

# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Vol 34, Number 6

Nov/Dec 2015



## WAS Meetings and Happenings

**Tuesday, Nov 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 pm**

### WAS Meeting

**Utah's Sage Grouse Recovery Program** is the topic for our November meeting. **Ben Nadolski**, a wildlife biologist for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, will bring us up-to-date on the disappearing habitat for sage grouse in the West.

**Tuesday, Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 p.m.**

### WAS Meeting

**Richard B. Stone**, a volunteer representative of The Nature Conservancy, will bring us a report on recent acquisition of **habitat in Southern Utah to protect the Gunnison Sage Grouse**, new information on the **"Wings and Water" program** for kids, and the latest on the **Canyonlands Research Project**.

Both meetings are at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden.

**Please join us and bring a friend!**

## It's Christmas Bird Count Time!

by Keith and Betty Evans

Tired of worrying about enough snow for skiing in December? Tired of spending time in the shopping malls? Wondering how to entertain out-of-town guests who arrive for the Christmas holidays? If so, plan to join members and friends of Wasatch Audubon Society for one or more Christmas Bird Counts!

Nationally, the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) program has been active since 1900. The first Christmas Bird Count in the Ogden area was held in 1980, before Wasatch Audubon became an "official" National Audubon Society chapter. Since that time, members and friends have added three additional counts in Northern Utah to our annual activities.

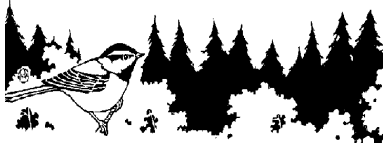


Including these four counts, there are approximately 30 counts located throughout the state. See [www.utahbirds.org/cbc](http://www.utahbirds.org/cbc) for a map of locations in Utah. Dates and other information for the Wasatch Audubon-sponsored counts can be found in the calendar portion of this newsletter. Note that we start each New Year with a count along the Causeway and Antelope Island State Park. Data collected on each Count are entered into the CBC database and shared with birders and scientists worldwide. The information is available through the National Audubon Society website at

[www.audubon.org/conservation/science](http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science). There is no charge to participate in any of the Counts and carpooling provides the opportunity for novice birders to benefit from the expertise of others in the group.

Spotting an adult Bald Eagle majestically soaring through the cold winter sky is a breathtaking experience! Unexpected sightings are often a highlight for a Christmas Bird Count, but it is also fun to meet your friends and neighbors to enjoy seeing our more common feathered winter visitors and residents. These birdwatching trips are fun for birders of all skill levels and are a great way to enjoy the birdwatching experience.

We hope to see you on one or more of the Wasatch Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts this December and January. *Pictured is Jack Rensel at a Christmas Bird Count.*



**Wasatch Audubon Society**  
 Website: [wasatchaudubon.org](http://wasatchaudubon.org)

**Officers**

President	Katie McVey	715-216-2605
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383

**Board of Directors**

2014/2015	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
2014/2015	Scott Baxter	801-540-9417
2014/2015	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
2015/2016	Weston Smith	801-829-4183
2015/2016	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
2015/2016	Mike Hearrell	801-529-8693

**Committee Chairpersons**

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-589-2591
Wed. Bird Walks	Paul Lombardi	801-295-7738
Historian		
Hospitality	Joyce Overdiek	801-392-1908
Membership	Pat Bausman	801-675-1642
Newsletter	Melissa Hofer	801-544-1453
Programs	Jack Rensel	801-399-0240
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Website	Patricia Allaire	801-597-1091

**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>

**PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE**

**Let's Talk Meadowlark Song**

by Katie McVey

These birds of the grassland are sure to brighten anyone's day with their bright yellow chest and black "V." But I think it's their song more than their color that makes me believe they have a cheerful demeanor. Whether you're in the East or in the West, a meadowlark singing is sure to brighten your day. Where does this song come from? Mechanically, birds' sounds come from their syrinx and, unlike humans, birds are capable of making two different pitches at the same time. As for the song itself, songs can be inherited, learned or invented. The songs of chickens, doves and brood parasites like the Brown-headed Cowbird and Cuckoo are inherited. As for meadowlarks, the notes are inherited, but meadowlarks learn their songs from others. Studies have shown there are four key periods for song learning: The Critical Learning Period, in which information is received and stored lasts up to a year; the Silent Period, in which syllables are stored without practice or rehearsal; the Subsong Period which is likened to infant babble, a period of practicing vocalizations without communication, and finally Song Crystallization, in which a young bird transforms syllables into song through repetition and some experimenting.

Now back to the meadowlarks. During the spring and summer, adults sing to defend territories and attract mates. As young birds hatch and grow they hear the adults calling and are in the Critical Learning and Silent Periods. By the fall and winter, they are practicing their own song. This makes fall a great time to go out and listen for meadowlarks. Often times you can hear a young bird practicing its songs and it can be a very strange song indeed. In some species it takes several years to perfect territorial songs. Western Meadowlarks seldom sing more than 10-12 songs, but Eastern birds can have up to 50 - 100 song variations. While I am not sure if it takes one year or many for meadowlarks to become master singers, I do know that listening to young meadowlarks practice their call during fall migration is a treat any birder should be able to enjoy. So, while it's still migration season, get out there and listen for meadowlarks. Know that if you hear a very strange sound that's probably a young one just learning its songs.

## **NATIONAL BIRDS**

by Jay Hudson

When Ben Franklin suggested that our national bird should be the Turkey, he lost the battle to advocates of the Bald Eagle. Franklin wrote:

*"I wish that the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country, he is a bird of bad moral character, he does not get his living honestly, you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing-hawk, and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to its nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him.... Besides he is a rank coward; the little kingbird, not bigger than a sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest . . . of America. . . For a truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America . . . a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards, who should presume to invade his farmyard with a red coat on".*

Birds have long been symbolic of countries, states, Indian tribes and even units of the military. Think of the Bald Eagle and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division nicknamed "The Screaming Eagles." Utah's state bird is the California Gull whose claim to fame is eating a plague of locusts, thereby saving the crops. Twenty-seven countries honor the Eagle, although not necessarily the Bald Eagle. Other countries have avoided the commanding, powerful eagle and have opted for gentler, kinder birds. Possibly, some even chose birds after a night of partying and a stand-up humorous vote, like Andorra and its Bearded Vulture. Here are a few others:

- Angola: Red-crested Turac
- Australia: Emu (powerful, fast, agile and recognizable)
- Belarus: White Stork
- Chile: Andean Condor
- Denmark: White Swan (the bird of royalty)

- Gibraltar: Barbary Partridge (a big-time food source during migration)
- Guatemala: Resplendent Quetzal (the name of their money is – Quetzal)
- Norway: White-throated Dipper
- Italy: Sparrow (some say to show their character in war?)

It would be fun to know the reasoning all 196 countries in the world have for choosing the birds they wanted to represent the people. Here in America, we all have a gut understanding why the Bald Eagle was chosen not only by the incomers but also by the natives.

## **MAKING THE MOST OF OUR SUNSHINE**

by Betty Evans

Wasatch Audubon Society is proud to support the Ogden Nature Center as it strives to become a sustainable, carbon neutral organization. Solar panels will be installed on the L. S. Peery Education Center (located at 966 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden, Utah 84404); and will generate much of the energy needed for the many facilities at the Nature Center. The Susie Hulet Community Solar Program at Weber State University was instrumental in making the installation of solar panels a realistic project. For more information on solar programs, visit [weberstatesolar.org](http://weberstatesolar.org).

We encourage you to show your support of the Ogden Nature Center as it moves forward with this program. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated and will help the Nature Center accomplish the goal of reducing its carbon footprint and becoming self-sustaining through the use of solar energy.





## CALENDAR Nov/Dec 2015

### November

**4 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**South Ogden Nature Park:** Meet at McDonald's (5745 S Harrison Blvd) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the Nature Park.

**11 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Riverdale Parkway:** Meet at McDonald's (900 West Riverdale Road, Riverdale) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the trailhead parking lot. Directions: From Riverdale Road, go north on 700 West for two blocks, then right on 4300 South, then right on 600 West to the parking lot.

**17 Tuesday 7:00pm** **WAS Meeting**  
**Utah's Sage Grouse Recovery Program:** Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup> Street) at 7:00 pm. **Ben Nadolski**, a wildlife biologist for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, will bring us up-to-date on the disappearing habitat for Sage Grouse in the Western U. S. The resulting population decline of these birds is a concern that has western states and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service looking for ways to safeguard sagebrush habitats from further decline. Come and bring a friend!

**18 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Ogden City Cemetery:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> Street and Monroe, Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the northeast corner of the cemetery.

**21 Saturday 8:00 am** **Field Trip**  
**The Ponds:** Meet in the southwest corner of the parking lot near Wendy's (1900 West 5600 South, Roy) at 8:00 am. Bring a lunch and water. We did this trip a year ago, and it was a big success until it started to rain. We had to cancel the trip due to the torrential downpour. We will try it again this year. I have added a couple of ponds. We will visit Meadow Creek, Clinton, Jensen, Glover, Farmington Bay Resting Pond, and Kaysville Ponds.

**25 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Willard Bay State Park:** Meet at McDonald's (1838 West 2700 North, Farr West, just east of I-15 exit #349) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool. **This is a fee area.**

### December

**1 Tuesday 7:00 pm** **Board Meeting**  
**Ogden Nature Center:** All members are welcome to attend. 966 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden.

**2 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Two Rivers Trail:** Meet at Denny's (North on 1100 W from 21<sup>st</sup> Street in the Flying J Plaza) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the trailhead.

**9 Wednesday 8:30/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Mantua Reservoir:** Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N just east of Exit 349 on I-15) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool.

**15 Tuesday 7:00 pm** **WAS Meeting**  
**Nature Conservancy:** Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup> Street) at 7:00 pm. **Richard B. Stone**, a volunteer representative of The Nature Conservancy, will bring us a report on recent acquisition of **habitat in Southern Utah to protect the Gunnison Sage Grouse**, new information on the **"Wings and Water" program** for kids at the Great Salt Lake Shoreline Preserve, and the latest on the **Canyonlands Research Project** at the Dugout Ranch property in San Juan County. Meeting is open to the public – come and enjoy the evening.

**16 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am** **Christmas Bird Count**  
**Bear River Christmas Bird Count:** Meet at McDonald's (1838 W 2700 N, Farr West – just east of I-15 exit 349) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars.

**19 Saturday 7:00 am** **Christmas Bird Count**  
**Ogden Christmas Bird Count:** Meet at Denny's (Take 21<sup>st</sup> Street to 1100 West, on north side by Flying J Plaza, Ogden) for breakfast and to get your assignment. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars. Potluck dinner at 6:00 pm at UCC Church (3350 South Harrison Blvd.) for compilation of data. Bring table service and a dish to share.

**23 Wednesday 7:30 am**                      **Christmas Bird Count**

**Morgan Christmas Bird Count:**

Meet at the Utah DWR (515 East 5300 South, South Ogden) at 7:30 am to carpool for breakfast at Spring Chicken Inn (4 North State Street, Morgan) at 8:00 am. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars.

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

**Pineview Reservoir:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) at 9:30 am to carpool. Depending on the weather, we may alter the location.

## *January*

**1 Friday 8:00 am**                                      **Christmas Bird Count**

**Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count:** Meet at the parking lot outside Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00 am. It is an all day trip. Bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars. *This is a fee area.*

**6 Wednesday 8:30/9:30 am**                      **Bird Walk**

**Fort Buenaventura Park:** Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave, Ogden) at 8:30 am for breakfast or at 9:30 am at the entrance to the park.

*We Wish You a Very Safe and  
Happy Holiday Season*

### **WASATCH AUDUBON OUTDOOR ACTIVITY INFORMATION**

**"For over a century, Audubon has been a leading voice in encouraging conservation of precious habitat and wildlife for future generations."**

#### **LEAVE NO TRACE**

Wasatch Audubon sponsors many outdoor activities. Our main goal, of course, is bird watching. We take our time and most walks are not strenuous. Water and binoculars are recommended equipment. Please do not bring dogs. They frighten the birds.

We meet for breakfast (optional) prior to our Weekly Wednesday Morning Walks. These walks usually last about 2 hours. All ages are welcome. Contact Paul Lombardi for more information at [801] 295-7738.

Saturday Field Trips are more rigorous, and we are often out until 3:00 to 5:00 pm. In addition to water and binoculars, bring a lunch and dress for changing weather. All ages are welcome. Contact Les Talbot for more information at [801] 589-2591.

Other outings may be scheduled and the trip leaders will be noted in the calendar entry.

Wasatch Audubon encourages conservation in the form of carpooling. When birding in remote areas, it is often necessary to carpool or caravan to keep the group together. On longer trips and/or trips to hard-to-find places, members use walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 to communicate between cars.

## **SITTIN' BIG**

by Susan Snyder

Wasatch Audubon Society's "the Big Sit" fundraiser was a big success! The club's birding team snared 46 total species on Oct. 10, which is one more than they spotted last year.

The Big Sit is an international, annual event conducted the second weekend of October, and promoted by Bird Watcher's Digest. Birders sit or stand inside a 17-foot circle and keep track of all the bird species they see or hear. WAS first used The Big Sit as an annual fundraiser in 2014 after the club stopped hosting its annual sunflower seed sale.

This year's watch occurred at the Robert N. Hasenyager Great Salt Lake Nature Center at Farmington Bay. The nature center currently is closed to the public for renovations, but WAS members were allowed to enter for The Big Sit.

The day started at 4 a.m. with a Barn Owl screech and fly-over. Great Blue Herons were perched on their rookery as dawn emerged. Among the species identified as the day wore on were American Goldfinch, Red-

winged Blackbird and American Coot. A Bald Eagle wowed the group with a fly-over later in the day. Birders packed up and went home at about 10 p.m.

Birders collected pledges for their birding efforts. Final collections and tallies are not in as of this printing, but the fundraising efforts help support WAS services.

The club welcomes the general public to its more than 60 free birding outings per year and also to the club's monthly meetings, which include guest speakers on an array of conservation and nature topics.

WAS also participates in such citizen science projects as the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's annual Great Backyard Bird Count. The club encourages new birders and members of the public to participate in these important projects as well. Wasatch Audubon also provides expertise and advice to numerous area elementary schools about bird feeding, identification and habitats.

It's not too late to give a donation in honor of The Big Sit efforts. You can send a check to Wasatch Audubon Society. Our address is in this newsletter. Thank you to all who planned and participated in this event!



Participants in the Big Sit!  
Oct 10, 2015



## BIRDY THURSDAYS NEED A LEADER!

Susan Snyder, here. I am a WAS board member and the leader of the monthly Birdy Thursday walks. Due to some changes in my professional and volunteer arenas, I no longer will be able to lead the walks after September's trip.

Would someone else like to try? The walks are the second Thursday of each month. They generally stay close to the urban area and are shorter than regular field trips, as they are designed for people who will be coming straight from work without having had dinner. As a result, it's nice to also have a place in mind for dining afterward if folks so desire.

If you are interested in leading these monthly excursions, you may contact Les Talbot, WAS field trip leader, [ibird2@comcast.net](mailto:ibird2@comcast.net). Or you can contact me, and I will get you in touch with Les. You can text me at 801-388-4201 or email, [naturescall@gmail.com](mailto:naturescall@gmail.com).

## NEST-BOX-ROUTE COORDINATOR

Wasatch Audubon is seeking a nest-box-route coordinator to fill the vacant position for the 2016 nesting season. The four routes along Ant Flat Road and in the Monte Cristo Mountain Range total 115 nest boxes and offer breeding sites for Mountain Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens and rare surprises like Mountain Chickadees and Cassin's Finches.

Duties include coordinating teams and materials to prepare four survey teams for the annual June breeding survey; September post-breeding assessment survey, repair and clean-out trip; and data collection. This long-term effort is one of the best education and nature entertainment programs we offer. Contact Kristin Purdy at 801-605-0328 or Jack Rensel at 801-399-0240 for more information.

## EDITOR

Wasatch Audubon Society is looking for a volunteer editor for *The Mountain Chickadee*.

The editor is responsible for receiving submissions, putting the newsletter together and emailing it to the printer. The newsletter is published six times per year.

If interested in this volunteer position, please contact Melissa Hofer at [mah3338@msn.com](mailto:mah3338@msn.com) or 801-388-0800, 801-544-1453.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Pat Bausman

Lynda Miner

Due to National Audubon's maintenance of its membership system, names new of new members will be delayed until the next issue.

We hope to see you at our next meeting or field trip!



**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 National 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 \$12, 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: **\$12.00**

\_\_ My contribution to Wasatch Audubon: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check, payable to **Wasatch Audubon** to:

Wasatch Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3211  
Ogden, Utah 84409