center, stopping and parking along the way to bird.

**OCTOBER****5 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Board Meeting.**

Held remotely.

**6 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Little Mountain Railroad Trail:** the trail begins off 4000 N (this is the road leading west from Smith and Edward's).

**9 Saturday 4:00 am to 8:00 pm special event: The Big Sit!** 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 3.

**13 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Two Rivers Trail:** Meet under the 21st St. overpass, just east of the flying J Plaza off I-15.

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

Our own president, Jay Stretch, will entertain and educate us on bird feet and beaks. We will also have a prize drawing for those who attend this Zoom meeting (\*see below).

**20 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

**Riverdale Trail South:** Meet at the trail parking lot. To get there, take 700 W off Riverdale Rd, and then turn at the next left. Follow that road to the trail parking lot at the end.

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Calendar continued from pg. 5

**27 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk Canal Walk (North Mountain Rd):** Meet at the parking lot. Take 2450 N off Mountain Rd, go straight and over the canal into the small parking lot.

**NOVEMBER**

**1 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk Ogden City Cemetery:** Located at 1875 Monroe Ave. Park on east end near the Dog Cemetery.

**CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS**

**Dan Johnston: 801-645-8633**

**John Bellmon: 801-444-3704**

**AND THE WINNER IS.....**

by Jay Stretch

In the last edition, I announced a contest. The Person who could come up with the Best Creative Bird Group Names would win a \$50 gift certificate to that excellent source for bird feeding, etc., Wild About Birds. Well, the winner was...LYNN CARROLL!!

And here are her creations:

- a grundle of Grebes
- a Durante of Grosbeaks
- a complaint of Grouse
- a fidget of Kinglets
- a choir of Hummingbirds
- a jumble of Juncos
- a madhouse of Magpies
- a tackle box of Kingfishers
- a brass band of Horned Larks
- a stretch of jays (Lynn’s idea, not mine!)
- a kettle of Kestrels
- a palace of Kingbirds
- a box of hawks
- an iCloud of Ibis
- a rodeo of Longspurs
- a lake of Loons

*In Memory of Betty Evans*



Wasatch Audubon Society has lost a beloved founding member. Betty Evans has contributed in every imaginable way to the success of our group,. Each of us has their own memories of how she did this. Below are our expressions of gratitude and appreciation.

Betty was a dear friend for 40 years. I first met Betty and Keith at our first meeting of the Wasatch Audubon chapter in April of 1981. She and Keith were very instrumental in the formation of our chapter and as it has grown over the years. She was always willing to work to make it a better chapter for everyone. She has participated in many ways in the life of the chapter. She helped Keith on the chapter birding trips to Southeastern Arizona and Southern California. Those were fun adventures for all who went. Betty was instrumental as our chapter treasurer for 10 years and she gently and expertly guided several editors of the Mountain Chickadee over the years. Many of us have tried to help her in return as much as she would let us, but I wish that we could have helped her more. She had a very kind heart and was always concerned about everyone’s health and wellbeing. Betty’s passing has been very tough on many of us, and she will be sorely missed in many of our day-to-day activities. Her willingness to help will be an inspiration to all of us. God bless you, Betty. You are one of our sweethearts forever.

**John Bellmon**

*Continued on pg. 7*

*Betty Evans, continued from pg. 6*

What a beautiful soul Betty is. She is one of the kindest and most gentle humans I have ever met. She was always so pleasant to talk to. We had great conversations. Keith and Betty were regulars to Antelope Island looking for birds, volunteering to turn in their observations. They are the best birders ever. Betty was so particular and on time with the information that she sent. She was tender and loving with Keith and was always his right-hand lady. She will be truly missed.

**Jolene Rose**

I've had the pleasure of knowing Betty for many years. I always enjoyed carpooling with Betty and Keith on Audubon field trips, especially surveying and cleaning the Bluebird nest boxes at Monte Cristo. I knew I would learn a lot about the different habitats and birds, so I would keep a blank piece of paper in my bird guide book to take notes. When I was asked to be the next WAS treasurer, Betty provided a very detailed list of instructions. She was so helpful and patient as I learned. She made the transition go smoothly. Betty was a wonderful person. She will be sorely missed.

**Nancy Arnett**

Betty was a great organizer and so capable in many areas. As secretary of WAS, I sent her the board minutes for review and correction. As board members, Betty, along with Lynn Carroll, always proofread the minutes and helped me correct them. A few years ago, Betty drove Keith and me to Monte Cristo to clean Bluebird boxes. I brought my manual screwdriver, but Betty brought her electric one to get the job done quicker and better.

**Sharen Perry**

We will really miss Betty. Betty always had a pleasant smile and wise advice for those who associated with her. I often reminisce about the bird watching adventures we had with her and Keith. One that quickly comes to mind is the 1997 Audubon trip to Arizona. They brought Aaron home from that trip so we could stop off to water meetings in St. George. Betty was a great chauffeur - she helped Keith get many great wildlife photos by maneuvering the car so the critters were right out his window! It's so hard to lose such a good friend, but she will never be lost from our hearts.

**Arnold, Linda, Aaron, Weston Smith and family**

Betty taught both of us how to do our Audubon jobs better than we thought we could. Her support and willingness to step in and help in any WAS situation kept our chapter working smoothly for over 40 years. And she did all this with a smile on her face and human warmth in her heart.

**Laura and Dan Johnston**

**Betty**

*I wrote a book. But it needed help.*

*Call Betty!*

*Rewrite*

*Rewrite again*

*Wait*

*Anxiety*

*Blessing*

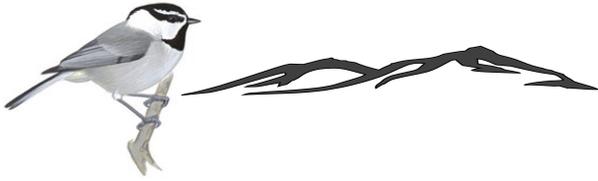
*Share*

*Bask*

**Jay Hudson**

**Volunteer Opportunity**

Help is needed to supervise Youth Impact students during nature studies and field trips. Dates and times vary. Contact Jay Stretch at 801-721-9432



**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

**JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!**

Go to [www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org) and click on the FACEBOOK logo on the webpage.



**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

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OGDEN, UT 84409**