



The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Volume 30, Number 5 *September/October 2011*

WAS Meetings and Happenings

September 20th

Katie McVey, ranger for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, will present Natural History and Ecology of the Burrowing Owl in Southwest Idaho - research experiences involving food habitats and habitat use by the owls for natural areas vs. agricultural areas. This is a good opportunity to learn more about this interesting and beloved species.

October 18th

Keith Evans, retired ornithologist for the U.S. Forest Service, longtime member of Wasatch Audubon Society, and dedicated birder, will present A Day Along UT-39 -- habitats and birds seen on a trip beginning at the shore of the Great Salt Lake and ending at Monte Cristo Campground.

Come and bring a friend!

DINING IN THE BACKYARD

We're not talking about firing up the grill for your own fulfillment. We're talking about feeding those birds that visit your "restaurant." Time seems to fly by for those of us who feed birds in our backyards. Just a short time ago, we were in our "spring migration" mode; then quickly we went into the "flower/butterfly" mode; and already it's time to think about feeding birds and shoveling snow. Our local sunflower seed grower has reported a good crop this year; so unless a disaster strikes, we should be able to provide the black-oil sunflower seeds that our members and friends need to more fully enjoy the birds that visit our yards during the winter months. The 40,000 pounds (or 20 ton) of bird feed that we distribute every year help maintain a healthy and happy bird population in Northern Utah. Those of us who are "backyard birders" receive many hours of enjoyment observing our feathered friends from the comfort of our homes.

In addition to feeding thousands of birds, the sunflower seed project is the main money-raising event for the Wasatch Audubon Society. We use this funding source to provide the **Audubon Adventures Program** in 100 local classrooms for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. This educational program, sponsored by the National Audubon Society, introduces the students to the wonders and perils of wildlife. Each year we receive feedback from teachers and students who have enjoyed the materials and have become more aware of the outdoors and the critters that contribute to the beauty of our wonderful state. In this issue, you will find a sunflower seed order form; or, if you prefer not to order seeds for the birds, please consider a small donation to help us continue to provide educational materials to the students in our area. *Good Birding!!*

Keith Evans



Wasatch Audubon Society

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Email: patricia@peakbusinesssolutions.net

801-597-1091

Officers

President	Paul Merola	801-731-4815
Vice President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
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2011/2012	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-731-4925
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
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President’s Pipeline. Well, I just got back from the Meadows USFS cabin on the Greys River in Western Wyoming. Fellow WAS chapter member, Dennis Collins, accompanied me on this trip. I sold him on it after he heard about all the birds that were observed just around the cabin in previous visits. Dennis brought along a seed and hummingbird feeder and I brought the beer.

This was the latest time of year I had been to this cabin, but it was only by about a week later than usual. When we arrived, we were hit by a fierce rain- and hailstorm. Next morning, we awoke to 30 degree weather. Bird activity was minimal that day and the next. I suspected that fall migration had already started in a serious way. I typically record about 30 species with good numbers of birds just around this cabin. Not this year. Dennis and I had to work pretty hard to get to 28 working the whole Greys drainage. Probably the most notable bird finds were a pair of Williamson Sapsuckers, a Red-naped Sapsucker, a pair of Rufous Hummingbird and a Spotted Sandpiper with a juvenile. We also saw an American marten and a badger as we drove around the area. Although we covered most species seen on previous trips, numbers of birds were decidedly down.

Around my house, the Black-capped Chickadees and a Northern Flicker had already established winter residency. This was about a month early. To me, it could only mean that fall is just around the corner and that winter could be close on its heels. Not much of a summer this year.

So just when you got caught up around your place after last winter and spring, winter may be back soon. I never did whittle down my summer “To Do List.” Hopefully part of your prepping for winter is putting in your sunflower seed order. This could be a hard winter and our feathered friends may really need us this year. I think the birds know what’s coming and are taking action. So fill out your sunflower seed order on the back page of the newsletter and send it in today. Who knows, snow may be flying by November 1st this year if the birds are right.

Paul Merola
WAS Chapter Leader

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 at: geoteck@hotmail.com

**Fall Retreat – Utah Audubon Council
Great Salt Lake Nature Center**
September 10th and 11th
by Lynn Carroll

Birds, talk, and food – these are the ingredients of a retreat with the Utah Audubon Council. Enjoy plenty of each when you join host Wasatch Audubon at the Great Salt Lake Nature Center on Farmington Bay on September 10 and 11. All Audubon members and friends are invited. **RSVP** before the 10th; the earlier the better. Here is the basic plan:

Saturday

- 9:00 am: Meet at the parking lot of the GSL Nature Center (West Glover Lane, Farmington). Carpool for a field trip at Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area and surrounding area. Bring binoculars and scopes along with a snack for lunch. We'll share chapter news after returning to the Nature Center.
- 6:00 pm: Potluck dinner begins at the Nature Center while viewing wildlife from the decks.
- 7:30-8:30 pm: Keith Evans, avid local birder, will share his interpretation of "Utah's Bird Heritage."

Sunday

- 8:00 am: Meet at the Nature Center for birding along the nature trails.
- 9:15 am: Breakfast provided by WAS at the nature center, followed by a business meeting. All invited to provide ideas and opinions; voting by chapter representatives.

Adjourn around noon.

This schedule is subject to change. Additional details such as cost, directions, potluck details and meeting agenda will be available on chapter web sites soon. Call Lynn Carroll (801-392-8216) or John Bellmon (801-444-3704) with questions or to say that you're coming.

Monte Cristo Flower Walk
July 30th, 2011
by Les Talbot, Field Trip Chair

We could not have asked for better weather with clear skies and mild temperatures. Ten of us: Marie Fulmer, Betty & Keith Evans, Jack Rensel, Carol & John Bellmon, Jeanette & Brian Nosker, Richard Johnson, Kris Purdy, and I enjoyed the adventure of pretending we were Tiny Tim tiptoeing through the tulips. Since we were supposedly concentrating on the flowers, I had to keep reminding the group that we were viewing flowers, not birding.

The abundance of flowers was not as great as it was in other years, but we have to remember that spring was really slow in arriving at higher elevations this year.

Our first stop was at Dairy Ridge Road. The highlight of that stop was seeing a Hairy Woodpecker drilling a hole in the trunk of a tree.

Visitation at the campground was low. Usually at that time of the year the campground is full. Betty and Keith ran into Crystal Carpenter, former WAS Board Member and naturalist at Antelope Island. Her job at Dead Horse Point is going well.

After we finished at the campground, we drove to the gravel pit to look for different flowers that might be growing in the rocky habitat. We were disappointed not to find any different flowers.

The gravel pit was our lunch stop. From there we drove to Curtis Creek Road to search for Purple Martins and we did see several. We also saw Red Crossbills and Cassin's Finches on the trip.

We saw the following flowers: Daisy Fleabane, Groundsel, Mountain Dandelion, Mule's Ears, Wavyleaf Thistle, Western Coneflower, Yarrow, Yellow Salsify, Oregon Grape, Mountain Bluebells, Mountain Forget-me-not, Stickweed, Yellow Columbine, Meadow Rue, Western Larkspur, Gooseberry, Hare Figwort, Red Paintbrush, Blue Penstemon, Richardson's Geranium, Western Wheat Grass, Elderberry, Bedstraw, Horsemint, Wallflower, Lomatium, Silvery Lupine, Vetch, Leafy Jacob's Ladder, Englemann Spruce, Limber Pine, Subalpine Fir, Soft Cinquefoil, a sedge species, Sticky Geranium, a Violet, and Elk Sedge. The following were new flowers this year: Small-

flowered Woodland Star (a member of the Waterleaf family), Striped Orchid, and Alum.

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 Chickadee at geoteck@hotmail.com.

Enjoy! -Rich-

How We Got Here

by Jay Hudson

This is the start of featuring both old and new members of Wasatch Audubon and why they joined.

Lynn Carroll

My dad loved to camp and my mom loved to put names on Mother Nature's treasures. I got my first "Golden Book" of birds at 12 in California. I was a now and then birder until I married Brad and we moved to Boulder, CO where I went to an Audubon meeting. I started going on bird walks, always staying close to the obviously knowledgeable birders. I went on a Christmas bird count and started my life list shortly thereafter. It wasn't until I joined the Wasatch Audubon that I became a regular at meetings, walks and counts. I take my binoculars on trips and always try to find a little time to use them. I've never taken a birding tour but have been thinking about one to Mexico.

UTAH HOTSPOT

ANTELOPE ISLAND STATE PARK

by Keith Evans

It's early in the morning on a drizzly, cold, fall day. I'm dressed warmly for a trip to my favorite Utah birding hotspot, Antelope Island State Park. I think of returning to the warm bed but don't. When I lived in Missouri, I birded on many rainy days since many days were rainy in the midcontinent wet climate. After moving to the arid climate of Utah with so many dry sunny days, I began skipping the occasional rainy day. However, today's trip will be great as hundreds of thousands of birds feast on the brine flies and brine shrimp of the Great Salt Lake.

The fall migrants are especially abundant. Of the 270 species on the Antelope Island bird checklist, many are rare visitors as this unique habitat can be a draw for birds more common in alpine habitats (Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch) or ocean environments (all three species of scoters). I bird this hotspot for the sheer joy of seeing thousands of birds concentrated on the mudflats as well as anticipating the sighting of a rare species. My "lifers" from Antelope Island include Hudsonian Godwit, Little Gull, Sabine's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Curlew Sandpiper, and Virginia's Warbler.

Antelope Island State Park (AISP) is an extension of the Oquirrh Mountain Range. The Oquirrhrs are one of approximately 300 "ranges" making up the basin and range topography of the Great Basin. Approximately 30% of Utah is within the Great Basin. The complex geology of the island influences the vegetation structure and content, thus contributing to the available diversity of wildlife habitats. During the last ice age, this portion of the Great Basin was filled with Lake Bonneville, a fresh water lake with water depths of about 1,000 feet above current levels. AISP is just over 28,000 acres and includes the largest island in the Great Salt Lake. The Great Salt Lake is approximately 75 by 30 miles of water too salty for fish. Many refer to the lake as a "dead sea," but tons of protein produced by brine flies and brine shrimp provide millions of birds food at a stopover area during migration. The elevation of AISP varies from the level of the Great Salt Lake shoreline (an average of 4,200 feet) to the 6,597 foot Frary Peak. A 7-mile long causeway across the Great Salt Lake links the island with the mainland and adds to the diversity and uniqueness of birding opportunities. This uniqueness and importance to birds earned the area a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site designation and also a globally significant Important Bird Area (IBA) designation.

On this occasion our group of Wasatch Audubon Society members initiated our trip just after 8:30 am. Our car caravan had just started across the causeway when the "walkie-talkies" became active with participants calling out birds like American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, and White-crowned Sparrow. Then an excited voice called out, "What was that large flock of little birds ahead of us?"

They turned out to be American Pipits. A Common Raven’s call could be heard in the distance just before our attention turned to the sound of Sandhill Cranes. Something about the wild call of the Sandhill Crane makes me feel like I’m experiencing a wilderness moment. As we proceeded across the causeway, the phragmites gave way to pickle weed, then to mudflats. As the mudflats became covered with shallow water, the bird numbers increased dramatically. The most obvious were Canada Goose, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Killdeer, Willet, Franklin’s Gull, Ring-billed Gull, and California Gull. We stopped and set up scopes to better observe the water-covered mudflats with scattered patches of pickle weed. I became more and more excited as the birders began calling out names like Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, White-faced Ibis, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson’s Phalarope, Marbled Godwit and Long-billed Curlew. After a “What is that?” moment, we identified a Whimbrel in attendance.

After crossing the causeway, we began our upland birding on Antelope Island. The portion of the island with roads is mostly grassland with patches of sage or rabbit brush. Some areas are rocky and provide good cover for Chukar. We enjoyed views of Northern Harrier, Western Meadowlark, Sage Thrasher, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Black-billed Magpie, and Loggerhead Shrike. We drove south on a road running along the east side of the island to a riparian oasis. This oasis is the result of the long occupied Fielding Garr Ranch headquarters. A spring that was formerly used to keep milk and other foodstuffs cool now meanders through the area and is a favorite for migrating birds. Large silver poplar trees dominate the area. We often refer to the wooded area as a “migrant trap” as birders never know what species will decide to spend some time in this “green spot” within a sea of grassland, mudflats, and open water. On this fall day, birds flitting through the trees and underbrush keep us busy calling out species like Hermit Thrush, Townsend’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Goldfinch, and American Robin. Reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl, Varied Thrush, Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-winged Dove, and Northern

Waterthrush were recently on the Utah “birdnet” hotline but were not located on this trip.

Although the fall migration season is a great time to enjoy AISP, the spring migration is also spectacular. I always think of fall migration as a more leisurely time for birds, thus the migration is spread over a longer period of time. Spring migration tends to be frantic with every bird in a hurry to reach the nesting ground. Technically we don’t have the “fallouts” we read about from other parts of the country; however, different birding trips offer a great variety of bird numbers and diversity depending on timing and weather patterns. One mid-April trip produced good views of a Black-throated Blue Warbler which was an exciting find for this western hotspot. Each year in mid-May the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival features several trips to AISP (www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com). The festival offers an opportunity to bird northern Utah with expert local birders. Every year, in addition to the numerous intermountain bird species, groups report rarities such as Wandering Tattler, White-throated Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Indigo Bunting. Commonly reported sightings like Sora, and Virginia Rail add excitement to the trips. Birders from the east enjoy our Chukar and Yellow-headed Blackbird which are common on this state park.

Keith Evans is retired from the Forest Service and a long-time birder in northern Utah. Keith’s latest book is entitled Utah’s Featured Birds and Viewing Sites

Welcome New Members
by Paul Lombardi

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

Diana T. Glenn	N. Mortensen
Michael Glover	Mary E. Oldham
M. B. Hager	Michael Speight
Nadine Jolly	Anna-Dale Worden

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 801-399-0240

Field Trips: Les Talbot 801-731-4925

Bird Walks: Mort Somer 801-782-5668

September

7 Wednesday 7:30/8:15am **Bird Walk**

North Arm Wildlife Viewing Area/Pineview

Reservoir: Meet 7:30 at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 am to carpool. Carpooling from the Smith's parking lot on 12th and Harrison.

14 Wednesday 7:45/8:15am **Bird Walk**

Riverdale Trail (south): Meet at 7:45 at

McDonald's (Riverdale Road & 900 W) for breakfast or at 8:15 at the trailhead parking lot (from Riverdale Rd., south on 700 W for one block, left on 4600 S. to lot on right at end of the road.

20 Tuesday 7:00pm **WAS Meeting**

Guest speaker Katie McVey, will present Natural History and Ecology of the Burrowing Owl in Southwest Idaho at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page side bar for details.)

21 Wednesday 7:45/8:15am **Bird Walk**

RR Trail near Willard Bay S: meet at 7:45 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West, just east of I-15 exit #349) for breakfast or at 8:15 to carpool.

24 Saturday 8:00am **Field Trip**

Bird Box Cleanup: This is our annual opportunity to make sure our Bluebird Box residents have a clean home to move into when they return next spring. Meet at Smith's (12th & Harrison) at 8:00am. Bring a lunch & water.

28 Wednesday 7:30/8:15 **Bird Walk**

Green Pond (trailhead on entrance road to Snowbasin): Meet 7:30 at Dylan's (12th & Monroe) for breakfast or at 8:15 am to carpool. Carpooling from the Smith's parking lot on 12th and Harrison.

October

4 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.

5 Wednesday 8:00/8:45am **Bird Walk**

Two Rivers Trail: Meet at 8:00 at Denny's Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21st St in the Flying J Plaza) for breakfast or meet there at 8:45 for carpooling.

12 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am **Bird Walk**

Hyrum Lake State Park: 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. This is a Fee Area.

18 Tuesday 7:00pm **WAS Meeting**

Guest speaker, Keith Evans will present A Day Along UT-34 at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12th). (See front page side bar for details.)

19 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am **Bird Walk**

Ogden Nature Center: Meet at 8:00 at The Village Inn (322 W 12th Street) for breakfast, or meet at the Nature Center (966 W 12th Street) at 9:00 for the walk.

22 Saturday 8:00am **Field Trip**

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: Meet at Harmon's (2nd Street) at 8:00 a.m. to car pool. Bring a lunch & water.

26 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am **Bird Walk**

Swanson Environmental Center: Meet at 8:00 at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N, N. Ogden) for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

November

2 Wednesday 8:00/8:30am **Bird Walk**

Kays Creek Parkway: Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison Blvd) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30 to carpool.

4-5 Friday/Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm

Sunflower Seed Pick-up: Pick up your pre-ordered sunflower seeds at the Utah DWR Warehouse (5151 E. 5300 S, South Ogden) between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm. Loading assistance will be available.



Wasatch Audubon's 2011 Sunflower Seed Sale

It's time once again to support your backyard birds and **Audubon Adventures** by ordering your winter's supply of black oil sunflower seeds at **\$22.00** per 50-lb. bag of seeds.

All money raised in *Wasatch Audubon's* annual event goes to support environmental education by providing **Audubon Adventures** packets to 4th - 6th graders in schools in our community. Our chapter has a continuing commitment to provide these packets to 100 classes each year. Our cost is \$44 per classroom. You can help us to fulfill this commitment, whether ordering sunflower seeds or not, by making a contribution in any amount. You may use the coupon below to do so.

TO ORDER

ORDER PICK UP

Orders must be pre-paid and received by **October 20th**.
Use the coupon below to place your order.

Pick up dates are: **Friday and Saturday
November 4 – November 5
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Mail your order to: **Wasatch Audubon
P. O. Box 3211
Ogden, UT 84409**

Pick up location is: **Utah DWR Warehouse
515 East 5300 South
South Ogden**

Save the top of this page to remind you of the pick up dates and location.

Ordered by (Please print):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone Number: _____

Sunflower seed purchase:

_____ bags @ **\$22.00** per bag = \$ _____

Additional (tax-deductible) contribution for

Audubon Adventures: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Mail to:
**Wasatch Audubon
P. O. Box 3211
Ogden, UT 84409**

At **\$22.00** per 50-lb. bag, use this table to find the amount of your purchase:

Bags	Amount
1	\$22.00
2	44.00
3	66.00
4	88.00
5	110.00
6	132.00
7	154.00
8	176.00
9	198.00
10	220.00



Wasatch Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3211

Ogden, Utah 84409

ORDER YOUR SUNFLOWER SEED NOW!

(This is your sunflower seed order form.)