



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society

Volume 42, Number 3 May/June 2023

WAS MONTHLY MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS

Tuesday May 16, 2023 7:00PM

As we await a commitment, plan to be surprised! Keep an eye on our website, wasatchaudubon.org.

Tuesday June 20, 2023 7:00PM

Join us as Ogden Nature Center Executive Director Jonathan Creel talks about one of his recent birding trips. Will it be Alaska or New Zealand? Tune in to find out.

Please note: Monthly meetings will continue in a hybrid format. This means attendees can meet in person at the Ogden Nature Center Educational Building, or tune in via Zoom. (To get a link, see the box below.)

Important Information About Your Newsletter!!

This will be the last edition of The Mountain Chickadee mailed to your home address. A change in editorship is in process and this seems a natural time to make a change that most Audubon chapters made long ago. The newsletter will be emailed to you *if we have your correct email address*. and will as always be available on our website (wasatchaudubon.org). If you cannot access wi-fi or the internet, you may still receive a mailed copy of The Mountain Chickadee. To receive a mailed copy, contact Lynn at bradlynn@comcast.net.

Call for Photos!

Did you take cool photos at a Wasatch Audubon walk this year? Or do you have some from a birding trip you took this year? Please email them to Susan Snyder, naturescall@gmail.com. Photos from 2023 and in digital format only.

WAS OPEN POSITION—TREASURER

Wasatch Audubon needs 1-2 hours of your time to fulfill Treasurer duties: maintain checking account and excel spreadsheet, provide a bi-monthly balance sheet to the board members, pay a few bills and file an IRS form, make deposits, mail correspondence to donors and members. Contact Nancy Arnett at 801-388-0637 or any board member.

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, 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.

Wasatch Audubon Society

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

Officers

President	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Vice President	Ben Johnson	801-231-7008
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
Past President	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432

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2022/2023	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2022/2023	George Muller	801-745-4035
2022/2023	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
2023/2024	Abigail Johnson	
2023/2024	Leah Johnson	
2023/2024	Jen Hitt	801-540-5091
2023/2024	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	Ben Johnson	801-231-7008
Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
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Newsletter	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Programs	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
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>.

President's Corner

by John Bellmon

Spring has sprung despite how hard it has been to come. As I write this, there is record snow fall and water contained within the snow. Some of us, including myself, are in the sandbag detail to help safeguard our homes, many with the help of our best friends, for which we are all very grateful. We are hoping for a spring without any extremes of weather, either too warm or too cold with too much precipitation. Thank you for all the efforts to help your friends and neighbors.

The big thing for us during this time of the year is bird migration. Many species of birds migrate through and into our area for their nesting grounds. Many are brightly colored, displaying and calling in preparation for nesting season that will be happening all over our northern hemisphere. If you would like to follow the migration you could log on to explorer.audubon.org to follow the migration of a bird species you like. This is an Audubon resource that follows over 450 species of birds as they migrate north in the spring. On the website, just list the location and the bird species that you would like to follow.

This is the season to make sure that your bird feeders are clean and filled with the different types of bird seed for all the birds that may be attracted to your yard. This includes different types of seed (black-oil sunflower, millet, thistle, and suet). And don't forget to put out your hummingbird feeders. Dissolve 1 part sugar into 4 parts water. This solution is better than store bought for the hummingbirds.

During migration it is very important to turn off your lights at night, especially those that point up into the sky. Most of our songbirds migrate at night and are disoriented by lights. It's a small thing to do for the small birds that we enjoy so much every spring and summer.

With the coming of spring, it is great to have a "bird friendly home" by planting native plants for the birds. Native plants are best for the survival of our spring and summer birds, as well as for the young they will raise in our yards.

Thanks for letting me ramble on about the many good things spring brings in this great area we live in. It is my favorite season! Good birding to all in this wonderful season.

John B.

Enjoying the Ordinary and Extraordinary
 What Everyday Birding Experiences Can Teach Us
 by Ben Johnson

As any serious birder will tell you, finding a 'rare' bird is a thrill. It might be the most exhilarating experience in all of birding- to add a new species to your "Life List" or to find something completely unexpected and unusual in a given place at a given time. For example, finding a rare "Eastern warbler" such as a Blackburnian or Black-Throated Blue Warbler in Utah at any time of the year, would be both a thrill and a feat!

However, not all people who enjoy watching birds keep a Life List, and certainly not all birders chase rare birds. Even for serious birders like me, finding rare birds like those listed above would be considered an extraordinary accomplishment. It's also an uncommon experience to find rare birds. Therefore, we need to experience enjoyment in watching, recording or photographing birds in the most *ordinary* of circumstances to continue enjoying the hobby of observing our winged friends. In other words, we need to find pleasure in everyday birding experiences.

To illustrate these points, I would like to share a couple of recent experiences I had that helped me to realize that ordinary birding experiences can be extraordinary...

On Saturday, March 25th, I was enjoying a day of watching birds in my own backyard, as many of us do on regular occasion. While I watched, I noticed a more unusual-looking Yellow-Rumped Warbler (YRWA) who was delighting in my backyard offerings of suet and peanut butter. So I did what any sensible bird fanatic would do in such a situation, I ran to retrieve my binoculars! Upon closer inspection, I discovered I likely had a 'rare' bird at hand. After watching closely, I discovered not one but two hybrid YRWAs in my backyard at the same time! They were both apparent hybrids between the two YRWA subspecies, Audubon's and Myrtle, as you can see below.



While I was basking in the glory of this extraordinary occasion, then something else extraordinary showed up: a European Starling (EUST) arrived. Now, Starlings are perhaps the most ordinary of birds- EUSTs are one of Earth's most prevalent birds (as shown on the eBird frequency map at the top of pg. 7

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Discover Gilmore Sanctuary—June 3rd

This is an opportunity to explore the flowering plants on the dunes of Gillmor Sanctuary. Botanist Dr. Lynn Bohs, author Steve Hegji and Audubon staff will present. An easy to moderate guided walk on grassland and dunes is included. Time: 7:45-12 noon. Register at:

<https://act.audubon.org/a/discover-gillmor-sanctuary-dunes-june>.

CALENDAR

May/June 2023



Note: Arrangements for carpooling will be your own responsibility. Accessibility: Walks are no more than 1 1/2 miles, unless otherwise noted. See end of calendar for explanation of accessibility codes located at the end of each event.

MAY**3 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk**

Farmington Bay: Meet on 1325 W (entrance to Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area), not GSL Nature Center. Accessibility: **R U L** Leader-Colin

10 Wednesday 7:00 bird walk

Antelope Island: Lady Finger Point trail: Meet in the Lady Finger Point trail parking lot. Take a right at the end of the causeway and follow the road 0.6 miles to the parking lot on the right. Fee Area. **R U M**

16 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting**Ogden Nature Center or remote**

As we await a commitment from a speaker, plan to be surprised!

17 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk

Buffalo Ranches Trail: Meet at the corner of Ranch Rd. and Prairie View Dr. (residential neighborhood—park on street). We will cross the Legacy Highway dirt road construction and walk to the Buffalo Ranches ponds on the west side of the new highway. **U—rough surface, B, L**

21 Saturday all day Great Salt Lake Bird Festival

It's not too late to enjoy many activities at the Festival. And today is family day! Head out to the Wildlife Education Center located at 1157 S. Waterfowl Way (1100 W Glovers lane) Farmington. See advertisement on pg. 6 for more details.

24 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk

Bountiful Pond: Take the 500 South exit off Legacy Highway, turn west; then follow the frontage road around and back to the north. A pre-bird walk species search will be held. Meet in the parking lot. More serious birders meet at 6:00 a.m. Those arriving at 7:00 a.m. meet the early group around the pond. **R P/U L B**

31 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk

West Weber Playa: Take Exit 339 from I-15, continue on to UT-39 West, take 900 South to 9350 West and drive to the end of the road. **U L**

JUNE**6 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Board Meeting**

Held remotely.

7 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk**Winter's Grove Nature Trail/Old Jefferson Hunt**

Campground area: Turn left just after Chris' restaurant in Huntsville. UT-39, turn on 7450 East. **U L**

14 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk

Woodland Park: Farmington. 300 South 200 East in Farmington. **R P/U L B**

20 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting**Ogden Nature Center or remote**

Jonathan Creel, Director of Ogden Nature Center, will present on a recent birding trip to either Alaska or New Zealand.

21 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk**GSL Shoreline Trail boardwalk, West Layton:**

1002 S 3200 W. Take Gentile St. west and turn left on 3200 W, follow to end of the road, look for the boardwalk trail. **R P/U B L**

24 Saturday 8:00am 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, American Dipper. Bring water and a lunch. Leader-Dan **This trip is mostly done by driving with occasional restroom break.**

28 Wednesday 7:00am bird walk

Ogden Nature Center: 966 West 12th Street in Ogden. Fee Area. **R P/U B L**

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JULY

5 Wednesday 7:am bird walk

Pineview Reservoir North Arm Natural Area:

The north area of Pineview Reservoir, off of UT-167 in Eden. **R P/U B L**

Accessibility Codes for walks and trips
R - Restroom available P/U Combination
P - Paved trail L - Level trail
U - Unpaved 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

**Conservation Corner
Water and the Willard Spur**

by Keith Evans



Willard Bay

Lighting flashed and thunder rumbled while rain came down in sheets. Luckily my birding buddy and I were in a dry and protected vehicle. Thousands of avocets, stilts, ducks, godwits, and other water loving birds didn't seem to mind the downpour. I was thinking about thundershowers and rain, but this spring (2023), we are thinking of record-breaking snow fall. First, water is our lifeline. Even those dreamers who search for possible life on exo-planets concentrate their efforts on "rocky worlds with liquid water." Life on earth is water based and assumed to be on other planets. This factor only exaggerates the importance of the

hydrology of the Willard Spur— as just an appendage of the GSL. A current cultural buzzword is sustainability, but that does not equate with stability. Change, as related to instability, often adds resilience to a functioning ecosystem and determines the diversity of habitats and birds in the area. With these thoughts come questions about the what, where, and value of the Willard Spur from a biodiversity viewpoint and the overall health of the GSL.

The Willard Spur is a significant contributor, both ecological and hydrological, to the 142,269 acre Bear River Bay Globally Important Bird Area. The Bear River drainage provides about 40% of the water required to maintain a functioning Great Salt Lake (GSL), thus important on several levels of scale. Fresh water inflow is a key factor promoting the diversity and productivity of the Willard Spur. Occasionally the GSL reaches levels that flood the area with salt water. We're reminded of the high water of 1983 and again in 1998. Each of these periods resulted in a saltwater covered Willard Spur. However, as this is a rare event and may be even rarer with climate change, I will direct my discussions of characteristics, threats, and management options to the of years when the spur is under the influence of fresh water flows. In recent years the Willard Spur has been dry and in danger of being a contributor to the valley's toxic dust storms. However, variability is still the key. We hope the spring/summer of 2023 will rejuvenate areas like the Willard Spur.

The diversity of the spur is defined largely by the "flushing" flows of the spring runoff. Very little information was available for the Willard Spur prior to the demand for a Willard/Perry joint wastewater treatment facility. With this facility plan came the need for ecological and water quality thresholds as a baseline for issuing of the required permits for plant operation. Management targets were established for the spur to help monitor the impacts/contributions of the wastewater treatment plant. First, the spur was defined as a freshwater wetland estuary of the Bear River Bay, thus for the GSL being below 4211 feet in elevation. Then, three "seasonal" habitats were recognized – submerged wetlands (during spring runoff), fringe wetlands (low brackish water with isolated patches of vegetation), and mudflats (usually mid to

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Conservation Corner

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late summer). These seasonal phases are sometimes referred to as a clear water phase, a green water phase, and a no water phase. All phases are important. But occasionally "wiped out" by a salt water phase. Luckily, we have a long database from the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge to use as a baseline.

At this time, management of the Willard Spur is more of a dialog than of on-site actions. The spur is unique, and many stakeholders prefer to keep the area as natural as possible without building the dikes and impoundments popular in most of the nearby "management areas." The concept of "management" usually implies some landform manipulation to "enhance" the wildlife value. However, management plans and actions also feature certain groups of wildlife at the expense of other groups. For example, the impoundments on many waterfowl management areas enhance the area for ducks and geese, but limit the needed habitats of migrating shorebirds. For management of the spur, we recommend protection from developments, invasive weed control, and minimal landform manipulation. Access should remain open, but with common sense

restrictions on wildlife destructive actions like ATVs and air boats.

The prolonged drought has sparked political attention about the significance of the GSL. If we move into a wetter cycle, lets do our part with continued water conservation and not allowing our politicians to back-slide into indifference.

Welcome New and Rejoined Members

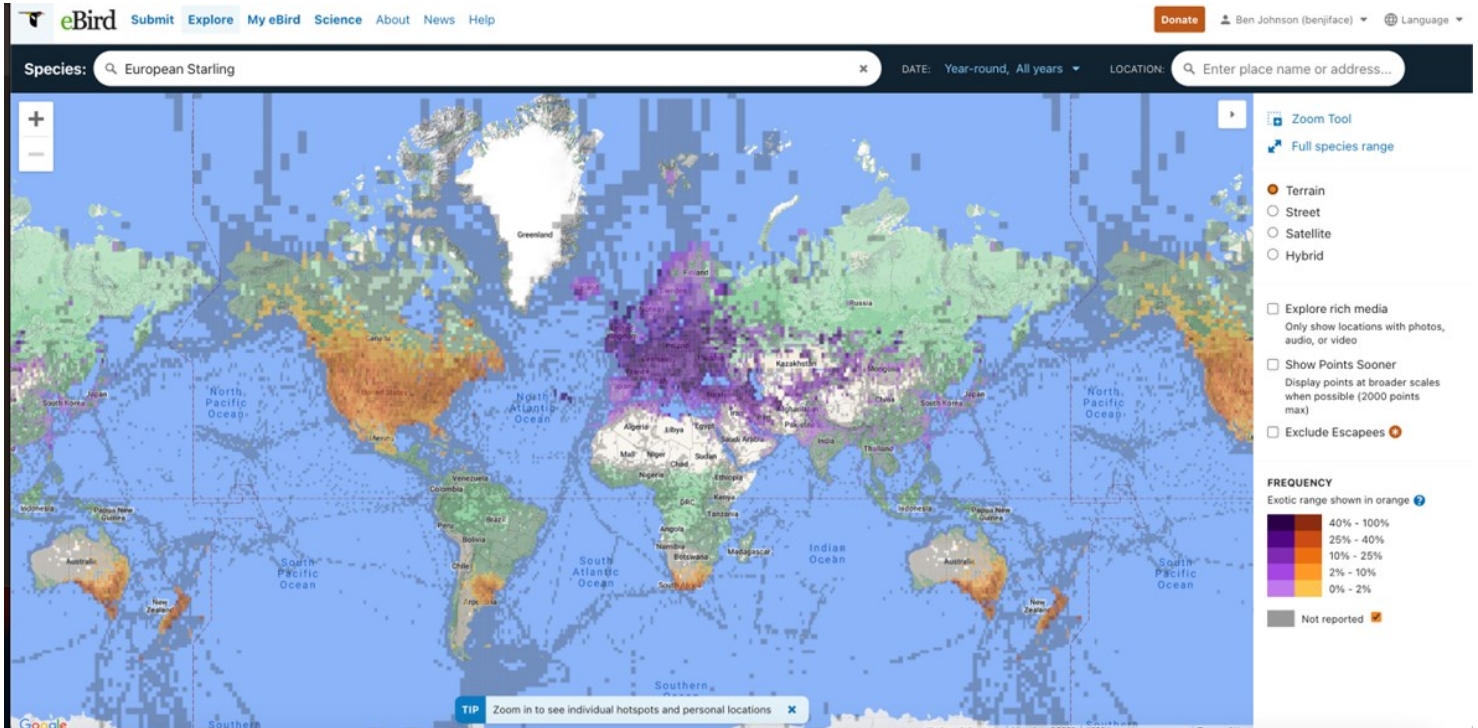
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Crystal Abernathy | Lynn Marshall |
| Ashwin Anand | Kenneth Moore |
| Jim Barney | Ellen B. Pace |
| Karen I. Bezoski | Christopher Pulver |
| Julie Draper | Ann Rakhm |
| Leonore Gabbard | Kimberley Schmeling |
| Sharee Harrison | Terry Taylor |
| Judith Jones | Kaden Wilson |
| Sharon L. Kight | |



Join us at the 25th Annual Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 18-21, 2023

The Festival this year offers over 50 field trips and 15 workshops. There is a family day and free educational workshops where birders of all ages are invited to learn about birds, participate in hand-on activities, and do some birdwatching of their own. Vendor and educational booths will be available. The Festival is held at the George S. and Dolores Dore Eccles Wildlife Education Center in Farmington. Register for trips and workshops online at www.daviscountyutah.gov/greatsaltlakebirdfest/registration

For more information:
Great Salt Lake Bird Festival, P.O. Box 618 , Farmington, Utah 84025
801-451-3286, E-mail: GSLBirdFest@daviscountyutah.gov



So what was so special about an invasive species like a EUST in the author’s backyard? Well, this (on the left below) was the individual bird that I observed...



That is an extraordinary bill (beak) on that Starling! We’d call this a bill deformity and it happens as one of nature’s mysteries, and serves as a reminder that all birds are just a little bit different, just like the humans we regularly interface with.

And lastly, just a [few days later](#), I was birding the Glasmann Pond area in Ogden and watching some Ring-Billed Gulls (RBGU), who allowed me to get quite close for excellent photos (photo above right). Admittedly, there is nothing too exceptional about RBGUs. Later two of the gulls flew up to and stationed themselves on top of a light post in the McKay Dee Hospital parking lot, which is adjacent to Glasmann Pond. I watched several times as other

RBGUs tried to join the two gulls already perched on the light post. The two RBGUs on the post did not seem to want another of their kind to join them, and they protested vociferously each time another Ring-Billed Gull tried to land. I’d never been able to record a clear RBGU call, so it occurred to me to go stand under the light post and wait for another attempted landing. Sure enough, about 45 seconds later, another RBGU circled in for a landing, but was called off the runway by the two post-sitters. I was able to record a very clear call, which you can listen to here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S132133013>. I walked away smiling just ten short seconds later a happy birder submitting yet another checklist to eBird.

As I have reflected upon these completely ordinary encounters, it occurred to me that any of us can have an extraordinary experience while doing the ordinary watching of birds in standard places. And better yet, we can have a joyous time while doing it! Give us a [shout](#) over here at [Wasatch Audubon](#) if you have something ordinary or extraordinary to report whilst on your birding adventures.

Remember—we are host to 20 million birds flying through on migration routes in April, May and June. Turn out as many lights as possible at night!



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 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

___ MY CONTRIBUTION TO WASATCH AUDUBON: _____

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