



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society

Volume 41, Number 3 May/June 2022

WAS MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS

For May and June, Wasatch Audubon membership meetings will be in person at Ogden Nature Center! We will meet on the front porch of the visitor center, and then take a walk about the trails to see what birds and other wildlife we can find. Bring your binoculars and a water bottle. We will wait about 15 minutes for people to arrive before we begin the walk. Dates and times are as follows:

Tuesday, May 17 - 6:30PM

Tuesday, June 21 - 7:00PM

SEE CALENDAR ON PG. 5 FOR MORE EVENTS!

***Keep in Touch With Us!**

Do we have your email address? We occasionally 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: bradlynn@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). Also, sign up on Instagram (search for Wasatch Audubon) to get reminders of walks, etc.

LOOK FOR THE NEW LEARNID,
created by Connor Johnson,
ON PAGE 2!

President's Corner

CORVID CAPERS

by Jay Stretch

Corvids (Ravens, Crows, Magpies, and Jays) are at or near the top of the pecking order in terms of avian intelligence. They are social animals, requiring interaction, 'reading' of other's behavior and preferences. They not only *use* tools but *create* and *make* them, enjoy games, have fantastic memories, and share what they learn by teaching others. Corvids are Altricial fowl, birds born blind and dependent, that may have smaller brains at birth but which grow with the bird and to the point of greater functionality and capability. Even among the corvids there is a diverse spectrum of what scientists consider intelligence. While the Canada (Camp Robber) Jay may seem wily when snitching the dinner you left on the picnic table for just a moment, or coercing you into feeding them peanuts by hand, the New Caledonian Crow hits the top of the list with its ability to create and use tools to feed and even in self-defense. Well, we don't see too many New Caledonian Crows flitting around the Wasatch, so let's concentrate on those species we more frequently encounter.

I first got interested in corvid intelligence when returning from a walk along the Bonneville shoreline trail several years ago. At the end of the trail was a house with a very steep roof and there was a mischief of Magpies at the top, both adults and that year's fledglings. I watch as one of the adults stood to the side, curl up its toes, and slide down the roof to the end then flew back to the peak. Almost immediately, the youth lined up to get to the same spot and started doing the same thing, except that they stopped lower down and climbed back up to the

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Wasatch Audubon Society

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

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Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
Past President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

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2022/2023	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2022/2023	Ben Johnson	801-231-7008
2022/2023	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
2021/2022	Abigail Johnson	
2021/2022	Leah Johnson	
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Hospitality	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
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Newsletter	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Programs	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091
Information Mgr.	Connor Johnson	385-209-5396

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>.

LearnID by Connor Johnson

Who's that Grebe?

Grebes are birds in the family Podicipedidae. They use their feet to dive and catch fish. To do this, their legs are set at the back of their bodies, which is great for swimming, but not so great for walking. In fact, Western and Clark's Grebes can't walk at all. Here in northern Utah we get a whopping total of 6 species of grebe. Two pairs in particular cause a lot of confusion. Let's learn to ID them!

Clark's Grebe

Less common, present Mar-Nov
Breeding Plumage: Feb-Sep

What to look for:

- White completely surrounds eye [1]
- Bright yellow bill [2]
- More white in flanks (variable) [3]

Western Grebe

More Common, present Feb-Dec
Breeding Plumage: Feb-Sep

What to look for:

- Black completely surrounds eye [1]
- Dull bill [2]
- Less white in flanks (variable) [3]



Note: In non-breeding plumage, the amount of black around the eye can be ambiguous. If the bill color and flanks are both extreme, it is usually safe to call it. Otherwise, intermediate birds should not be identified (there is possibility of hybridization too).

Eared Grebe

Common, present year-round
Breeding Plumage: Apr-Aug

What to look for (Breeding):

- Thin, uniformly black bill [1]
- Tall head, peaks above eye [2]
- Wispy gold "ears" [3]
- Black lores and neck [4]

Horned Grebe

Uncommon, present in migration
Breeding Plumage: Apr-Aug

What to look for (Breeding):

- Thick, white-tipped bill [1]
- Round head, peaks far back [2]
- Solid gold "horns" [3]
- Rufous lores and neck [4]



What to look for (Non-breeding):

- Tall head, peaks above eye [1]
- Messy black auriculars [2]
- Thin, dusky, uniform bill [3]
- Bill slightly upturned [3]

What to look for (Non-breeding):

- Round head, peaks far back [1]
- Clean white auriculars [2]
- Pale lores (variable) [3]
- Thicker, straighter bill [4]



All photos used are in the public domain.

Pulled from inaturalist.org

Photo ID is next to name.

1. Robb Hannawacker 7695693

2. Dorothy Johnson 107541105

3. Dario 120743007

4. Chrissy McClarren and Andy Reago 143277245

5. Dario 60271537

6. By Claude Lyneis 59819529

President’s Corner

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top. Here were birds that were playing a game and having fun! There was no food, escape from predators, safety or comfort involved, they were just learning from an adult and having a good time, repeatedly. To me, that seemed like an indication of intelligence well beyond that which is instinctual and survival focused. Not my favorite birds, but something to look into.

Ravens and Crows can be rather particular—if you treat them well, they may reciprocate. One young girl used to leave treats for the Crows every day on her way to school. Soon she found trinkets on the small platform where she left the treats, the Crows were gifting her back. This would seem to indicate that the birds not only reciprocated the giving, but perhaps were anticipating interactions—you give me food, I give you a gift and it keeps on happening. This also involves planning, for the crow has to plan to provide the gift to the donor of the dietary treats. Interestingly, there is an amazing nuance to such behavior. Studies have shown that in small groups, if an individual or a small group is favored more than another, the latter will balk at doing work or interacting with the donor. They seem to recognize inequity and react negatively—something previously attributed only to humans and dogs. Additionally, these birds have anticipation and patience. If they learn that a greater reward is coming, they will resist the first offering to get the better/larger one later—I don’t care so much for the peanut but if I get two cashews a short time later, then I’ll wait. Kind of like a little kid passing on a popsicle knowing that two scoops of ice cream in a cone are coming later. A short-term thing only lasting for a few is passed up because something lasting days is coming later.

As mentioned, Crows and Ravens are social birds. Not just gathering in flocks, but selecting and associating with ‘friends.’ These relationships require the ability not just to recognize and react to the other’s moods and preferences, but to remember and anticipate the best way to interact with that individual in different situations. And these are not just seasonal friendships that are reinforced daily,

studies have shown that friendship behavior will return even after a period of three years of separation—kind of like when you meet someone you knew well in high school but haven’t seen since.

You may well be familiar with the research done at the University of Washington that showed this recognition and reaction behavior. The researchers noticed that the local Crows seemed to recognize human faces, and categorized them for future interaction. Those that sowed treats were favored but those that caught and banded the birds were deemed hostile and destined to remain that way. An experiment evolved with the use of masks on the humans: favorable interactions continued with increased positivity from the Crows but once a ‘face’ was linked to a threat or disagreeable behavior it remained that way. And this carried on not only through the seasonal experimental period, but was apparently passed on through the generations without reinforcing interaction. When the masks were worn nine years later in the same locale, the Crows had the same reaction to the human ‘faces’ as their predecessors. So, when the Magpie, Jay, Raven, or Crow scolds you, be careful—you may not know what it’s thinking!



Winter Memories
Gulls Reflecting by Jay Stretch

	<p>Word Wisdom from Jay Hudson</p> <p>The word aigrette comes from the French for Egret. It refers to the tufted crest or head plumes of the egret. An aigrette was used to adorn a head-dress in times past.</p>
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Conservation Corner: HAPPY CATS, HAPPY BIRDS

by Lynn Carroll

The Audubon Society and Humane Society of the U.S. (HSUS) agree that keeping cats indoors is best for birds and the cats. Free-roaming cats kill many birds, estimated to be over 1 **billion** per year in the U.S. Roughly 70% of this mortality is caused by feral and “community” cats, which may be fed but are homeless.

Even a single cat in a sensitive area can be devastating. In Australia a single cat roamed through a colony of threatened Fairy Terns with 111 nests. A few birds were killed, and all of the nests were abandoned. However, in most areas it’s the sheer numbers of roaming cats that endanger bird populations.

HSUS promotes trap-neuter/spay-release (TNR) programs to solve the population problem, saying, “These programs have shown evidence of stabilizing cat numbers that eventually dwindle to zero.” In fact, TNR is rarely effective, because over 75% of the cats in an area must be sterilized year after year to make a significant difference. Funding is inadequate for this or any other solution I know of. Feeding stray cats is another controversial subject. In my opinion, if you do so, you should not also feed birds.

HSUS and Audubon agree that cats that have homes should not roam freely through their neighborhoods. If they do, they likely also hunt, regardless of how well they are fed, and birds may be victims. Roaming cats also face dangers such as:

- Cars, which kill 5.4 million cats annually in the U.S., according to the National Traffic Safety Administration;
- Attacks by other cats, stray dogs, raccoons, coyotes, etc., which can lead to infections or disability if not death;
- and
- Ingesting poisons such as pesticides, antifreeze, and rat poison.

Being outdoors at night is especially dangerous. These and a few other threats add up to a shorter lifespan. Outdoor cats typically live 2-5 years, whereas indoor cats will usually live 10-15 years.

In spite of the dangers, some cat owners believe that it is unkind to keep cats indoors, but there are ways to keep indoor cats happy, and also to safely provide them outdoor experiences. See for instance [Don't let them out: 15 ways to keep your indoor cat happy \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/dont-let-them-out-15-ways-to-keep-your-indoor-cat-happy) Among their suggestions: Provide an extra litter box in a separate location for choice and clean these often, as cats are fastidious about their toileting; the food bowl should be in a separate room. They need vertical space more than horizontal space, so provide things to climb on. Brushing the cat’s coat is good for the coat and provides pleasure. Give the cat a way to see out a window. Cats can enjoy the outdoors riding in a stroller or go for walks in a harness with a leash. A walk should be kept to about 15 minutes, or the cat can be allowed to take the lead. People with the means have started building or buying “catios,” enclosed outdoor spaces that the cat accesses through a cat door. HSUS also offers advice for transitioning an outdoor cat to a happy indoor life.

Are You Cleaning Up Around the Yard This Summer? A Word to the Wise

A homeowner in Ohio conscientiously cleared out brush from around the edges of his yard. He used a chain saw on some larger plants. That night, he became very ill—to the point of being hospitalized with severe breathing problems. He was ventilated and put into a coma in the ICU. In total he spent over a hundred days hospitalized.

It turns out he inhaled particles from some plants he had cut down. The plants were poison Hemlock in this case, but a variety of poison plants can produce the same result.

The Moral: Know what plants you are removing, no matter what method you are using to remove them! It may save your life.

From an article by Alex Mitchell in the March 31, 2022 New York Post

CALENDAR

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

Accessibility: Walks are no more than 1 1/2 miles. See box at end of calendar for explanation of accessibility codes.

MAY**4 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk**

Farmington Bay: Meet at the parking area outside the gate to Eccles Wildlife Center at Farmington Bay Wildlife Management Area located at 1157 S. Waterfowl Way (1700 W Glovers Lane) Farmington. Leader-Ben **R P L B**

11 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Woodland Park, Farmington: 300 S 200 E, Farmington, next to the police station. Leader-Colin **R P/U L B**

14 Saturday all day Great Salt Lake Bird Festival

It's not too late to enjoy many activities at the Festival! Head out to the Wildlife Education Center located at 1157 S. Waterfowl Way (1100 W Glovers Lane) Farmington. More info at www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com.

17 Tuesday 6:30 pm WAS meeting

Meet at Ogden Nature Center on the front porch of the visitor center. We will take a walk about the trails to see what birds and other wildlife we can find. Bring your binoculars and a water bottle. We will wait about 15 minutes for people to arrive before we begin the walk. **R P/U L B**

18 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Garr Ranch on Antelope Island: Meet at the parking lot just before the toll booth This is a fee area. Leader-Colin **R U L B**

25 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Ogden Regional Medical Center, South Ogden: Meet at the south end of the hospital parking lot on the west side of the building. Leader-Ben **U L**

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

Mueller Park, Bountiful: 2200 Mueller Park Road. From I-15 take exit 315, go east on 2600 S (turns into Orchard Dr.). Turn east on 1800 S and go up and over the summit into Mueller Canyon. Meet at the parking area. (You may

have to park on the street if lot is full). Leader-Colin **U M**

7 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Board Meeting.

Held remotely.

8 Wednesday 8:00 am field trip

Willard Bay State Park: Meet at the Pilot Flying J Travel Center (600 W 750 N, Willard) in the parking lot, south end. Exit I-15 at Willard and go east. This is a fee area. Leader-John **R P/U L B**

11 Saturday 8:00 am Saturday Bird Walk

Winter's Grove/Jefferson Hunt Campground, Huntsville: Meet at north end of Smith's parking lot (Harrison & 12th St., Ogden) at 8:00 am or in Huntsville at south end of the Nature Trail at 8:30 am (Rte. 39, just past Chris', down short road on the left). Leader-John **P/U M**

15 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Green Pond Trail near Snowbasin: Meet at the trail-head which is on New Snowbasin Road just past mile post 2. Leader-Kris Purdy **Unpaved, Not level**

21 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS meeting

Meet at Ogden Nature Center on the front porch of the visitor center. We will take a walk about the trails to see what birds and other wildlife we can find. Bring your binoculars and a water bottle. We will wait about 15 minutes for people to arrive before we begin the walk. **R P/U L B**

22 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk

Farmington Pond/Mouth of Farmington Canyon, Farmington: Meet in the parking lot at 750 N 75 W Farmington. Leader-Colin **R P L B**

25 Saturday 8:00 am Field Trip

Bird the Donner/Mormon Trail: Meet at the DWR office, 515 E 5300 S (Adams Ave) in South Ogden. We will caravan to Henefer where we will pick up the trail, follow it to East Canyon Reservoir and go on to Jeremy Ranch Road (a dirt road). We will spot historical markers and birds along the way, ending at Mormon Flats. Target birds: Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Dusky Grouse, Hermit Thrush, American Dipper.

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Calendar cont. from pg. 5

Bring water and a lunch. Leader-Dan **This trip is mostly done by driving, maybe occasional restroom break.**

29 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Riverdale Trail South: Meet at the trailhead off Riverdale Road at 700 W. Leader-Dan **R P L B**

JULY

6 Wednesday 8:00 am bird walk
Great Salt Lake Nature Center, Farmington: Meet in the parking lot. 1157 S. Waterfowl Way (1100 W Glovers Lane) Farmington. Leader-Ben **R P/U L B**

Accessibility Codes
R - Restroom available
P - Paved trail
U - Unpaved trail
P/U Combination
L - Level trail
M - Moderately level trail
B - Benches available

CONTACTS FOR WALKS AND TRIPS

- Dan Johnston:**
801-645-8633
- John Bellmon:**
801-444-3704
- Ben Johnson:**
801-231-7008

ISTANBUL BIRD PALACES

by Jay Hudson

When Suleiman the Magnificent conquered Constantinople, formerly known as Istanbul, in the mid 15th century, good things began to happen for birds! Suleiman put his chief architect, Sinan, to work building the city to Muslim standards. The city’s name became Istanbul, and like all conquerors, he moved Muslims in to consolidate his new empire. Mosques and administrative buildings sprang up. There were many new places (with natural air-conditioning) for birds to nest in the lattice work openings of the new buildings. Muslims used birds for food and appreciated them for the effect their chirping had on the soul. As the city spread out, gardens and flowing water became part of the city’s charm, and they took the birds with them. Because the population understood that heat rises, they made openings for the hot air to escape. This principle was practiced from China to the island of Guam and places in between.

Architects designed bird “palaces” to mount on the sides of buildings. In 1878, the traveler de Amicis wrote “Mosque and grove, ancient wall and garden, palace and courtyard are full of song.” The “Palaces” mimicked the architectural design of the rich men’s buildings. They “...provided safe havens for sparrows, swallows, pigeons and doves to come and go in peace”. I envy the concept of man’s engagement with nonhumans. Building owners and mosque superintendents chose to work with nature.

Watching Ogden grow, I have seen little evidence of the ethics of working with nature. We covered over our streams for industry and private dwellings to squeeze in people and build profits. The traveler De Amicis wrote, “Religion puts emphasis on the oneness of creation, proper stewardship and protection of the earth.” I doubt that this is a serious part of subsidized housing development. We are lucky for those who developed zoos so we can reconnect with nature. Istanbul developed fountains that gushed rose-water and musk. Rome’s famous fountains were paid for by the wealthy to prove they were looking after the people. The Sultan’s Topkapi palace in Istanbul had aviaries that totaled over 6,500 birds, not for profit but for ambiance.

Istanbul’s mosques, tombs, schools, libraries, bridges, and water systems were all provided with bird palaces. One travel writer described Constantinople as a place blessed with “grace emanating from her myriad of birds of every species.” I have looked at Ogden’s visitor’s pamphlets and have missed a like endorsement. On the positive side, Weber County is blessed that it’s leaders and volunteers developed a mountain and rivers trail system that attracts many species of animals and birds.

We encourage our Audubon members to voice their thoughts to leaders at all levels on building a closer relationship between growth and nature. If Suleiman could do it centuries ago, we should be able to do it today.

Welcome New and Rejoined Members

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mr. Bob Argyle | Erika MacArthur |
| Andrea Ayers | Ms. Ann Mathews |
| Albert Bodaski | Wayne McCallum |
| Megan Conroy | Robert Miller |
| Nancy Corgiat | Janet O’Berg |
| David Crowther | Christine Painter |
| Janice Dailey | Elizabeth Poulter |
| Mr. Dion Dostaler | Rebecca Ragain |
| Robert Hammer | Robin Reed |
| Kathryn Hardy | Carol Robins |
| Jeni Hitt | Matthew Skellham |
| James Jensen | Jackie Swearingen |
| Cynthia Jones | Mr. Lynn Walker |
| Charlotte Kibbie | Kathylynn Wixom |

Also, welcome Ben Johnson as our new Bird Walks leader! We look forward to his leadership!

Hummingbird Myths

by Kris Purdy

Everybody loves hummingbirds. But despite their status as favorites and one of the easiest families to attract to our yards with feeders, myths that just won’t go away abound about hummingbirds such as:

Hummingbirds prefer red flowers. Nope. Hummingbirds are attracted to flowers based on their nectar load. While yes, they like red, they also like yellow, blue, violet, pink, white, and even brown. The brown Western Coneflower is an excellent nectar (and pollen) producer and hummingbirds and other pollinators choose it. Years ago, a wildflower expert who made a presentation at a WAS meeting cited the dearth of red wildflowers in Utah, and yet Utah is an excellent state for species and numbers of hummingbirds. Many red flowers have co-evolved with hummingbirds and offer nectar at the base of a long, tubular corolla, so they’re notable as hummingbird flowers. So why do hummingbirds so willingly come to your red nectar feeder? Because the nectar volume from a feeder vs. the energy expenditure to feed there is an excellent bargain for the bird, and is far better than any other color nectar plant available.

Backyard birders need to boil the water when making hummingbird nectar. Nope. Hummingbirds don’t get sterile nectar in the wild, so why do they need sterile nectar in hummingbird feeders? And if your tap water was so bacteria-laden that it had to be boiled for the birds, how would you drink it without getting sick? Just dissolve one part sugar in four parts water and stir it until the sugar dissolves. It’s very important to wash with hot water and a brush all parts of the feeder twice weekly and re-fill it with fresh nectar regardless of how much was left since the last filling. Amp that schedule up to every 2 days when the weather is really hot, but boiling is unnecessary.



Rufous Hummingbird
Kris Purdy

I just heard a new one last year: The nectar recipe should be 11 parts sugar to 12 parts water so hummingbird eggs form properly. Oh. My. Gosh. Humans have been feeding hummingbirds for only about 100 years, so I wondered how the myth-believer thought hummingbird eggs formed before someone started doing that. Flower nectar ranges from 15-25% sucrose, so your one part sugar to four parts water recipe is right in the middle of that range as a 20% sucrose solution.

Hummingbirds eat nectar exclusively. Oh, no. Hummingbirds also eat arthropods, the largest category of insects. That includes fruit flies, gnats, thrips, aphids, mites, midges, and spiders. Some estimates of the percentage of insects in a hummingbird’s diet are about 10% with females feeding on insects more and especially for young that need higher levels of protein and minerals.

And finally, an oldie, but a goodie: Take down your hummingbird feeders in the fall to force the birds to migrate. I just heard this one again recently from a very earnest hummingbird supporter. Hummingbird migration is a hormone-driven behavior instigated by a combination of the length of the photo period and the bird’s accumulated fat resources. Leaving your feeders out well into October will help the truly needy birds that haven’t yet accumulated the fat resources for their big journey.



Wasatch Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3211
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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 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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