



The Mountain Chickadee



Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Volume 31, Number 6

Nov/Dec 2012

WAS Meetings and Happenings

Wasatch Audubon Society
is now on FACEBOOK

Tuesday Nov. 20, 2012
7:00 p.m.

“Getting Reacquainted with
Winter Birds.”

Keith Evans, ornithologist and long-time member of Wasatch Audubon Society, will review birds that we may encounter during upcoming Christmas Bird Counts and winter bird feeding operations. This is an excellent opportunity to brush up on identifying wintering birds by field marks, behavior, and habitat preferences. Come and bring a friend!

At the Ogden Nature Center, 966
West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

Tuesday Dec. 18, 2012
7:00 p.m.

Mark Elzey, a local teacher and member of our group is a long-time adventurer of scenic and wild western settings. He has shared many of his experiences with us in the past, giving us the opportunity to enjoy the outings vicariously. His program for December is “Ogden – Recreational Hub of the West.”

At the Ogden Nature Center, 966
West 12th Street, Ogden, Utah.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IS NOW FREE!

by John Bellmon

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is now free to participants. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5.00 field participant fee. This is a BIG DEAL for Audubon! In order to increase participation in CBCs and citizen science through volunteer participation in bird counts and studies, this is a move in a positive direction. While the integrity of the CBC is crucial to maintain bird trend data, it has become equally important for the ability to engage people in other citizen science projects. Audubon extends its deepest thanks to all of you for your long-standing dedication to the Christmas Bird Count Program.

To minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, *American Birds* will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants; and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the CBC. In order to continue to fund the Christmas Bird Count program in the long term, Audubon will be moving to a voluntary donation model for the CBC.

This will be the 113th CBC for Audubon and the 33rd CBC for Wasatch Audubon (this is how we got started). We again will be conducting four CBCs in our area - Ogden, Bear River Refuge, Morgan, and Antelope Island. Please check the Calendar Page for dates, meeting times, and places.

We invite you to participate in any or all of our CBCs and have fun birding during the winter season. This is the highlight for many birders in the area. Some area birds are seen best during this time of the year. Hope to see you during our Christmas Bird Count time of fun!



Wasatch Audubon Society
Website: wasatchaudubon.org

Officers

President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Paul Merola	801-731-4815

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2011/2013	Dan Johnston	801-731-4573
2011/2012	Weston Smith	801-829-4183
2011/2012	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
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	801-589-2591
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
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Hospitality	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
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PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE

by Arnold Smith

It's always exciting to see birds at your feeder. However, it's even more exciting when a seldom seen or just plain rare bird shows up. A couple of weeks ago, a Scrub Jay turned up at one of our feeders. It was a very happy moment when I spotted that bird with its immaculate blue and gray plumage. It has been a number of years since we have had one in our yard.

The jay returned several days later and, as of this writing, is spending a lot of time every day at our feeders. Fall and winter months tend to be a depressing time of the year for many people, but a bright spot is that it is a great time to watch birds at your feeders or in the wild. As the beautiful leaves fade and drop from the trees, the search for birds is much easier in the bare branches. The chance to see that lost-in-migration rare bird is always there.

I would like to wish all of you a very happy bird watching holiday season. Check our schedule for a field trip near you and join us for a fun time visiting together and birding. We have very qualified field trip leaders to help with sightings. Also, keep in mind that there are four Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by our chapter and this year participation is free. During this holiday season may your birds be merry, many and bright.

NEW YEAR NEWS

New Board

Several Wasatch Audubon Board positions will be opening up for 2013. If you have an interest in serving as a member, please contact John Bellmon 801-444-3704 or bellmonj@comcast.net.

New Evening Bird Walks

"Bird Thursday" walks will occur the second Thursday of every month beginning January 2013. More details to follow. THANK YOU Susan Snyder, Jason St. Sauver, and Katie McVey for organizing these fun evening additions to our calendar of events!

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>

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Lynn Carroll

Water for the Colorado

I recently saw a new film called *Watershed*, produced by the Redford Center. It talks about the Colorado River, how important it is to many millions of people, and how its water is used so much that it is usually dry before reaching its delta on the Gulf of California. We hear how seven people, from the rancher in the Rockies to the wildlife biologist in Mexico, feel about the river, and we see what they are doing personally to make a difference.

The problem is probably not news to you. The diversions that irrigate crops in deserts, the 30 million people who use the river's water, dams that tame floods and thereby completely change ecosystems, the species that evolved with a wild river and now are endangered, the threat that climate change will bring more dry years—all have been well publicized. Nevertheless, I highly recommend *Watershed*. The film is beautiful and inspirational. It made me think about how dewatering the Colorado's delta must be affecting migrating birds and about what I can do to contribute to the health of this iconic river.

Residents of Northern Utah don't get our water from the Colorado River basin. I'll conserve water to keep dams off the Bear River, benefiting Great Salt Lake but not the Colorado River.

Energy conservation will help. (As if we needed another reason!) Reducing demand for energy enough would bring down the price, which would take away incentive for water-gulping projects like a thermonuclear plant on the Green River and hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas. The power needed to desalinate the lower Colorado could be more easily spared.

Of course, conservation won't get us anywhere if the population in the West keeps climbing. More work on reducing teen pregnancy would help. So would policies that help people in Mexico make a living there, instead of coming here.

Speaking of government policies that affect the Colorado River, here are two that threaten it. Utah's

governor and legislature have both been eager to have the state's fossil fuels extracted without much attention to potential environmental impacts, such as groundwater contamination or excessive water consumption. Then there is the Lake Powell pipeline. Utah doesn't use as much water from the Colorado River basin as it is allotted under the overly-optimistic Colorado River Compact. Our politicians are afraid that if we don't take some 300,000 acre-ft more water per year, we might somehow lose our right to it. So when Washington County said it needs more water for expected growth, legislators worked out a way to fund a pipeline from Lake Powell to St. George that can transport 100,000 acre-ft. yearly. This is an expensive, inefficient way to obtain water that isn't needed for any desirable level of growth. The funding plan didn't pass during last year's legislature, but it will be back during the 2013 session. Prepare for battle!

We'd win more such battles if Utahns elected candidates who understand environmental regulation as protection for the quality of life of this and future generations, in place of incumbents who see them as a hindrance to economic development. How did you vote?

FIELD TRIP REPORT

by Kris Purdy/Les Talbot

The August 25th Field Trip was to **Bear River Meadows** and led by Kris Purdy. Lynn Carroll, Marie Fulmer, Bruce Perry, Sharon Perry, Kris Purdy and Christina Rockwell birded the Randolph area. A Dusky Grouse crossing the road in the Monte Cristo Range was an enroute highlight. The Randolph town park offered a well-populated Turkey Vulture roost even at 10:00 a.m. One roosting Common Nighthawk at that time and three at a later stop proves the park continues to be a good place for the species. Many Yellow Warblers and a MacGillivray's were foraging in the treetops as well. Crawford Mountain Road northeast of town was a great spot for American Bitterns at four (fabulous!), lifer or best looks ever by several birders; Black-crowned Night-herons; and multiple ducks identifiable to species even in their look-alike brown eclipse plumage. We saw a couple more Common Nighthawks over the marsh, many Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows and several Sage Thrashers along the fencerows. We also stopped at Little Creek Reservoir northwest of town and logged the sole

Black Tern of the day, another lifer for several birders. We picked up more species of ducks at Little Creek, along with many entertaining juvenile Horned Larks along the shoreline. Species count for the day was 52.

The September 22nd Field Trip was our **Blue Bird Nest Box Cleanout** led by Les Talbot. Jack Rensel & I would like to thank the following for helping clean out the nest boxes in the Monte Cristo Area: Betty & Keith Evans, Sharen Perry, Melissa & Andrew Hofer, Marily Gren, Arnold Smith, and Weston Smith and his family.

Nest Box News *by Kalyssa Smith age 10*

My grandpa, dad, mom, sister, brother and I went on a trip to clean out bird boxes at Monte Cristo. On the way up we seen some very pretty trees, it almost looked like the mountain side was on fire! On our way to our section of bird boxes, it seemed as though the sky was filled with Red-tailed Hawks.

While cleaning out bird boxes, I found that I enjoy finding feathers, and trying to identify what type of bird it belonged to. While standing by my dad, waiting for him to put the lid back on a box, I found a hawk feather. It took my family quite some time to become pretty sure it's a Sharp Shinned Hawk feather.

There were several blue birds along the fence, I tried to see how close I could get to one. The closest I got was about four feet away. Nearby, my family and I were surprised to find a box that still had eggs in it, especially since there was a pair of blue birds that seemed to be protecting the eggs. I learned that wrens pack their nest boxes very high! It's kind of funny to see a nest box packed so high the lid's barely on. I know that I enjoyed that trip, and hope to go again in the spring.

We welcome articles written by any member of Wasatch Audubon. Some of our most entertaining and original stories come from your trips, sightings, and backyards. Please send submissions to *The Chickadee* editor, Melissa Hofer, at mah3338@msn.com or call for more information 801-388-0800.

Bird Count Tradition *by Paul Merola*

This will be the 113th year of the Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. This holiday tradition started out as a way to combat winter's cabin fever and keep your shooting skills sharp. Luckily for the birds, the shooting part has now been eliminated. It took a few years before the Ogden Christmas Bird Count became a tradition for me. My friend Dennis pushed me into getting out of bed on a dark, cold, December Saturday to participate. He would say that it was the high point of the holidays. Back then, I looked at him weird when I heard him say that. But you know what? He was right! I now look forward to it with great anticipation and expectations. I scout our area (Plain City) prior to the count. I don't sleep well the night before and, when it's over, I am a little depressed. It's kind of funny how holiday traditions start.

Dennis and I have had a variety of people tag along with us over the years, but only one became a regular. Gene Amman.

Gene had worked with Dennis for the Forest Service but was retired when he joined us. He was one of the early members of the Wasatch Audubon Society from the 80's. I loved Gene. He had a "dry" wit. As we cruised the gravel roads around Plain City, Gene and Dennis would trade stories. Once, I spotted a strange-looking deer. Dennis thought it was just a goat. A lively discussion ensued and Gene proclaimed that it was a goat-deer hybrid to be forever known as a "Go-Deer". From that time on, every year when we turned onto that road near West Warren, Gene would advise us to be on the lookout for the Go-Deer.

During another count, Gene, Dennis, myself and a few others were walking along the Weber River near 4700 West. I stopped at one point and was the only witness when a flock of something exploded out of some downed timber just in front of me. My guess was Gray Partridge, but it happened so quickly I was not sure. Dennis was a skeptic because we never had seen them along the river before. The next year we did not see them. The year after that, Dennis was not feeling well and wisely stayed in our vehicle while Gene and I trudged a quarter mile through a foot of snow to the spot

where they had been. This time we saw them. Gene and I shared that joy and the satisfaction of my vindication all the way back to the car.

In his last few years, Gene started to have health problems but still managed to be part of our count. No more trudging through snow along the Weber, but he still had a sharp eye for birds and he still had plenty of stories to tell. The last year he went on the count, he and his son, Anthony, were in a separate vehicle. We had decided to meet in Plain City for lunch, but got separated in a pea-soup fog that limited visibility to 100 feet. We didn't see Gene and Anthony after that. Gene was fatigued and the fog was real thick, so they headed home. Gene won't be part of our holiday tradition anymore. He passed away earlier this year.

This year, working our count area will feel a little empty but our holiday tradition will continue. As usual, Dennis and I will probably meet with friends at Brewski's and talk up the count in hopes of recruiting some new participants. We'll drink a toast to our old friend Gene. Who knows, while we're at it, maybe we'll break into a verse of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Want to start a new holiday tradition? Come on out to a Christmas Bird Count!

A Costumed Duck

by Jay Hudson

He wore black and red in diamond shaped patches on his costume. He had a black mask and seldom spoke but was good at playing tricks and diverting the attention of an audience. In France, he was called a Harlequin: a clown, juggler, buffoon, a rouge. Sometimes, he was the emissary of the devil chasing damned souls to hell. The adjective is "having a pattern of brightly colored diamond shapes" and that's how the duck got its name; not from the romance novels at the airport. The romance I see in a bird sighting is not only the bird but the conditions, the location, the habitat, the weather and, if it was a "target", the serendipity.

McDonald creek comes off the mountains where the world famous Going-to-the-Sun highway begins its scary climb east in Glacier National Park, Montana. It's just what the Harlequin Ducks like; cold and fast. When

you leave Lake McDonald Lodge the short trip up the creek is one to remember. You can see the magnificent high mountains, goat, deer, elk, bear and a terrific raised boardwalk called the "Trail of the Cedars". It's just past the Cedars that you have turnouts to view the creek. It is here that you can see the colorful Harlequins in the mating season. That sight is something to remember.

The Harlequin is endangered and it is sad to see it on the list with so many other birds and animals. I sometimes think that adding birds to my life list should be prioritized based on the endangered list, then the weather, the distance and the cost; or is the other way round? One Harlequin is all I saw that day but that's enough to brag about.

Seasonal Intrigue

by Keith Evans

I repeatedly hear accolades for the benefits of a four season year in Utah. I don't know what people talk about in the tropics where weather reports are unnecessary. As I write this, the fall colors are gorgeous and the "winter" birds are just arriving in my yard. In some ways I dread thoughts of cold weather; however, in other ways I anticipate the enjoyment of feeding and watching the many birds in my backyard. I'm already wondering if the White-throated, White-crowned, and Song Sparrows will remain all winter or if they will move south for warmer weather. I will continue to provide abundant food to entice them to remain in my yard. Also, many "birders" are already discussing the possible surprises we might encounter on one or more of the four Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) sponsored by Wasatch Audubon (details are elsewhere in this newsletter). Our winter birding outings are definitely different from our summer trips, but just as exciting and informative.

I encourage all "summer birders" to remain active throughout the year. Toward that end, I offer a few random thoughts and suggestions to enhance your enjoyment. Open (unfrozen) water is important for winter birds. Easy ways to accomplish this are to consider a "heated" water feature in your yard for the winter; or, when on a birding trip, seek areas with open water – the Great Salt Lake (causeway to Antelope Island, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Wildlife

Management Areas), various springs, water treatment facilities, etc. Food supply is also a requirement for wintering birds. Brushy areas with rose, hawthorn, and Russian olive plants are usually good places to find birds. The nearby high elevation sites are good for specialty birds (Rosy Finch, Red Crossbills, Steller’s Jays, etc.) -- just don’t expect to see a multitude of species. Keep birding all winter and I hope to see you on the birding trail, during a CBC, or on other trips.

E-Bird Winner

During 2012, Wyoming offered incentives for submitting data to e-bird through a program called the Wyoming Birding Bonanza. Since Weston Smith’s work requires him to be in Wyoming a lot, he keeps lists of birds he sees and posts them to e-bird.

Recently, he was contacted by James Maley, Department of Zoology and Physiology, University of Wyoming who told him he had won a t-shirt for submitting data and a National Geographic Field Guide. Weston was unaware of the contest when he was entering his lists. It just shows that you should always submit your data. You never know when it might pay off.

It’s Official! Wasatch Audubon is on FACEBOOK!

Wasatch Audubon has a new Facebook page. It will be used to promote our activities and help increase community awareness of our chapter. Just search for “Wasatch Audubon Society” or follow the direct link: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Wasatch-Audubon-Society/493657780653585>



“God loved the birds and created trees. Man loved the birds and created cages.”

Jacques Deval



The Wild Bird Center started by Bill Fenimore in 2001 is migrating to a new location and name. It is now the Wild About Birds Nature Center, located on Hill Field Road and Antelope Drive (1986 North 400 West) in Layton (801-779-BIRD). It is just ½ mile east of the original location and faces Antelope Drive.

As many of the birds we enjoy molt into different plumages, Wild About Birds Nature Center is very similar. Bill Fenimore senior is turning over operation of the business to his son, Billy. Billy has been the store manager for the last five years. The new store will run as an independent operation. We ask for your support.

The change will provide Bill senior with more time for guiding birders around Utah and the Inter-mountain West and his work with Governor Herbert’s Balanced Resources Advisory Council. They are currently tasked with developing a Utah outdoor recreation vision. Additionally, Bill will continue his work on the Utah Wildlife Board for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

There will be a grand opening party on Saturday, November 10th with Wasatch Audubon, Hawk Watch, Ogden Nature Center, Skymasters and many other conservation organizations with live displays of hawks, owls and eagles. Come out and join us.

Welcome New Members

By Paul Lombardi

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

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Richard V. Bohman | Tom Kishimoto |
| Jean Branch | Franklin Koberna |
| Howard Browsers | Donald Mathewson |
| Gloria Dixon | Ellen B. Pace |
| Wallace Gillespie | Lynne Quick |
| Beverly Goodwin | Evelyn Tarver |
| Irene Helmcke | Jamus Wangsgard |
| King F. Hom | Kurtis Woolf |

CALENDAR

November

2 & 3 Friday/Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

PICK UP SUNFLOWER SEED

Utah DWR Warehouse 515 East 5300 South, South Ogden

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

Swanson Environmental Center: Meet at 8:00 at McDonald's (Washington & 2600 N., N. Ogden) for breakfast or at 8:30am to carpool. Depending on the weather and/or road conditions, this trip may be changed.

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

Ogden Cemetery: Meet at 8:15 at McDonald's (1111 Washington Blvd) for breakfast or at the NE corner of the cemetery at 8:45.

20 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Speaker Keith Evans. See Front Page for details.

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

Willard Bay (South): Meet at 8:15 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West – just east of I-15 exit 349) for breakfast or at 8:45 to carpool. THIS IS A FEE AREA.

24 Saturday 8:00 am Field Trip

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: The ponds should have water in them and the Tundra Swans should be back. Meet at Harmon's (2nd Street & Washington Blvd. in Ogden). Bring a lunch and water.

27 Tuesday 7:00 pm Board Meeting

Ogden Nature Center: All members welcome to attend. 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

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

South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool.

December

5 Wednesday 8:30/9:15 am Bird Walk

Pineview Area: Meet at Dylan's (12th and Monroe, Ogden) for breakfast at 8:30 or in the Smith's parking

lot(12th and Harrison) at 9:15 to carpool. We'll decide the birding location(s) that morning.

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

Riverdale Parkway: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (900 W Riverdale Rd, Ogden) for breakfast or at the trailhead parking lot (from Riverdale Rd, north on 700 W for two blocks, right on 4300 S, the right on 600 W).

15 Saturday 7:30 am Christmas Bird Count

Ogden Area: Meet at Denny's Restaurant (21st St to 1100 W – on north side by Flying J/Conoco Plaza) for breakfast and to get your assignment. Potluck dinner at 6:00 pm at UCC Church (3350 S. Harrison, Ogden) for compilation of data. Bring table service and a dish to share.

18 Tuesday 7:00 pm WAS Meeting

Speaker Mark Elzey. See Front Page for details.

19 Wed 8:00/8:30 am Christmas Bird Count

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

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

Mantua Reservoir Area: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N Farr West, just east of I-15 exit 349) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool. Depending on weather conditions, the location may change.

28 Friday 7:30/8:00 am Christmas Bird Count

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

January

1 Tuesday 8:00 am Christmas Bird Count

Antelope Island: Meet at the parking lot outside Antelope Island State Park entrance Kiosk

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

Willard Bay: Meet at 8:30 at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N Farr West – just east of I-15 exit 349) for breakfast or at 9:00 to carpool. THIS IS A FEE AREA.

Thursday Evening Bird Walks begin Jan 10th



Wasatch Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3211

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 _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, Florida 32142-2250

Local Chapter: **Wasatch Audubon Society** C9ZW540Z



Wasatch Audubon Society

Mountain Chickadee Subscription

You can receive **The Mountain Chickadee** (6 issues) for just \$6, without joining **National Audubon**. If you would like to support Wasatch Audubon's education and conservation efforts, please indicate the amount of your contribution and include it in your check. Thank you.

1-year **Mountain Chickadee** subscription: **\$6.00**

My contribution to Wasatch Audubon: _____

Total enclosed: _____

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