



The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Volume 29, Number 6 **November/December 2010**

WAS Meetings and Happenings

November 16th Meeting

Anticipating the Christmas Bird Counts – Our chapter will soon be conducting counts of wintering birds in Northern Utah as a part of the 111th nationwide Christmas Bird Counts. Wasatch Audubon has participated in this effort for 30 years at four different count-circle locations. At this meeting, Dr. Keith Evans will provide us with techniques and procedures to help brush up on identifying wintering bird species. Be sure to attend so you will be ready for winter feeding and/or participating in the field counts or feeder counts during this citizen-science activity. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th).

December 21st Meeting

Birding Adventures from a Kayak For our December meeting, past Wasatch Audubon President, Scott Baxter, will share some of his many adventures and outstanding photography of a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and other marshland inhabitants. Scott is an expert photographer and kayaker and has used these talents to produce an informative and entertaining program. 7:00 PM at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th).

Come and bring a friend!

The 111th Christmas Bird Count

From December 14, 2010 through January 5, 2011, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition across generations. Grandmothers and students, soccer moms and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists will head out on an annual mission – often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house in the middle of winter to participate in the Christmas Bird Count..

Wasatch Audubon will again be conducting four Christmas Bird Counts over four separate days (see the schedule below). Following the Ogden Area Count on Saturday, December 18th, there will be a potluck dinner at 6:00 PM at the UCC Church at 3350 Harrison. Come, bring a friend, and have some good birding fun! For more information call **John Bellmon (801-444-3704)**. **Note:** there is a \$5 fee to participate in the counts. Participants will receive the Audubon publication, *The 111th Christmas Bird Count, American Birds*.

WAS Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Bear River Refuge Count: Wednesday, December 15th. Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West - just east of I-15, exit 346) at 8:00 AM for breakfast or at 8:30 AM to carpool.

Ogden Area Count: Saturday, December 18th. Our annual daylong effort to count birds seen in the Ogden area. Meet at 7:30 AM at the Denny's Restaurant (take 1100 W north from 21st St. to Flying J/Conoco Plaza on your left) for breakfast and to get your assignment. Come to the UCC Church (3350 S Harrison) at 6:00 PM for a potluck dinner and compilation of data.

Morgan Area Count: Wednesday, December 29th. Meet at Utah DWR (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) at 7:30 AM to carpool to breakfast at the Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan, or meet at the Inn at 8:00 AM.

Antelope Island Count: Saturday, January 1st. Meet in the parking lot outside the Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00 AM.



Wasatch Audubon Society

Website: wasatchaudubon.org

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801-597-1091

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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>

Newsletter Articles: Items for the next newsletter are due by the 20th of the month prior to the newsletter date. Send letters, articles or comments to Rich Kennedy, 1184 W. Pleasant View Dr., Pleasant View, Utah 84414 or by email to: geoteck@hotmail.com

President's Pipeline. So I'm browsing through a golf magazine recently, and I have one of those Homer Simpson-like "Duh" moments. No, I didn't find a magic cure for my 20 handicap. Instead I found an article which discussed how golf courses are seeking ways to reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides as well as reducing the amount of water they use.

The article focused much of its attention on how the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has essentially codified water use by golf courses by dictating design features, course modifications and irrigation. There is also currently a moratorium on new course construction in that area. So why did my light bulb go on?

For us environmentalists, two major issues are on the table right now: the Snake Valley water grab by SNWA and the Great Salt Lake Mineral expansion. Both are water issues which would ultimately have an adverse impact on wildlife. The GSLM expansion would draw the Great Salt Lake down by two feet. There is a push now for a conservation pool of water for the GSL so this won't happen. A conservation pool would require less water use from all the drainages that flow into the lake.

SNWA is viewed as the great ogre out to dry up the whole Great Basin. It did not seem that way after reading this article. **Nothing** like what SNWA requires for golf courses is occurring on the Wasatch Front. Take it from me, courses here on the Front are soft and lush thanks to all the water dumped on them. Still no excuse for the 20 handicap.

So I decided to do a little impromptu study comparing water consumption on the Wasatch Front to Las Vegas and water saving programs offered by SNWA versus those offered on the Wasatch Front. Here are some factoids:

1. Per capita water consumption in Las Vegas is 165 gallons per day (gpd). In Utah, statewide consumption is 293 gpd. Salt Lake City consumption is 240 gpd., St. George 254 gpd.
2. SNWA offers a landscape renovation program to its users. They will pay \$1.50 per square foot up to \$5000 to homeowners to tear out lawn and shrubs that are high water users and replace them with a low water use landscape. The **only** program offered here is by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. Users can receive a rebate by switching to more efficient sprinkler heads. Big deal!

(Continued on Page 6)

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lynn Carroll

Energy Alternatives: Wind. Demand for energy keeps growing in spite of all the costs to human and environmental health. Wind offers a less harmful alternative to fossil fuels. With government incentives providing a boost, wind farms have begun generating significant amounts of electricity.

Utahns are seeing turbines pop up in unexpected places. Suddenly we have to face the reality that this clean, renewable energy source isn't ideal. First there is the lovely view that's spoiled. Then we hear about bird deaths—lots of them! Bats too! So what's a good environmentalist and bird lover to do when a wind farm is proposed for a blustery butte or canyon mouth nearby?

Research. Here is some of what I learned at www.nationalwind.org. Large wind turbines generate electricity more efficiently than smaller ones, capturing energy from more wind with their longer rotor blades, and often reaching stronger winds with their higher towers. Effects on birds include “both *direct mortality* from collisions and *indirect impacts* from ... habitat disruption, reduced nesting ... habitat abandonment, loss of refugia,” etc. Raptor deaths from wind turbines gained a lot of attention early on, because the wind farm at Altamont Pass in California was sited in an area heavily used by Golden eagles. However, roughly 75% of the bird deaths at wind power facilities are songbirds, since they are the most common type of bird, most migrate, and most do so at night. They die in collisions with the turbines, meteorological towers, and transmission lines. Songbirds generally fly higher than the highest turbines but are vulnerable during take-offs and landings and when weather conditions force them to lower altitudes. Bats are also killed at all sites that have been studied. Three migratory tree-roosting species of bats appear to be especially vulnerable to wind power-related fatalities.

Put this in perspective. The numbers of bird deaths associated with wind power are probably underestimated because of: difficulty recognizing remains of small birds, scavengers removing the bodies, lack of manpower for counts, etc. Nevertheless, wind power deaths so far are much

lower than other man-made causes such as building and vehicle collisions and pesticides, or feral cats. So the environmental benefits of wind power will often out-weigh the risks, unless species already in serious decline are involved.

Know the local conditions. Rates of bird fatalities vary widely among the wind facilities studied; the number of fatalities *per megawatt per year* ranges from 14 down to less than one. (A typical new turbine is rated at 1.5 MW.) Knowing how many birds use a site and their behavior there helps predict how dangerous wind turbines will be to birds at a particular site, and the same applies to bats.

Advocate for research and standards. Not enough is known about how to minimize harm to birds and bats caused by wind power generation, so more research is needed. What is known, e.g., raptor deaths increase in areas with concentrations of small mammals, needs to be used to develop standards for siting and operation of wind farms. There are no mandatory Utah standards, and federal guidelines are incomplete.

Check out National Audubon's policy and information about wind energy at www.audubon.org under conservation/policy issues and action/energy.

Stansbury Mountains Trip

August 21, 2010

by Les Talbot

During the field trip, I kept thinking that this was a hot, desolate place to be this time of year. We began by stopping at Stansbury Park Pond. There were Mallards, Eared Grebes, and Ring-billed Gulls on the pond. We also saw Eurasian Collared Doves, Barn Swallows, a Mourning Dove, and a Kestrel around the pond. A Golden Eagle flew over us.

Our next stop was South Willow Canyon, which was pretty much wall-to-wall with people. The Forest Service Ranger Station had four hummingbird feeders on the front porch with numerous Broad-tailed and Rufous Hummingbirds. We were given permission to approach the porch, so we got an excellent view of them. I scoped the cliffs across the canyon from the station and spotted

a raptor sitting on a ledge. At the time, we couldn't identify it. After the trip, I asked Lee Shirley about it. From my description and the illustrations in Sibley's Field Guide's, we decided that it was probably a Prairie Falcon.

We then drove to the top of the road and walked around the campground loop. There were not many birds. We stopped at a campsite for lunch. A sign said day use was half off with a Golden Age Passport. We figured that if they asked us to pay a fee we had enough passports amongst us that they would owe us money. No one came to collect a fee.

After lunch we drove to Rush Valley, turned west and traveled to Dugway. At Dugway we saw a small flock of birds that we couldn't identify. We kept wishing that Jack, John, or Keith were with us to help us out. We finally got a good look at them in the scope and with Sibley's Field Guide decided that they were juvenile Cowbirds. From Dugway we went north on State Highway 196 to I-80 and then home.

About eight miles south of I-80 on State Highway 196, there is a large natural spring called Horseshoe Spring. We saw Lark Sparrows and a Spotted Sandpiper there. The spring is probably a hot spot for birds during the spring migration. At the spring the thermometer in Paul's car read 104° F!

Paul Lombardi, Jeannette & Brian Nosker, Jeane Taylor, Sharon Andrus, and I made the trip. We saw the following 24 species: Ring-billed Gull, Eared Grebe, Mallard, Eurasian Collared Dove, Barn Swallow, Golden Eagle (3), Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Kestrel, Broad-tailed & Rufous Hummingbirds, Prairie Falcon, Chickadee species, Northern Flicker, Western Kingbird, Vesper Sparrow, Raven, Juvenile Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Lark Sparrow, Spotted Sandpiper, Horned Lark, and Double-crested Cormorant. We also saw pronghorns and a coyote.

After compiling the species list, it turned out to be a good birding trip after all! However it was still desolate terrain and hot. This trip would probably be better trip in the spring.

DUCK STAMPS

by Jay Hudson

A few good men in the early 1930s recognized that because of drought, loss of habitat and market hunters, America was losing its waterfowl. A cartoonist, hunter and conservationist named Ding Darling raised the alarm, and President Franklin Roosevelt appointed him chief of the newly created U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His mission was to develop a steady stream of revenue to help reverse the losses. President Roosevelt signed the Duck Stamp Act into law in 1934, and the slow but steady change began. Darling drew the first duck stamp and signed it. Years later that \$1.00 stamp sold for \$275,000.

Seventy-five years later, the over \$700,000,000 raised has partially been the reason that 5.2 million acres of wetlands have been purchased, and America has tenuously held the line in the loss of waterfowl acreage. With over 500 Wildlife Refuges in the system, purchasing an annual Duck Stamp is a cheap way to help protect our natural resources. With the \$15.00 purchase from the Post Office, you can enter any of the refuges simply by showing the stamp. I doubt that your purchase will ever turn into a \$274,999 profit but the stamp will always have a sale value and if you have a complete collection in mint condition, you have about \$12,000 worth of duck stamps. If you only have a few of the latest, they make a great shadow box for a wall hanging.



**Support Migratory Bird Management.
Buy your Federal Duck Stamp now!**

Available at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
or at your local Post Office

or at:

<http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps>

Nest Box Clean-Out Trip

September 25, 2010

by Les Talbot

Jack Rensel and I would like to thank the following people for participating in the annual nest box clean-out: Paul Merola, Betty & Keith Evans, Lynn Carroll, Paul Lombardi, Kris Purdy, and John Bellmon. Thanks to everyone's participation, we were able to clean out all of the boxes. We also need to give Jack a big thanks for heading up this project.

Members Corner

Editor's note: Following are a few new columns/articles submitted by our members. Each month we will have something new in this section. Some will become regular monthly columns, while others may be a onetime treat! Please feel free to send me your ideas, photos, articles, etc. or anything you might like to share with the readers of *The Mtn. Chickadee* at geoteck@hotmail.com.

Enjoy! -Rich-

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON

by Jay Hudson (no relation) with help from *The Bird Biographies of W. H. Hudson*"

Among the birds named for W. H. Hudson is the Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*), that long distance flyer that so many of us do not have on our life list. Hudson was born on the Argentine Pampas in 1841 about the same time that Thoreau was building his hut at Walden Pond. At that time the pampas teemed with wildlife, and Hudson's home outside of Buenos Aires was in not only gaucho country, but included many wetlands. He is considered a pioneer in conservation and a born observer. He believed that birds had a soul, experience emotions and appreciate beauty in their love songs and mating dances. Hudson observed that the Godwit arrived at the lagoons and arroyos to the south of Buenos Aires in April and obtained two specimens from a fellow bird enthusiast in November of 1876 to study.

The origin of the name "Godwit" is unknown, but an easy way to distinguish this large sandpiper from other shorebirds is to say that the bill curves up towards "god." The Latin scientific name means "color of blood." W.H. Hudson recognized the Godwit growing up and also recognized that when he saw a "prayer" of these Godwits that they were "undoubtedly visitors from the far northern reaches

of North America." This smallest of the four Godwits of the world, migrates from the Hudson (a different Henry Hudson) Bay region of Manitoba over and down the coast of North America. Many feel that it rests somewhere in the interior of South America prior to completing its journey to both northern and southern Argentina.

I have not found the original Argentine name of the bird. W.H. Hudson was not only honored with his name on this Godwit but also with Hudson's Black-tyrant and Hudson's Canastero. We are fortunate that many ornithologists believe the Hudsonian Godwit population is on the upswing. One Hudsonian Godwit has been recorded and photographed on the Great Salt Lake. Let's hope we see more!

HOME SWEET HOME

by Keith Evans

In addition to information on 150 birding hotspots, the book entitled, "Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites" is full of information on habitat types. Is habitat as important as size, color, wing-bars, and bill shape for bird identification? Probably not, but being habitat aware sure helps. And, for the birds, habitat is everything. This month-by-month series is based on information from the book with a few anecdotes to add interest.

December Christmas Bird Counts. Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were started in 1900 and provide the longest continuous database on wintering birds in the world. Over 2,000 counts are made throughout North America each year. CBC birding is social, exciting and provides valuable information on bird populations. The database is online at www.audubon.org/cbc. Wasatch Audubon Society volunteers coordinate, compile and collect CBC data for four count circles – Ogden, Morgan, Bear River Refuge, and Antelope Island. Habitats throughout these areas are variable but are primarily residential, agricultural, and wetland. The common birds encountered on most counts provide the most useful information for the database, but the rare encounters offer the most excitement. Some of the expected birds include Canada Goose, Mallard, Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Black-billed Magpie, Ruby-crowned

Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, White-crowned Sparrow, and many more as approximately 80 species of birds commonly winter in the area.

I remember a cold winter day when Bohemian Waxwings were abundantly mixed in with the more common Cedar Waxwings. Darrell and I were counting birds on the high bench residential area on both sides of 12th Street. First we were spending lots of time carefully counting each species whenever a flock was encountered. We finally realized that our eyes were going bad and the sun was going down. So we changed our strategy. First we calculated the percentage of Bohemian's within the flocks we had already counted, then we counted total birds and applied the "percentage rule." I believe we were as accurate and efficient as possible. This was Darrell's first CBC and he was almost overcome with the "wow factor." This same dilemma has occurred with flocks of gulls and starlings. I remember when one of our observers reported a "ton of gulls." Our recorder, being an engineer, asked if that was a short ton or a metric ton. I've been participating in CBCs for nearly 50 years in Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri, Virginia and Utah and am always amazed at the variety of experiences. And, don't forget the great potluck dinner after the Ogden count.

HELP WANTED!

A volunteer is needed to take over the role of the Wasatch Audubon Newsletter Editor. The position requires some computer skill, including document formatting and familiarity with Microsoft Word. This requires just a few hours every two months. Please communicate your interest in this position to any board member.

President's Pipeline (Continued from Page 2)

3. Several municipalities in Utah employ an increasing block rate fee schedule for water to discourage excessive water consumption. A recent study found this fee schedule in its current form has had a minimal impact on decreasing water consumption.

So the ogre is not Las Vegas, it is us. It is very difficult for the citizens of this state to fight to protect Snake Valley water when the citizens of this state consume 77% more water than Las Vegas. It's also tough to fight for a conservation pool for the Great Salt Lake given our current consumption rates. Next summer try watering that blue grass lawn and petunias every 3 days instead of every day. If we don't reduce our water consumption, we are the proverbial residents of a glass house throwing stones.

Paul Merola
sfarkus@yahoo.com

Welcome New Members

by Paul Lombardi

Please join us in welcoming those who have recently joined Audubon and/or our chapter:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Bob Argyle | Rhonda Mickelson |
| Chris Balling | John Mijer |
| Richard Barty & Family | Korinne Nelson |
| Helen Bell | Janet O'Berg |
| Jason Chamberlain | Jaye Poelman |
| Scott Chamberlain | Don & Shirley Pewtress |
| Kim Cooper | Carol Roundy |
| Cindy Hadley | Carol Rotunda |
| Thomas Hawkins | Shawna |
| Janice Hewett | Michele V. Sickle |
| Deanna Johansen | Dickson Smith |
| Richard C. Johnson | Patrick Stallcup |
| Lester | Orin Talbot |
| Sharon Lockhart | Paul Dean Wagner |
| Glen R. Loper | Lynn R. Weeks |
| Lowell S. Maw | Donna Wilson |

Hope to see you at our next meeting or field trip.



CALENDAR

All activities listed below are open to the public.
No fees are charged for any event unless noted.

For further information on
Meetings: Jack Rensel 399-0240
Field Trips: Les Talbot 731-4925
Bird Walks: Mort Somer 782-5668

November

3 Wednesday 8:00/8:45am Bird Walk

Two Rivers Trail: Meet at 8:00 at the Denny's Restaurant (Take 1100 W north from 21st St. to Flying J/Conoco Plaza on your left) for breakfast or meet at 8:45 to carpool.

5-6 Friday & Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm

Sunflower Seed Pick Up. Pick up your pre-ordered sunflower seed at the Utah DWR Warehouse (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

10 Wednesday 8:15/8:45am Bird Walk

Kays Creek Parkway: Meet at 8:15 at McDonald's (5745 S. Harrison) for breakfast or at 8:45 to carpool.

16 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting

Anticipating the Christmas Bird Counts - Keith Evans will provide us with techniques and procedures to help brush up on identifying wintering bird species. Be sure to attend! At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page sidebar for details.)

17 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am Bird Walk

Ogden Cemetery: Meet at 8:15 at Burger King (SE corner of 21st & Wall) for breakfast or at 9:00 at the cemetery entrance at 20th and Jefferson.

20 Saturday 8:00/8:15am Field Trip

Antelope Island: Meet at 8:00 at the northwest corner of 5600 S and 1900 W in Roy (west of Wendy's) or meet at 8:15 at the Antelope Island Visitor's Parking Lot to carpool. Bring a lunch.

24 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am Bird Walk

Pineview Area: Meet at 8:30 at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool. (Where we go will depend on ground conditions in Ogden Valley.)

December

1 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am Bird Walk

Willard Bay: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, east of I-15, Exit #349) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

7 Tuesday 7:00pm Board Meeting

The Board of Directors meets at 7:00 at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). All members are welcome.

8 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am Bird Walk

Riverdale Parkway: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (Riverdale Rd. & 900 W) for breakfast or meet at 9:00 at trip start. (From Riverdale Rd., north on 700 W for two blocks, right on 4300 S, right on 600 W to the parking lot.)

15 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am Christmas Bird Count

Bear River Refuge: Meet at 8:00 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West – just east of I-15 exit 349) for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool. (See page 1 for details.)

18 Saturday 7:30am Christmas Bird Count

Ogden Area: Meet at 7:30 at the Denny's Restaurant (Take 1100 W north from 21st St. to Flying J/Conoco Plaza on your left) for breakfast and to get your assignment. (See page 1 for details.)

21 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting

Guest speaker Scott Baxter will present Birding Adventures from a Kayak. At the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page sidebar for details.)

22 Wednesday 8:15/9:00am Bird Walk

Ogden Nature Center: Meet at 8:15 at The Village Inn (322 12th) for breakfast, or at 9:00 at the Nature Center for the walk.

29 Wednesday 7:30/8:00am Christmas Bird Count

Morgan County: Meet at Utah DWR (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) at 7:30 to carpool to breakfast at the Spring Chicken Inn in Morgan, or meet at the Inn at 8:00. (see page 1 for details.)

January 2011

1 Saturday 8:00am Christmas Bird Count

Antelope Island: Meet in the parking lot outside the Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00. (See page 1 for details.)

5 Wednesday 8:30/9:00am Bird Walk

Ogden River Parkway: Meet at 8:30 at The Village Inn (322 12th) for breakfast, or at 9:00 to carpool.



Wasatch Audubon Society

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Wasatch Audubon Society
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Ogden, Utah 84409



Audubon
Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of *Audubon* and of my local chapter, *Wasatch Audubon*. Send my membership card, and my annual subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine (6 issues) and *The Mountain Chickadee* (6 issues) to the address below. My check for \$20 (Introductory rate only) is enclosed.

NAME _____

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Send this and your check for \$20, payable to Audubon to:

National Audubon Society
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Palm Coast, Florida 32142-2250

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