



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society
Volume 45, Number 4 ~ July / August 2026

President's Corner

Happy Summer from Wasatch Audubon!

Our newly arrived migratory birds have settled in and are starting to nest and raise their young. It is a wonderful thing when birds nest in our yards. What a treat to watch them gather nesting materials and then watching the parents bring food for their young and teach them how to fly. Cornell Lab of Ornithology has tips for making your yard nesting-bird-friendly [here](#).

This summer, I encourage you to join us for some of our regular scheduled activities. Our Wednesday bird walks and monthly field trips 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 really fun sightings, including a least flycatcher at Willard Bay, baby American coots at Bear River

Migratory Bird Refuge, and an American Robin in her nest at Bountiful Pond. Please see the events schedule for our upcoming Wednesday bird walks and Saturday field trips.

In place of a chapter meeting in August, on Tuesday, August 18, we will have our annual potluck picnic at the Ogden Nature Center. It's so much fun to get together in this beautiful space to share a meal and visit with each other. We will not have access to a grill, so your dishes will need to be prepared in advance. We hope to see you there!

Looking ahead to autumn, we'll have our annual Bluebird Nesting Box Clean Out Day in September and our Big Sit fundraiser in October.

I hope you have an incredible summer, and look forward to birding with you soon.

Jen Hitt



The Wednesday bird walk crew at Willard Bay, with big smiles after getting great looks at a couple of Least Flycatchers.

Wasatch Audubon Society

Officers

President	Jen Hitt	801-540-5091
Vice President	Dallin Henderson	801-309-7285
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Joan Miller	717-448-5480
Past President	John Bellmon	801-814-7544

Board

2026/2027	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2026/2027	George Muller	801-745-4035
2026/2027	Ruth Carmona-Murray	703-258-2652
2025/2026	Abigail Johnson	
2025/2026	Leah Johnson	
2025/2026	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
2025/2026	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Ruth Carmona-Murray	703-258-2652
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	801-829-3383
Hospitality		
Newsletter	Steve Aird	steven.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>

Jay Stretch Steps Down

It is with great sadness that for health reasons, Jay Stretch has had to step down as Wasatch Audubon's treasurer, a position he filled for the last two and a half years, following his two-year term as our president. He also assisted Nancy Arnett while she was treasurer. Jay has been very helpful in guiding us financially with investments and uses of our funds. We are all very grateful for his help and advice.

Wasatch Audubon has a new member, Joan Miller, who will fill out the remainder of Jay's term. Joan has had a career in accounting and financial management. She moved to our area nine months ago to be closer to family. She is a long-time member of National Audubon and served as a volunteer guide at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and at New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Sanctuary. We are very fortunate to have her help.

Field Trip to Bear River Refuge

by Dan and Laura Johnston

On May 23, in perfect weather, 24 birders in seven cars met at the Bear River Visitor Center. The regular auto loop was closed due to construction, so we were able to go on the D line (behind the gates) a route not generally open to the public. We were well rewarded with 61 species. Highlights were several Long-billed Curlews and Cattle and Snowy Egrets. We also had close looks at male Ruddy Ducks in breeding plumage, and cute baby Coots with their red heads. The baby coots were being well fed by their mom.



Say's Phoebe Greenwich, Utah, 30 May 2026. Photo: Ben Johnson.

Conservation Corner**What Does a Farm Bill Have to Do with Birds?****by Lynn Carroll**

Well, it's the single largest source of conservation funding in the world (1). Congress normally renews a "Farm Bill" every five years. Exactly what's included can make a significant difference for bird habitat. It's a couple of years overdue now, but the House passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 this spring. The Senate will need to pass its own version, then negotiate with the House, to get a final bill passed this year.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was first in the Farm Bill in 1985. It is a voluntary program that pays farmers to take degraded or highly erodible land out of crop production for years, changing to vegetative cover, such as native grasses, trees, and riparian buffers. This helps control erosion, improves water and soil quality, and enhances wildlife habitat. Grassland birds, in particular, have benefitted from this program and a special Grassland CRP that preserves grassland and rangeland while allowing grazing. Unfortunately, the CRP is capped at 27 million acres, despite the need for more.

The CRP and several other Farm Bill-funded programs are run by The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) is the largest "working lands" program, paying farmers and forest owners to adopt habitat-friendly practices. It's used to target specific wildlife species, such as the Golden-winged Warbler. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) supports conservation activities by public-private partnerships. The House's Farm Bill allows partners such as universities or Audubon to access RCPP funds to provide direct technical support to landowners. This could reduce the impact of a nearly 20% cut to NRCS staff.

The House bill also creates a new Forest Conservation Easement Program, providing

protections for old-growth forests, which would, or course, benefit forest birds.

There are items in the bill that conservationists will work to see gone in the final version. For instance, there are several provisions that reduce pesticide oversight and regulation. EPA is given extra time to comply with the Endangered Species Act, and large-scale logging would be less regulated. Desirable additions would include programs that provide incentives for grazing rotation and for using seed without insecticide coatings, as well as increased funding.

You can help by responding when Audubon or others ask you to contact Congress in support of a good Farm Bill. For example: [A Farm Bill?](#)

(1) [How the Farm Bill Works for Birds - American Bird Conservancy](#)



Lazuli Bunting, Ogden Botanical Gardens, 20 May 2026.
Photo: Joan Miller.



Caspian Tern, Buffalo Ranch Pond, 15 May 2026. Photo: Ben Johnson.



Sage Thrasher, Greenwich, Utah, 30 May 2026. Photo: Ben Johnson.

May and June Bird Walks

July 1 - Kaysville Ponds

7:00 AM Breakfast at Dylan's, 185 North Main Street in Kaysville

8:00 AM [Meet at 920 S 50 W, Kaysville, UT 84037](#) on the Frontage Road (50 West). Meet in the Botanical Center parking lot to walk the trail from there. **P/U M B**

July 8 - 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**

July 15 - Powder Mountain Feeders and Surrounding Area:

7:00 AM Meet at Dylan's in Ogden, 981 12th St., Ogden

8:30 AM [Meet at Powder Mountain to view feeders and surrounding area](#)

July 22 - 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

the parking area or park on the street if parking lot full. **U, R**

July 29 - Green Pond Trail near Snowbasin

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

8:30 AM [Meet at the trailhead which is on New Snowbasin Road just past mile post 2.](#) **U, not level.**

August 5 - Willard Bay (this is a fee area):

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

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

August 12 - 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**

August 19 - 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 26 - 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**

September 2 - Garr Ranch, Antelope Island (this is a fee area):

7:00 AM Breakfast at Warren's Drive In, 1778 S. 1000 W., Syracuse

8:15 AM [Meet at the parking lot at Garr Ranch](#) **R, L, U**

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

Future Field Trips

18 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 lunch and water. **Accessibility: Mostly by car, restroom stops along the way.**

22 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 Swainson's Hawks. Bring lunch and water. **Accessibility: Restrooms on the drive/ minimal walking.**

Annual Summer Potluck Dinner

Please join us for our annual summer potluck at 6:00 pm on August 18 at the Ogden Nature Center. We'll be meeting on the lawn behind the visitor center. Please note that unlike in 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!

New and Renewed Members

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.

Katherine Acree	Barbara Hanlin
Eugene Anderson	Deborah Larson
Darlene Bridwell	Michael Moran
Melvin Burningham	Craig Penrod
Janice Dalley	Brenda Reed
Isabella Gonzales	Barbara J. Sandstrom
Michael Gonzales	Ian Swenson
Rylie Gonzales	Angela Tereba
Marcus Hadlock	Garrick Webster
David Hamilton	



American Avocet, Bear River Refuge, 23 May 2026. Photo: Joan Miller.

Temporary Auto Route Closure / Alternate Route - Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

The Refuge's regular Auto Tour Route will be closed starting on Saturday, April 4 through mid-September due to a planned maintenance project. During this time period, an alternate route will be available for the public to drive. More information about the closure, alternate route, and project can be found [here](#). Information is also available at the Visitor Center and at Refuge kiosks.

Invitation to a Board Meeting

by Lynn Carroll

Did you ever wonder who decides what goes on in this Audubon chapter? The answer is Wasatch Audubon Society's Board of Directors (Board), which consists of the officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and immediate Past President) and six elected Directors (aka Board Members). See page 2.

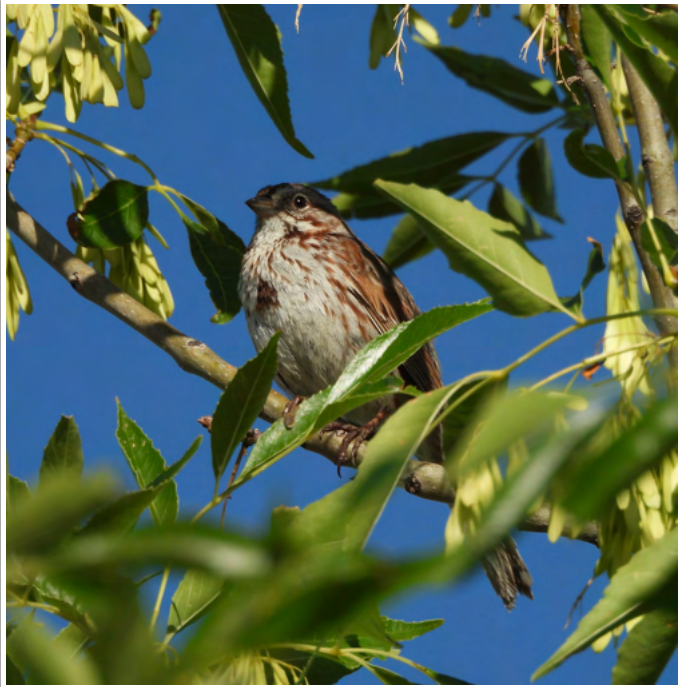
The Board meets on the first Tuesday of even-numbered months. Ever since we learned to use Zoom because of Covid, the Board meetings have been held virtually. Committee Chairs often attend, and members who would like to are invited. We could use your opinions and ideas. Let Jen or John know of your interest so that they can share the Zoom link and agenda. If you haven't used Zoom before, help is available online and from friends.

June Field Trip Report

Fourteen birders, including the Bobolinks, enjoyed the Donner/Mormon Trail birding trip. The weather was perfect. We saw 47 species, among them an immature Bald Eagle, Gray Catbird, McGillivray's Warbler and the Green-tailed Towhee. We missed the American Dipper, which has been a regularly spotted species on this trip, because the Weber River was too high at that spot.

Dark Sky Monitoring Progress

The Sky Monitoring Project of Weber County has completed its first year of seasonally measuring sky darkness. The data is being compiled by scientists in Audubon Rockies and Gillmor Sanctuary to share with those interested in keeping our skies dark for migrating birds and for other environmental benefits. Each season volunteers spend a couple hours at night measuring darkness. If you are interested in learning more about this, contact Laura Johnston at laurajohns0150@gmail.com.



A Song Sparrow (above) and an American Robin on her nest (below) at Bountiful Pond, 3 June 2026. Photos: Joan Miller.



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



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](#)

Calling All Bird Photographers

Several avid photographers regularly share their outstanding photos with us, but we know that many more of you are also stalking Utah's wild areas with your own cameras and professional lenses. We would be delighted to showcase your best work as well. If you have really good photos of Wasatch bird life, please send it to WAS President Jen Hitt, at: jenhitt@hotmail.com