



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society
Volume 44, Number 6 ~ November-December 2025

President's Corner

by Jen Hitt

Hello and happy autumn! Temperatures have cooled recently, and there's a fresh dusting of snow in the mountaintops. The bright birds of summer have moved on, and flickers, ruby-crowned kinglets, and white-crowned sparrows have moved back into the valleys.

Wasatch Audubon has had a terrific fall so far. In September, six volunteers headed up to Monte Cristo for the annual bluebird nest box clean out. It was a gorgeous day, with perfect, crisp weather and spectacular views of the fiery fall foliage. We appreciate those who helped us with this!

In October, despite strong winds and the threat of severe thunderstorms, we had a great time at the Big Sit. Ten members joined us, and saw 35 species. Thanks to everyone who came out and to those who made a donation.

We have a lot of exciting events coming up. In addition to our weekly Wednesday bird walks, we will have a Saturday field trip in November to Antelope Island. In December, we will host five Christmas bird counts. If you haven't joined us for a Christmas Bird Count before, we really encourage you to come out! For each count, we divide into teams to find as many birds as we can, and the more eyes we have looking, the better. Whether you're new to birding or whether you are an expert, we need you. Please see the events section for dates and times.

We are still looking for a new program director. The program director is responsible for scheduling speakers for our membership meetings every other month. If you are interested in this position, please contact me at jenhitt@hotmail.com. Alternatively, if you've got suggestions for speakers you'd like to invite to present at an upcoming meeting, please let me know.

I hope that you and yours have a wonderful holiday season, and I hope to bird with you soon.

Jen



Ruffed grouse seen on our way up Monte Cristo; September 2025. Photo: Jen Hitt

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	even.d.aird@gmail.com

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. You might also want to visit our website at:

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Conservation Corner

Audubon Aims to Protect Birds and People

by Lynn Carroll

Audubon calls climate change "the single greatest threat to birds and other species." You may remember the headline, "Two-thirds of North American birds are at increasing risk of extinction from global temperature rise." This quote is from the 2019 report, [Survival by Degrees: 389 Species on the Brink](#) by Audubon's Climate Science Team, which used the latest climate models to predict how the ranges of 604 North American bird species will shift as "climate change and other human impacts advance."

In the quest to protect birds from impacts of climate change, Audubon is advocating two approaches. Natural climate solutions have the advantage of also expanding bird habitat. They include preserving existing carbon sinks, such as forests and wetlands, and improving the carbon-capture capacity of rangelands, farms, and degraded ecosystems with better management practices. At the same time, greenhouse gas production must decrease, so Audubon encourages "swift and responsible deployment of renewable energy." By "responsible" they mean avoiding sites that are especially bad for birds or communities. They don't mean we must keep burning fossil fuels until some new technology is developed.

As the demand for electricity explodes, the U.S. urgently needs to improve and greatly expand its electrical grid to support a wider range of renewable resources across all geographic regions. This will require large-scale construction with land clearing and heavy machinery in remote areas. The potential harm to biodiversity both during and after construction prompt Audubon to collaborate with other conservation organizations, decision makers, and project developers. However the importance of added transmission capacity for climate stabilization remains.

The Climate Science Team produced a report in 2023 called [Birds and Transmission: Building the Grid Birds Need](#). It shows how birds and communities could be protected while the essential infrastructure is built. I strongly recommend reading at least the Letter of Introduction and maybe the Executive Summary. After those you can find:

- "Why We Care", which details why more transmission is needed to support the clean energy future we want. There is also a nice diagram of an electrical grid.
- The "Science" chapter tells current understanding of how transmission lines affect birds. While electrocution is not a concern, collisions are, and so are habitat impacts. Ways these risks can be mitigated are detailed.
- "Policy" discusses how the science can be applied to help birds. It includes a case study of the impacts Audubon had through direct engagement with the SunZia transmission line.
- "Conclusions" is a brief wrap-up.

You'll see how Audubon aims to protect birds and people from both climate change and climate change solutions.

Source: Audubon.org 10/19/25



Fall foliage seen while cleaning nesting boxes in Monte Cristo, September 2025. Photo: Jen Hitt

Lester Talbot

by John Bellmon

Les Talbot retired from his 16 years of volunteer service at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Visitor Center. He was the welcoming face that many first saw when they entered the visitor center. Les taught countless visitors about the refuge and the birds and other wildlife in the refuge.

Les worked for many years as a high school Biology Teacher at Ben Lomond High School in Ogden. After retiring from teaching at the high school, he started his volunteer service at the Bear River Refuge Visitor Center. Les has been an active member of Wasatch Audubon for many years, including over 10 years as our field trip chairman. He planned and led many of our field trips during that time. He was also a recipient of the Wasatch Audubon John Nelson Award, "for his commitment to conservation, volunteer service to his community, and lifetime dedication to the Audubon Cause."

On Les' last day, August 28th, there was a party held in his honor, at which he was recognized for his years of faithful service (5,421 hours over his 16 years). He was presented a very nice plaque honoring him for his service and then a big

surprise. The outdoor classroom education center was named in his honor! It is now the "Lester Talbot Outdoor Nature Explore Classroom." Congratulations Les for this recognition of your years of service to the refuge and to all of us. Thank you very much!



Photo: John Bellmon

November and December Bird Walks

November 5 - 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**

November 12 - Beus and Glasmann Ponds-Ogden:

8:00 AM Meet for breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 1765 E. Skyline Dr., South Ogden

9:00 AM Meet at Beus Pond parking lot. 240 Country Hills Drive, Ogden 84403. **R P/U L B**

November 19 - Buffalo Ranches Pond:

8:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville

9:00 AM Meet at large white (ball) radar station by the GSL Nature Center, walking to the Ranches ponds from there (over 3 miles round trip). **U L B**

November 26 - 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. **U**

December 3 - Buffalo Ranches Pond:

8:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville

9:00 AM Meet at large white (ball) radar station by the GSL Nature Center, walking to the Ranches ponds from there (over 3 miles round trip). **U L B**

December 10 - Ogden Cemetery:

8:00 AM Meet for breakfast at Dylan's, 981 12th Street in Ogden

9:00 AM Meet at 1875 Monroe Blvd. Ogden **P/U L**

December 17 - No Bird Walk. Bear River Refuge Christmas Bird Count

December 24 - No Bird Walk. Christmas Eve. Morgan Christmas Bird Count on 12/22. Ogden Valley Christmas Bird Count on 12/24

December 31 - No Bird Walk. Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count on 1/1.

January 7 - GSL Nature Center:

8:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville, 185 N. Main St., Kaysville

9:00 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

Christmas Bird Counts

For questions regarding accessibility, please contact the appropriate CBC leader.

Wednesday, December 17, 9:00 am, Bear River Refuge Christmas Bird Count

Meet at the Bear River Refuge Headquarters' parking lot at 9:00am. We will divide into three teams to cover the different areas. This is an all-day trip, so bring water and lunch.

John Bellmon: bellmonj@comcast.net

Saturday, December 20, 7:00am, Ogden Christmas Bird Count

Meet at Denny's (take 21st Street to 1100 West, on the north side by the Flying J Plaza, Ogden) for breakfast and to get your assignment. This is an all-day trip, so bring water and lunch.

John Bellmon: bellmonj@comcast.net

Monday, 22 December, 7:30/8:00 am, Morgan Christmas Bird Count

Meet at the Utah DWR (515 E. 5300 S., South Ogden) to carpool at 7:30. Or meet Weston Smith at McDonald's in Morgan, 297 E. 300 N., at 8:00am. There will be three or four teams depending on how many people can help. This is an all-day trip so bring water and lunch.

Weston Smith: weston73@hotmail.com

Saturday, 27 December, Ogden Valley Christmas Bird Count

No description available.

Mike Hearell: utmarshrat@yahoo.com

Leslie Loeffel lloeffel@comcast.net

Thursday, January 1, 8:00am, Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count

Antelope Island State Park, meet in the parking lot at the entrance to the park. We will divide into teams to cover the area. It is an all-day trip, so bring



Wednesday bird walk at the Kaysville Wilderness Trail, September 2025. Photo: Jen Hitt.

November Field Trip

22 November, Saturday, 8:00 am, Antelope Island: Meet in the parking lot before the gate. We will be visiting the birding hot spots on the island – the Causeway, Lady Finger Point, Garr Ranch. Bring lunch and water. This is a fee area. **Restrooms available/minimal walking.**

There will be no December field trip due to the Christmas bird counts.



Common nighthawk; Syracuse, Utah; September 2025.

Ogden Nature Center Bird Feeding

by Laura Johnston

Wasatch Audubon will begin its annual feeding project at the Ogden Nature Center on **November 14**. This involves teams or individuals feeding the birds daily at seven feeders provided by WAS. The seed and feeding gear, also provided by WAS, are available on site. Although there were enough feeders at the end of last year's feeding season, openings can occur at any time. Please contact Laura at lauraj51@comcast.net if you would like to volunteer.



Cassin's Vireo. Mulberry Grove, Antelope Island, 6 September 2025. Photo: Ben Johnson.

Weber County Dark Sky Monitoring Update

by Laura Johnston

Our summer monitoring was a total success! We added three new sites, all in Ogden Valley, for a total of nine monitoring sites. Later in November our data will be compiled by scientists at Utah Audubon in a form I can report on in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, the fall monitoring will be done one night within these two windows: November 10-12, November 17-19. Training will be on November 3 at Church of the Good Shepherd in Ogden 6:00-7:30pm. If you are interested in volunteering to join us, contact Laura Johnston at laurajohns0150@gmail.com. I will send you a flier with more information and a link to sign up.

New and Renewed Members (June, 2023)

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

Luke Alexander	Tyler Gilbert
Virgene Andelin	Kristy Gliens
Sterling Anderson	John Golding
Tomoya Averett	Lindsey Graham
Sylvia Baker	Marylou Hancock
Leigh Barnette	Nicholas Hansen
Alex Berta	Leslie Hanson
Gage Binette	Ian Hardy
John M. Brady	David Harley
Aubrey Brandon	Kylie Harris
Josh Breinling	Alexis Harvey
Dusti Bridges	Alex Hill
Linda Brown	Brian Horman
Jordin Butcher	Barbara Hudson
Jackson Buttschardt	Schuyler Johnston
Debbie Caballero	Tara Judecis
Morgan Carbajal	Katie Kapinos
Gretchen Cassidy	Durke Kilburn
Jerome Chaffee	K. W. Killeen
Brighton Chandler	Kelly Kirkham
Ethan Christensen	Sarah Lambson
Tami Chugg	Kristi Larsen
Andy Conlin	Yvette Laughter
Rachel Coon	Ted Lawson
Christiana Cortes	Mikari Leblanc
Cameron Day	Monica Linford
David B. Day	Chris Loftus
Amber Dayley	Rachel Lyn
Mike Dollar	Kate Madge
Katherine L. Dreyer	Nate Marin
Jessica Dugan	Diane Marston
Ian Duncan	Cathy Marum
Lesli Eck	Corey McKay
Jodi Eitner	Dave Munsell
Jacque Elliott	Deedra Nelson
Melanie Espinosa	Kate Overton
Austin Everley	James Paliwoda
Chelsea Fairbourn	Lynette Penrod
Aimee Fallbrook	Bailey Porter
Jimmy Gardener	Emmy Poulos
Katie Gardner	Steve Pragovich
Catherine Gerwels	Alex Richter
Justine Gifford	Emily Rimmasch

Jessica Rivera	Tanner Thibodeaux
Mario Rivero	Kathy Thronbur
Cassi Robison	Haylie Tracy
Connor Rules	Christa Unruh
Tink Safeer	Kilisitina Usle
Andrea Scholl	Mike Vowles
Zach Shaw	Daniel Wade
Alan Smith	Kristin Webster
Deborah Smith	Jessica Wright
Benjamin Sokolik	Ann-Marie Yoshida
Hailey Spillane	Rebecca Young
Mary Stewart	Shaunell Young
Ben Stucki	Shyla Zahariades
Hope Szarek	



Hammond's Flycatcher. Mulberry Grove, Antelope Island, 6 September 2025. Photo: Ben Johnson.



Wasatch Audubon would like to thank the Layton Lowe's for the incredibly generous donation of bird seed. We will use this to feed the birds this winter at the Ogden Nature Center. Photo: Dan Johnston

Dennis Collins Retires

After 45 years, Dennis Collins will step down from his chairmanship of the Wasatch Audubon Education Committee. One of the founding members of the chapter, Dennis has held this position since its formation in 1981. During his time as Education Committee chairman, he placed over 100 Audubon Adventures in elementary classrooms in 20 schools in four school districts (1980s and 90s). He has always led classroom learning with owl pellet dissection, which is why he is always looking for them. Our chapter has always emphasized education about birds and wildlife conservation. Dennis, thank you very much for all your years of service to residents of the Wasatch Front. Ruth Carmona-Murray will now assume leadership of the Education Committee. Please help Ruth as much as possible, even though Dennis will continue helping with classroom sessions.



Owl Pellets

Thanks to all who collected owl pellets for me 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



Intrepid volunteers, John Bellmon and Dallin Henderson, installing nest boxes.



Hunter Mann and nest boxes he built.

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 each year. Six issues of our chapter newsletter, *The Mountain Chickadee*, are on our website. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of \$20, please go to the following website:

[Audubon Membership](#)