



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society  
Volume 44, Number 4 ~ July - August 2025

## President's Message

by Jen Hitt

Hello and Happy Summer!

I hope you have been able to enjoy some of the summer birds that have migrated into our area during the past couple of months. I've really enjoyed hearing the warbling vireos, yellow warblers, and lazuli buntings singing every morning while walking my dog.

Hummingbirds have also made their way into Utah. My hummingbird feeders have been buzzing with birds over the last few weeks, but I anticipate that will slow a little as the nesting season starts. In late summer, when my Rose-of-Sharon bushes begin to bloom, the hummingbirds will return. Earlier this year, Audubon Rockies published a great article about ways to encourage hummingbird visitors to your yard. Read it [here](#).

As always, I encourage you to join us for any of our activities. Our Wednesday bird walks are a great way to get into nature and visit with other people who share a love of birds. In the past couple of months we've had some incredible sightings, including a Least Flycatcher at Willard Bay, over 20 Burrowing Owls in a morning at Antelope Island, baby Avocets and Curlews on the Causeway, and Bobolinks in Layton. We never know what we'll see next. Please see the events schedule for our upcoming bird walks.

In place of a chapter meeting in August, on Tuesday, August 19, we will have our annual

potluck picnic at the Ogden Nature Center. It's such a fun opportunity to gather together and visit in a truly beautiful place. Please join us at the Ogden Nature Center. We'll be meeting on the lawn behind the visitor center. Unlike years past, we will not have access to a grill, so your food will need to be pre-cooked. Please bring a dish to share as well as dishes and utensils. Don't forget the bug spray!

Events to watch for in the fall will include the bluebird nesting box clean out activity in September and the Big Sit in October. More details about both of these events will be in the next issue.

I hope that your summer is wonderful, and I hope to have the opportunity to bird with you soon.

Jen



Bobolink. Great Shorelands Preserve, Layton. June 2025.  
Photo by Jen Hitt.

**Conservation Corner****Protect Insects to Protect Birds****by Lynn Carroll**

Birds need insects. The aerial insect-eaters like swallows are the most insect-dependent, but 96% of terrestrial North American birds rely on insects in their diets for part of their lives, according to the American Bird Conservancy. Most songbirds feed insects to their young. Caterpillars comprise 2/3 of many Wood Warblers' diets. Large insects like grasshoppers make up most of a Kestrel's diet in the summer.

Migratory birds need the extra calories and protein of abundant insects to fatten up before, and to sustain them during, migration. Wilson's Phalaropes gorge on brine fly larvae and adults on Great Salt Lake each summer. The theme of World Migratory Bird Day last year was "Protect Insects, Protect Birds." Their press release stated, "timing of migration often coincides with peak insect abundance at stopover locations."

Unfortunately, insect populations seem to be declining worldwide, although the best data is available for Europe and the U.S. (In this context, spiders and other arthropods are included with the true insects.) Research on insect abundance is more difficult than bird counts, and hardly anyone had bothered to measure it until around 2017. There are millions of species, most very small, many underground, and their populations are prone to "boom and bust" cycles. The National Academy of Sciences published two analyses of insect biomass studies (weight or volume) which reported declines estimated at 1-2% per year. That would mean a loss of at least 1/3 of the insect biomass in 40 years.

It's no wonder that aerial insectivorous birds have declined by 1/3 since 1970. A scarcity of insects can hinder bird migration and breeding, leading to weakened immune systems, reduced reproductive success, and increased mortality

rates for both adult birds and their offspring. Omnivores like raptors are affected less, but their prey such as frogs, fish, bats, and songbirds that depend on insects also become less available.

Insects provide a lot of ecosystem services. Pollination is a big one, both for agriculture and for wildlands. Pollinators include various bee species, flies, wasps, and even midges, which are essential for cocoa production. Loss of pollinators can reduce food availability for fruit-eating birds. Waste removal is another invaluable service. Insects clear rotting vegetation out of waterways and recycle nutrients from excrement, dead plants, and animals into soil. People have good reasons to protect insects, so that a so-called "insect apocalypse" doesn't occur.

Three major threats to insect populations are habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. Urban areas have a lot of pavement and buildings with minimal diversity of plant life, thus limited insect habitat. Intensive agriculture, characterized by large expanses of single crops, also reduces insect diversity.

This is compounded, especially in the Midwest, by use of seeds coated with insecticides. "Neonics" are especially destructive to insect biodiversity, because the product either washes off seeds into the soil or is taken up by plants, which return to the soil after harvest. It can migrate into streams from there. Pesticide use throughout developed areas is far greater than necessary.

Climate change is expected to have large impacts on insects in the future by causing droughts or other conditions that kill host plants. Ranges of many species will move north, but as individual insects cannot move far, the northward movement can be interrupted by water bodies or incompatible habitat. A study of intact tropical forests in Brazil found that hotter and drier conditions during dry seasons reduced bird survival rates for 24 out of 29 species studied. The White-plumed Antbird, which follows army ant swarms in the understory, was one that declined significantly. The authors suggest that the reduced bird survival is due to decreased understory

insects in the drier climate.

American Bird Conservancy suggests ways for us to make a difference for insects and birds. Use organic or chemical-free methods of pest control (insect, fungus, rodents, weeds) whenever possible in your yard. Buy organic produce to incentivize small, more diverse, chemical-free farming. Plant a variety of native plants. Let your yard get messy and leave the fall leaves. Support restoration of grasslands.



Western Bluebird. Photo by Mick Thompson.

### Field Trip Report

by Laura Johnston

May 24 was a sunny, windy day and nine birdwatchers enjoyed touring Bear River Bird Refuge. Driving to the auto loop we saw Long-billed Curlews, many Western Kingbirds, and were serenaded by Western Meadowlarks. There were many swallows of multiple species at the beginning of the loop. The remainder of the loop provided us with the expected variety of shorebirds and water birds. Additionally an American Bittern made a fly over.



Tree Swallows at dinner, and perched, at Great Salt Lake Nature Center, 7 June 2025. Photos by Ben Johnson.

### Weber County Sky Monitoring Project

by Laura Johnston

The Wasatch Audubon Society has made commitments to protect the environment throughout the decades. Our newest effort involves the skies over Weber County. Light pollution associated with development is rapidly increasing across Weber County. This poses a concern for bird migration routes. It also presents a concern for other wildlife and human health.

We are joining an effort begun at National Audubon's Gillmor Sanctuary. A Utah Valley University student, interested in migrating birds, wanted to apply skills and knowledge to a real-world problem. Out of that came a community science monitoring program led by a collaborative group from Audubon Rockies, Great Salt Lake Audubon, UTAH Valley University and Dark Sky Utah.

**YOU CAN HELP!** We are seeking volunteers who want to help collect night sky brightness data. Volunteer Details:

- Conduct 2-hour surveys at night in Weber County, four times a year.
- No prior experience necessary.



## The Mountain Chickadee

- Volunteers will work in pairs and will receive necessary training.
- The next volunteer training will be occur in August.
- Contact Laura Johnston at [lauraj51@comcast.net](mailto:lauraj51@comcast.net), or 801-458-9558 for more information and to reserve a spot.



## License Required at Some WMAs

By Lynn Carroll

The following was posted on Facebook by the Utah DWR.

A current fishing or hunting license is now required for access (if you're 18 or older) at most wildlife and waterfowl management areas in Davis, Salt Lake, Utah and Weber counties. All license sales go toward wildlife conservation and habitat restoration, so having a Utah license is a great way to support local wildlife and the WMAs you love. Find a list of WMAs where a license is required and learn about how they differ from other public lands: [\[bit.ly/4jRRXRT\]](http://bit.ly/4jRRXRT) (<http://bit.ly/4jRRXRT>)

## Report on the June Field Trip

By Jen Hitt

Our June field trip took place on June 21. After record-breaking heat the week before, the day was comfortably cool. A group of six birders followed the Donner/Mormon Trail through Morgan county, stopping at key points to learn some of the history of the pioneers' crossing and to look for birds.

## Wasatch Audubon Society

Highlights included Common Nighthawks, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, two fledgling Bald Eagles, an American Dipper and a Great Horned Owl.



American Dipper. Lost Creek. 21 June 2025. Photo by Jen Hitt.



Birders caught in the act by one of their own. Morgan County, 21 June. Photo by Jen Hitt.



Wilson's Phalarope at Great Salt Lake Nature Center, 7 June 2025. Photo by Ben Johnson.

## Email Scam Directed at WAS Members

Regrettably, Wasatch Audubon has recently become the target of scam Emails. These vary in their sophistication, but all purport to be from a WAS officer, requesting assistance paying a vendor. Please be assured that we have a system in place for paying our vendors. We will never request this sort of assistance. Additionally, we would never ask you to provide gift cards or online payment portal (Zelle, Venmo, ApplePay, etc.) information. If you receive such an Email, please delete it immediately. Do not reply or click any links in the message. Please contact me directly with any questions.

Jen Hitt, WAS President

## Let's Communicate

by Lynn Carroll

Do I have your e-mail address? If you haven't received a message "from Wasatch Audubon Society," such as the one announcing that this newsletter was ready, then I don't have a current address. I use MailChimp to send messages to over 300 contacts. These are reminders about meetings, notifications of something new since the latest newsletter, other items of interest, and occasional "action alerts."

I only send about four messages per month, except when the Utah Legislature is in session, when the rate doubles. I get your contact info from National Audubon as Membership Chair or if you give it to me. None of the other recipients will see your address. Please send a request to me at [bradlynnc@comcast.net](mailto:bradlynnc@comcast.net) to stay "in the know."



Wednesday Bird Walk, Green Pond Trail, Weber County, Utah.

## Upcoming Events

### Annual WAS Summer Potluck

Please join us for our annual summer potluck on August 19 at the Ogden Nature Center. We'll be meeting on the lawn behind the visitor center. Please note that unlike years past, we will not have access to a grill, so your food will need to be pre-cooked. Please bring a dish to share as well as dishes and utensils. Don't forget the bug spray!

## Field Trips

**19 July, Saturday, 7:30 am, Monte Cristo/Woodruff.** Meet at North end of Smith's parking lot (12th and Harrison) at 7:30 am to caravan. We'll be heading to higher elevation to beat the heat, and search for high elevation species along SR39. We will then go to the Woodruff area in hopes of seeing Common Nighthawks and Black Terns, and maybe Dusky Grouse. There will be a little easy hiking. The trip will continue into the early afternoon, so bring a light lunch and water. **Accessibility: Mostly by car, restroom stops along the way.**

**23 AUGUST, Saturday, 8:00 am Ogden Valley.** Meet at Smith's 12th and Harrison at 8:00, OR at Chris' in Huntsville, at 8:20. Wandering through Ogden Valley, we hope to see Lewis' woodpeckers, Ospreys and Great Horned Owls. Bring lunch and water. **Accessibility: Restrooms on the drive/minimal walking.**



## Bird Walks

**July 9 - Farmington Pond/Mouth of Farmington Canyon, Farmington:****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville**8:00 AM** Meet in the lower parking lot at 750 N 75 W Farmington. **R P L B****July 16 – Little Mountain Rail Trail:****7:00 AM** Ramblin Roads, 1720 West 12th Street, Ogden**8:00 AM** Meet at the trailhead located at 2000 West on 4000 North (west from Smith & Edwards)**July 23 - Woodland Park: Farmington:****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville**8:00 AM** 300 South 200 East in Farmington **R P/U L B****July 30 - Beus and Glasmann Ponds- Ogden:****7:00 AM** Meet for breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 1765 E. Skyline Dr., South Ogden**8:00 AM** Meet at Beus Pond parking lot. 240 Country Hills Drive, Ogden 84403. **R P/U L B****August 6 - Bountiful Pond:****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 544 W. 400 N., Bountiful**8:00 AM** Take the 500 South exit off Legacy Highway, turn west; then follow the frontage road around and back to the north. Meet in the parking lot. **R P/U L B****August 13 - Antelope Island Causeway (this is a fee area):****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Warren's Drive In, 1778 S. 1000 W., Syracuse**8:00 AM** Meet at the parking lot at the toll booth. **R, L****August 20 - Garr Ranch, Antelope Island (this is a fee area):****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Warren's Drive In, 1778 S. 1000 W., Syracuse**8:30 AM** Meet at the parking lot at Garr Ranch **R, L, U****August 27 - Mueller Park:****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 544 W. 400 N., Bountiful**8:00 AM** Meet at the Gates to Mueller Park, taking Mueller Park Rd east until you reach parking area or park on the street if parking lot full. Bring your boots! Uphill walk, possible high snow levels **U****September 3 - GSL Nature Center:****7:00 AM** Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville, 185 N. Main St., Kaysville**8:00 AM** Meet in the parking lot. 1157 S. Waterfowl Way (1100 W Glovers Lane) Farmington. **R U L B****Accessibility Codes for walks and trips****R** - Restrooms available**P** - Paved trail **U** - Unpaved trail**P/U** - Combination**L** - Level trail **M** - Moderately level trail**B** - benches available

American Coot at Great Salt Lake Nature Center, 7 June 2025. Photo by Ben Johnson.

**Announcement****By Susan Snyder**

Wasatch Audubon is looking for a new program director! This is a fancy title for the person who schedules speakers for our monthly membership meetings. In 2025, we will be meeting in February, April, June, August, October, and December. The August meeting is our annual picnic. Speakers have already been scheduled for February, so that's not very many months left to find speakers. It's a fun position, and allows us to bring diverse topics to our members. Anyone who is interested should contact WAS President, Jen Hitt [jenhitt@hotmail.com](mailto:jenhitt@hotmail.com).

## New/Rejoined Members

Welcome to our new members, and to those who have joined again after an extended absence! We look forward to seeing you at a meeting or on a birding trip.

Bikila Ayano	Sarah Kiefer
Malakhi Becker	Linda Lee
Frank Brown	Xasha Lopez
Lynn Burningham	Roy F Lunsford
Terra Celeste	McKenzie Maki
Michael D Charlton	Keelan Mangus
Martinique Clay	Kandice Matteucci
Chris Coleman	Arvey McFarland
Ashley Crandall	Mark Mitchell
Roberta Crook	Renee Nettesheim
Mevin Davis	Mary Norda
Carey Deachin	Cathy Overfield
Orwin Draney	Ben Phifer
Larry B. Durtschi	Erika Pitlik
Mitchell Eddards	Gail Prims
Teisha Emery	Alan Ribsamen
Chris Erickson	Elizabeth Robertson
Shelley Finder	Guy Robin
Don Gardner	Christopher Sargent
Sofia Garza	Nate Staker
Abigail Grimmett	Kimberly Stephens
Carmen Gutierrez	Jack Taylor
Lisa Hall	Marjeane Thompson
Brittany Halladay	Shelby Tidwell
Sam Haller	Kaitlyn Tomes
Vicky B. Hansen	Joseph Turner
Kirstin Harris	Mary Waddell
Mathew Heiner	Nicholas Wells
Mistie Hoaglin	Sammy Willhoite
King F. Hom	Helen J. Witbeck
Fernando Huerta	David Wood
Kobe Jensen	

## 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 outdoors 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. Visit our website at: <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

## Wasatch Audubon Society

### Officers

President	Jen Hitt	801-540-5091
Vice President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
Past President	John Bellmon	801-814-7544

### Board

2024/2025	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2024/2025	George Muller	801-745-4035
2024/2025	Ruth Carmona-Murray	703-258-2652
2025/2026	Abigail Johnson	
2025/2026	Leah Johnson	
2025/2026	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
2025/2026	Dallin Henderson	801-309-7285

### 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
Membership	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Programs		
Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-338
Hospitality	Jeane Taylor	801-394-2813
Newsletter	Steve Aird	<a href="mailto:even.d.aird@gmail.com">even.d.aird@gmail.com</a>



## Owl Pellets

Thanks to all who collected owl pellets during the last school year. I was able to present my owl program in third, fourth, and fifth grade classes in three school districts. I never have enough owl pellets, so please keep them coming. The larger barn and great horned owl pellets are best. If you know of a good location to collect them, please give me a call. Thanks again, and happy birding!

Dennis Collins (801) 393-1115