



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**



Vol 35, Number 3

May/June 2016

## WAS Meetings and Happenings

**Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 pm**  
**WAS Meeting**

**Susan Snyder**, Teacher-Naturalist at the Ogden Nature Center will present **“Birds of Shakespeare.”** Susan has researched this part of history and will share information on how Shakespeare’s experiences and writings have affected bird populations and birding activities in America.

**Tuesday, June 21st**  
**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**, and other projects.

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

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

## A GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT SPECIAL

by Keith Evans

It was early on February 12, 2016 -- at least early for me. I headed for the kitchen to brew a cup of coffee and toast a bagel; then took my breakfast to my favorite bird-viewing window (the guest bedroom) to start my checklist for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). A total of 20 species visited my yard for the count this year, but one was special – the Red-naped Sapsucker.

It turned out that my checklist was only one of the over 162,000 submitted during the four-day GBBC timeframe. When I explored the online database, I discovered my observation was the most northerly report for Red-naped Sapsucker. Every checklist is an important contribution to this great database; and I encourage everyone to participate in this citizen science project.



It is interesting to note that Red-naped Sapsuckers were not countable as a separate species until 1983, when the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was split into three species – the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the east, the Red-breasted Sapsucker on the Pacific coast, and the Red-naped Sapsucker in the interior west. The Red-naped Sapsucker shares many behavioral and habitat selection characteristics with the other two species.

*Continued on page 6*

*Photo by Keith Evans*



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

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Feeder Projects	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
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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>

**PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE**

**Woodpeckers: Family Picidae**

by Dan Johnston

There are more than 180 species of woodpeckers (birds of the Family Picidae) worldwide, but none of them are found in Australia, Madagascar or New Zealand. 23 species are found in North America, not counting the probably-extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

That will allow me to discuss at least one species for each monthly meeting of my two-year term as President of Wasatch Audubon Society. I plan to give some interesting facts about Family Picidae each time. After which, the bird of the month will be introduced by the sound of its drumming. Woodpeckers can often be identified by carefully listening to length and speed of their drumming. Next, we will get to hear the bird's call. By the time I show a picture, someone will ID it.

Woodpeckers do not have vocal songs. Instead, they drum on resonant objects such as hollow trees and logs, utility poles, chimneys, rain gutters and trash cans.

Woodpeckers drum to attract mates, establish territories and otherwise communicate. Both genders are known to drum. Between feeding, excavating nest cavities and drumming, woodpeckers can peck up to 20 times per second, or a total of 8,000-12,000 pecks per day.

Woodpeckers don't get headaches from pecking. They have reinforced skulls structured to spread the impact force, they have a short duration of contact, and their brains are tightly cushioned and protected. All this helps them to survive better than ex-football players. The millisecond before contact with wood, a thickened nictitating membrane closes, protecting the eye from flying debris. The nostrils are also protected; they are often slit-like and have special feathers to cover them.

The Downy Woodpecker was BOM (Bird of Month) for January. The smallest of North America's woodpeckers, it is common throughout the WAS country (Northern Utah). The Downy's drum is almost slow enough to count (9-16) in fairly rapid sequence and only a few seconds between drums. Its call is a short, gentle, flat *pik*. Despite their close resemblance, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers are not very closely related.

*President's Pipeline continues on Page 3*

## **PRESIDENT'S PIPELINE**

*Continued from page 2*

The Northern Flicker was February's BOM. The Red-shafted Flicker subspecies is also common in WAS' area. Males have a red moustache. Its drum averages moderate to fast speed and call is a high, piercing, clear *keew*. Flickers frequently feed on the ground, with ants alone making up to 45% of their diet.

The Red-naped Sapsucker was BOM for March. The Red-naped is common during spring/ summer in WAS' area. The Red-naped was first thought to be a subspecies of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, however a significant genetic difference was found to exist between the species. True to their name, and like other sapsuckers, they drill rows of small shallow holes in trees and eat the sap as well as the insects attracted to it. Sapsuckers do not suck sap, but are specialized for sipping it. Their tongues are shorter than those of other woodpeckers, so they do not extend as far out, and the tips of the tongues have small, hair-like projections that help pick up the sap. Sapsuckers sometimes catch insects in flight; they also eat seeds and berries. A group of sapsuckers is collectively known as a "slurp" of sapsuckers.

For more interesting woodpecker facts and a discussion by members who may know even more, join us for our monthly meeting. WAS meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month except July. Come and get information on future field trips and other activities, followed by an always interesting program arranged by Jack Rensel. And, best of all, TREATS!! See you there.

## **CONSERVATION CORNER**

### **Spreading the Word About Warming and Birds**

by Lynn Carroll

National Audubon has been working hard to discover and report how our changing climate is now affecting

and will continue to affect birds. (See the Sept/Oct 2014 issue of *Audubon* or the website.) They've identified 314 North American species that are at risk of significant declines from global warming. Of these, 126 face big trouble. By 2050, their ranges could be cut in half as the climate becomes inhospitable while nowhere else meets their needs. This research will help direct money and effort where they're likely to do the most good. The results make the point that we're all in this together—people and animals all over the world are dealing with changes brought by extra heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). That's a message that policy makers need to hear for the good of birds and people. The public needs to make sure they hear it.

Utah's Audubon chapters will be helping to spread the word among "the public." We'll pass out brochures to adults, teach children and speak up when and wherever the opportunity presents itself. Bridgerland Audubon is sharing money they received from National to help with printing and other costs. We'd like your help, even if it's only in casual conversation with people you know. I'll be doing a little global warming education to help you become comfortable with the subject, starting here.

**Greenhouse gases:** Several of the gases that make up our atmosphere cause warming because, as heat radiates away from the Earth, these molecules absorb it and send about half back toward the planet. The most abundant are water, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. We concentrate on CO<sub>2</sub> because it is the one that contributes the most to the recent increase in the average temperature at the surface of the Earth, which we call "global warming." Although it's been going on for a couple of centuries, the rate of carbon dioxide's accumulation in the atmosphere has increased rapidly as deforestation and the burning of coal, oil and gas increased over the last few decades. The sooner and more drastically this trend is reversed, the less rapidly the climate will change, giving birds more time to find new homes and new food sources. People will welcome the chance for orderly transition too.

Another time I'll discuss why the climate won't stabilize quickly.



## CALENDAR May/June 2016

### May

**4 Wednesday 8:00/8:30 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Canal Walk – North Mountain Road:** Meet at McDonald's (2600 North Washington Blvd, North Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 8:30 am to carpool. Take 2450 North off Mountain Road, over the canal into the small parking lot. Depending on conditions in the area, we may alter the location.

**11 Wednesday** **No Bird Walk**  
**No Walk:** Enjoy the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 12-16<sup>th</sup>.

**12-16 Thurs thru Mon** **Bird Festival**  
**Great Salt Lake Bird Festival:** Various locations and times. On Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to 4 pm, Wasatch Audubon will have an education booth.

**17 Tuesday 7:00pm** **WAS Meeting**  
**Birds of Shakespeare:** Meet at the Ogden Nature Center (966 W 12<sup>th</sup> Street) at 7:00 pm. **Susan Snyder**, Teacher-Naturalist at the Ogden Nature Center will present "**Birds of Shakespeare**" at this meeting. William Shakespeare was a well-known English playwright and author who influenced many with his writings. He was also an experienced falconer and his love and appreciation for birds was evidenced in his writings. Susan has researched this part of history and will share information on how Shakespeare's experiences and writings have affected bird populations and birding activities in America. Bring a friend and join us!

**18 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**South Ogden Nature Park:** Meet at Denny's Restaurant (5805 South Harrison Blvd, South Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the Nature Park parking lot.

**21 Saturday** **No Field Trip**  
**No Field Trip:** There will be no Saturday Field Trip in May due to Great Salt Lake Bird Festival.

**25 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**North Arm of Pine View Reservoir:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> Street and Monroe, Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> Street and Harrison Blvd, Ogden) to carpool.

### June

**1 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville:** Meet at Village Inn (1765 East Skyline Drive, South Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the trail head.

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

**8 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Weber River/South Ogden Area:** Meet at Denny's Restaurant (5805 South Harrison Blvd, South Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am to carpool to the trail head. Take Exit 85, Adams Avenue, and proceed to the frontage road on the north side of I-84. Go east about 0.1 miles to the Angler's Access parking area. We'll bird down river.

**15 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Dale Young Nature Park (formerly Perry Nature Park):** Meet at The Rusty Spoon (2645 US-89, Perry) at 8:00 for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the Park.

**21 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.

**22 Wednesday 8:00/9:00 am** **Bird Walk**  
**Lagoon Trail:** Meet at Dylan's in Kaysville (185 Main Street, Kaysville) at 8:00 for breakfast or meet at 9:00 am in the trail parking lot. To access the trail, we'll use the parking area located at the dead end street (200 West, South off of 600 North in Farmington.) This lot has ample parking. We will start the walk at approximately 9:00-9:15 am.

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

**Blue Bird Nest Box Census:** Meet at Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> Street and Harrison, Ogden) at 8:00 a.m. Since we do not have a coordinator for the event, we may not do the census. If we are unable to do the Blue Bird Nest Box Census, we will still meet at Smith's and go birding to another area. This is an all day trip, so bring a lunch and drinks

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

**Kay's Creek Parkway:** Meet at Denny's (5805 South Harrison Blvd, Ogden) at 8:00 am for breakfast or at 9:00 am at the trailhead.

## July

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

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

### Contact Persons for WAS Outings

Wednesday Walks - Paul Lombardi 801-295-7738

Saturday Field Trips (the Saturday after the WAS Tuesday Meeting) - Les Talbot 801-731-4925

Other Field Trips - Mike Hearell 801-529-8693

### Field Trip Idea: Would you be interested?

Someone asked me if I had ever thought of leading a field trip to Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge. I researched it and found the following information:

It is 180 miles (about a three hour drive) north of Ogden. It would be a long, one-day trip. May, June, and September are probably the best times of the year to visit. The refuge is well known as a major Greater Sandhill Crane breeding site. Trumpeter Swans are also common there.

The Education Specialist at Bear River NWR has been there on assignment. She said it would be a good place to visit. She also said the trip may be better if we stopped at Bear Lake NWR on the way. However, that would add a lot of time to the trip since we would either have to go up Logan Canyon or to Evanston, WY, then north to Bear Lake. The approach road to Gray's Lake is a narrow, gravel road which gets a lot of truck traffic due to a cement plant that is near the refuge.

This would be a new trip for us. I would like as many chapter members as possible to express their opinion on this trip before I make any definite plans.

You can email me at [ibird2@comcast.net](mailto:ibird2@comcast.net) or text me at 801-589-2591.

Les Talbot

## **FIELD TRIP REPORT**

### **Blue Creek Valley**

March 19, 2016

by Les Talbot

This was a very productive trip. Our group consisted of Paul Lombardi, Joe Donahue, Gary Mowery, John Bellmon, Dan Johnston, Jeannette and Brian Nosker, and me. On a sad note, Joe will no longer be birding with us. He and his wife have moved to North Carolina.

Our target birds were Horned Larks and Rough-legged Hawks. We saw a lot of Horned Larks and one Rough-legged Hawk. The Blue Creek Valley road goes north from Howell, UT, to the Utah-Idaho State line. From there we went east, to the top of the ridge, and down Middle Canyon to Portage. The Middle Canyon Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek is at the top of the ridge. We arrived at the lek around 10:00 a.m. and did not expect to see any birds because it was too late in the day. Brian walked downhill from the vehicles and flushed about 10 grouse. They flew across a ravine and everyone got a good look at them.

While driving down Middle Canyon, we saw several Mountain Bluebirds. Following that, we drove to Plymouth, UT, and up Johnson Canyon. The area north of the steel plant was formerly an excellent area to see Grasshopper Sparrows. To our disappointment, all of that land had been disked under and there is no Grasshopper Sparrow habitat there anymore.

Our next stop was Blue Creek Reservoir. There were several types of ducks on the water. South of the reservoir, we saw two Gray Partridges. We drove along the highway on the north side of ATK to Tremonton and saw an immature bald eagle.

Our final stop was at Salt Creek WMA. There were various kinds of ducks, White Pelicans, Tundra Swans, three Sandhill Cranes, and gulls. It was hard to tell if the gulls were California or Ring-billed. John had us look at the gulls' eyes to ID them. The Ring-bills have a yellow eye and the California has a black eye. As you may

know, Gadwalls have a black butt and I learned that Green-winged Teals have a yellow butt. While we were there, the Cranes were doing courtship behavior. We saw two of the cranes mate.

## **A GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT** **SPECIAL (Sapsuckers)**

*Continued from page 1*

Sapsuckers drill sap "wells" in trees and then drink the sap as a major source of food. This characteristic has caused them to be disliked by many orchard growers.

Red-naped Sapsuckers are primarily migratory, arriving in northern Utah in May and departing in September; therefore Northern Utah birders usually enjoy observing Red-naped Sapsuckers during the summer months. This "behavioral expectation" is what led to my surprise on February 12. My yard visitor was a male, which makes sense as females tend to migrate further south than males. Their winter range is normally in the southern U.S. or Mexico.

As "primary" cavity nesters, they drill their own cavities, usually in aspen or willows. In following years these cavities are very important to the "secondary" cavity nesters, such as Mountain Bluebird, Purple Martin, and Tree Swallow, that don't drill their own cavities. Red-naped Sapsuckers prefer aspen stands at higher elevations or riparian habitats at lower elevations. They have a clutch of 4-5 eggs and have one brood per year. They feed their young insects and arthropods, with an abundance of ants. The adults often dip food items in the sap wells before feeding their young. It is unknown if this adds nutrition or just prepares the young for their future diet.

The Red-naped Sapsucker is one of the featured birds in the "Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites" book. And, for those readers who regularly attend Wasatch Audubon Society meetings, it fits in with the "woodpecker" theme highlighted at each meeting by President Dan.



**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.

**OWL PELLETS WANTED**

If you happen to discover any owl pellets while out birding, please collect them for me; or let me know the location, and I will get them. I do a lesson in elementary schools on owls, and the students enjoy dissecting the pellets.

Thanks for your help and happy birding.  
*Dennis Collins (801) 393-1115*



**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

by Pat Bausman

Please join us in welcoming those who recently joined or rejoined National Audubon:

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Carol Campbell     | Sandra J Kinney  |
| Chris Cross        | Donald Mathewson |
| Roland Debeer      | Sandra Mckay     |
| Linda A Eesley     | David Price      |
| Christine Flanders | Angela Tereba    |
| Judith James       | Cathy Welch      |
| Jerry Keller       |                  |

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

**BIRDING UTAH** App is now available for **iPhone and Android** devices. This App contains over 150 sites for birdwatching throughout Utah. Each site provides featured birds, habitat descriptions, directions, and nearby amenities. Depending on your phone, the App is available at iTunes or the Google App Store.

Sponsors for **Birding Utah** are: Great Salt Lake Audubon, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Office of Tourism, Utah State Office of the BLM, Wasatch Audubon Society, and Wild About Birds Nature Center. We want to thank them for their support in helping to make this project possible and hope that you will enjoy the information provided for the many sites featured in this App.



**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:

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