



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society
Volume 44, Number 5 ~ September - October 2025

President's Message

by Jen Hitt

I hope that you have had a wonderful summer, and have enjoyed some of the wonderful birds that are around this time of year. While there are still a few weeks of summer remaining, the fall migration has already begun. In North America, the fall migration peaks from mid-August to mid-October. Some shorebirds and songbirds have already started their journey south. The fall migration can seem less enjoyable than the spring migration, as we watch some of our favorite migrants leave for the winter. But it can also provide opportunities for viewing unusual birds that may make a quick stop during their journeys. Keep an eye out for rarities at migrant stopover sites like Garr Ranch on Antelope Island, Bountiful Pond, or the Salt Lake International Center.

The same Cornell Labs BirdCast link that I shared for the spring migration can be used to monitor the autumn migration as well. Check out migration numbers for Weber County [here](#). We can help migrating birds navigate their way south by dimming or turning off outdoor lights during this time. Outdoor light shades that focus light down, rather than up, can also be helpful.

We will be keeping an eye out for interesting migrants on our weekly Wednesday bird walks, and we encourage you to join us if you can. We have had some great sightings on our field trips and bird walks over the past couple of months. We watched a sapsucker parent

feed its young in a nest cavity in Huntsville.

We saw a rare white-winged dove in Plain City, and watched purple martins soaring over Monte Cristo. Check out the events calendar for our upcoming bird walks, and be there for our next great bird sighting.

On September 27, we will have our annual Bluebird Nest Box Clean-up in Monte Cristo, east of Ogden on highway 39. The birds will not nest in boxes that have a previous year's nesting materials in them, so this is really important. Thank you to everyone who can come out to help!

On Saturday, October 11, we will be holding our annual Big Sit fundraiser in the parking lot of the Eccles Wildlife Education Center. The Big Sit is a yearly event, in which groups from around the world participate by setting up a circle with a 17 foot diameter, and sitting in that location to count birds. We would love to have you drop by and count birds with us for a few hours that day! If you can't join us, we would appreciate your support by collecting pledges from your friends and neighbors. Funds received from this event will be used to continue our education, bird feeder, and other programs. Pledge forms and additional information can be found [here](#).

I hope to bird with you soon!

Conservation Corner

Projects Currently Affecting Water to Farmington Bay

by Heather Dove

Conservation Chair, Great Salt Lake Audubon

You may have noticed that Farmington Bay is drier than normal for this time of year. In addition to the effects of climate change and the ongoing drought, there are some big water infrastructure rehabilitation projects happening that are contributing to the drying. While they are in process, water to Farmington Bay will be temporarily reduced. The good news is that once they are completed, the result should be improved water delivery to Farmington Bay and improved control of phragmites.

Much of the water infrastructure around the lake is ancient, often dating from the 1930s. These structures are highly inefficient, often ineffective and in some cases, broken. They are also very dangerous for our wetland managers to adjust. These projects are designed to update these structures for the benefit of the lake and the wildlife.

Here are a couple of articles that give a good overview of these projects:

[Trust Awards Funding to Protect and Restore More Than 13,000 Acres of Essential Great Salt Lake Wetlands](#) (Nov 2023)

[Cha-ching! Why is the Great Salt Lake set to get a massive infusion of cash?](#) (July 2025)

Two big projects that will impact water to Farmington Bay are the

[State Canal Dam - Burnham Dam](#) and the [Bypass Dam](#). The State Canal project has started and is scheduled to finish in mid-September. The Bypass Dam project is currently scheduled to begin in Summer 2026.

Once completed, the water flow to both impounded and unimpounded areas of Farmington Bay should be significantly improved. Birds and people are eagerly awaiting its completion! Duck habitat and shorebird habitat should benefit.

Conservation Corner

Keep the Ball Rolling for GSL

by Lynn Carroll

I hope you followed the hyperlinks in Heather's article. There's a lot of information there, showing that good things are happening around Great Salt Lake that should pay off in the future. The reference to a "massive" infusion of funds struck me as hyperbole, since the money was spread over three years, but still worth celebrating.

There's a long way to go to "save the lake," meaning reaching a lake elevation of at least 4198 ft. The Great Salt Lake Commissioner envisioned reaching that goal (for the south arm) in 2054. This July, the lake was at 4192 and expected to decline further until autumn. The good news is that the salinity is in a safe range now. If the lake elevation falls to 4190, the berm will be used to reduce flow from the higher-salinity North Arm into the South Arm, which should avoid the die-off of brine flies that occurred in 2022.

Last year, GSL Commissioner Steed outlined a 10-yr Strategic Plan meant to make good progress in time for the Olympics. It includes a 10% reduction in water use across the board to add about 250K acre-ft. of conserved water to the lake so as to achieve a lake elevation around 4195 ft. It will not be easy. In fact Lynn de Freitas, FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake Director, wrote that we will have to "make difficult choices, put up with inconveniences, and fundamentally change the way we use our water." She has heard that the State leadership views the plan as too aggressive. "Now it's time to give [the Commissioner] the support he needs." It's up to us to let our leaders know we're up to the challenge. We want them to lead us toward a healthier lake and healthier people.

Youth Corner

How to Change Your Birding Routine

by Abigail Johnson

Have you ever gotten bored with birding? Sometimes I get tired of birding in the same areas doing the same things. But finding different ways to do it can make birding more interesting and can help you grow as a birder. One way to help entertain you during your birding experience is to use different technology. Another way is to change the places you go. A third way to have fun while birding is to do it with different transportation.

The first way is to use different technology. That is, use binoculars, scopes, cameras, recordings, or different birding apps. Sometimes you can bring a camera and focus on photography. Use different birding apps, like Merlin, to record bird songs. This can help you improve your birding skills by recognizing each bird by sight and call.

Another way to change your birding routine is to go to new places. Sometimes it is fun to travel a little farther than usual. This can help you find new birds in new environments. This will enable you to improve your spotting skills as a birder.

A third way to change your routine is by using different transportation. Sometimes you can walk. Other times you can drive. Some examples of transportation could be: car, bikes, feet, kayak, boat, motorcycle, paddle board, horse, RZR, four-wheelers, etc. Changing your transportation may help you access habitats you otherwise wouldn't be able to see.

So, if you ever start to wonder what you can do to change up your birding routine just think about the three ways. Each of them can help you have a whole different birding experience. Think about what you can do to change your birding habits and continue to enjoy this wonderful pastime!



Uber for rodents. A Northern Harrier carrying a vole at Buffalo Ranch Pond, 28 June 2025. Credit: Ben Johnson.

July Field Trip Report

by Dan and Laura Johnston

The day of our July field trip was clear and cool. We explored around the Monte Cristo area, drove to Randolph, and then to the wetlands along the Bear River. We spotted five Purple Martins at Monte Cristo. Those are a rare find in Utah. While there, we also found a family of Dark-eyed Juncos with juveniles begging for food from their parents. Along the way, we saw an abundance of beautiful wildflowers. In Woodruff and Randolph we saw 12 Common Nighthawks flying and sitting in trees. We missed the expected flyover of the Black Tern in the wetlands, but were rewarded instead with a flyover of an American Bittern.

August Potluck Report

by Laura Johnston

On a WARM evening at the Ogden Nature Center, we enjoyed each other's company, lots of birding stories and good food. The food everyone brought was a real treat for all. A few attendees, young and not so young, played croquet.



Great Horned Owl at Great Salt Lake Nature Center, 12 July 2025. Credit: Ben Johnson.

Dark Sky Monitoring Report

by Laura Johnston

In April, Sky monitoring volunteers made good use of the equipment donated by WAS by measuring brightness in three Weber County locations. And we are well into accomplishing our second Weber County Sky Monitoring with twice as many volunteers and three additional sites. It will be done by the end of August, and then we will start planning for the fall monitoring. Your support for this project is appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering for this ongoing project, email Laura Johnston at ljohns0150@gmail.com.



Juvenile Dark-eyed Junco at Monte Cristo, July 2025. Photo by Jen Hitt

Upcoming Events

October Meeting

Our October meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00 pm. Wasatch Audubon webmaster and current Weber State student, Clementine Rane, will be joining us to discuss her work last winter in South America. She had the opportunity to put the first ever radio-tag on a wintering Wilson's Phalarope, our Great Salt Lake summer resident, in Argentina. Join us in person at the Ogden Nature Center located at 966 W 12th Street in Ogden or attend virtually via Zoom.



Rufous Hummingbird, Ogden, Utah, 28 June 2025. Credit: Dennis Collins.

Bluebird Nest Box Cleanout

27 September, Saturday 8:00 AM

It's time to clean out the nest boxes so they will be ready for the Mountain Bluebirds next spring. This is very important as the birds will not use old nests. We will meet at Smith's (12th and Harrison Blvd., Ogden) at 8:00 am. 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.

This is an off-trail hike with elevation.

The Big Sit

Robert N. Hasenyager Nature Reserve at Farmington Bay, Saturday, 11 October, 4:00 AM to 8:00 PM

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. **R P L**



Burrowing Owl at Ambassador Duck Club, 9 August 2025. Credit: Ben Johnson.



Announcement

by Susan Snyder

Wasatch Audubon is looking for a new program director! This person schedules speakers for our monthly membership meetings. 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.

Bird Walks

September 10 - East Mountain Wilderness Park:

7:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville, 185 N. Main St., Kaysville

8:00 AM Meet at 1625 E 650 North Kaysville, UT 84037 **R, U**

September 17 - Riverdale Trail- South:

7:00 AM Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant 3558 Wall Ave Ogden

8:00 AM Meet at the trailhead off Riverdale Road at 700 W. 4800 Weber River Dr, Riverdale, UT 84405 **R, P, L**

September 24 - 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**

October 1 - Willard Bay (this is a fee area):

7:00 AM Breakfast at Ramblin Roads 1720 W 12th St. Ogden

8:15 AM Meet at Flying J Parking Lot and travel to Willard Bay from there. **R P/U L B**

October 8 - Buffalo Ranches Pond:

7:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's in Kaysville

8:00 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**

October 15 - Fort Buenaventura river trail to Kingfisher Loop:

7:00 AM Breakfast at Moore's Family Restaurant, 3558 Wall Ave., Ogden

8:00 AM Located on A Avenue in Ogden. Meet at the entrance to the park, walk the trail that goes along the river to Kingfisher Pond. **P L B**

October 22 - Ogden Botanical Gardens and Parkway:

7:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's 981 12th St. Ogden

8:00 AM Meet in front of Ogden Botanical Park, 1750 Monroe Blvd. **R P L B**

October 29 - Croydon Lost Creek Area:

7:00 AM Breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 1720 W. 12th St., Ogden

8:30 AM Meet at Croydon City Park. 1801 N 6900 E, Croydon, UT 84018 **no applicable accessibility codes**

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**

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



Les Talbot, long-time WAS member and volunteer at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, during his last month at the Wildlife Education Center. Credit: Lynn Carroll

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.

Michaela Abeyta
Hannah Adams
Brad Anderson
Amber Aposhian
Lake Baker
Monti Bargsley
Jessica Barraza
Skylar Beck
Kyle Bertagnolli
Emily Bishop-Valles
Colter Blanchard
Cooper Brayton
Lauren Broadhead
James Bustin
Shae Capener
Jamie Chan
Alex Charters
Dexter Clark
Peter Clemens
Autumn Coates
Harlan Cooper
Brittany Cotton
Brandon Crosthwait
Ian Cunningham
Camille Cutler
Kelly L. Dabb
Colton Darger
Olivia Day
Mckenna Delton
Joseph Dudash
Mary A. Ebert
Rebecca Escalante
Janelle Gibbs
Stephanie Grant
Julia Griffith
Logan Hammer
Michael Hanson
Bonnie Harper
Laurel Harry
Jesse Hawkley
Thane Heiner
Ej Hinterman
Ty Hipwell
Nick Jahsman
Jennifer James
Samantha Keane

G. D. Keaton
Judith Keime
Madison Kilpack
Jerry Kirk
Kelly Krumm
Justin Lee
Anthony Little
Lucinda Lunsford
Alexis Maurice
Mallory McLean
Brennan Mecham
Jill Montgomery
Mary Montgomery
Mackenzie Mujwid
Henry O'Keefe
Jesse Olson
Andrew Opalewski
Joyce Oppedahl
Delores Ottley
Jolene Oyler
Tiffany Partington
Christian Paxton
Becca Powell
Kirk Probasco
Beverly Prothero
Kelani Purvis
Kelly Rodriguez
Verda Rost
Denise Samples
Gisela Schierman
Cristal Sepulveda
Mitchell Shaum
Amber Sherman
Julee Shields
Jonah Simmons
Chanetta Simpson
Brianna Sprutta
Athena Steadman
Stacy Stewart
Kira Tadehara
Jacqueline Taylor
Tara Thalman
Scott Thornton
Taylor Thornton
Jose Torres
(continued on next page)

(new members, continued)

Amanda Trott
 Sandra Turner
 Robert Vanspyke
 Hannah Watson
 Alexis Wendt
 Karlene Williams
 Donna Wilson
 Robert Winfield
 Vicki Zollinaer



Western Kingbird at BR. 28 June 2025. Credit* Ben Johnson

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	even.d.aird@gmail.com



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