



# The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the **Wasatch Audubon Society**

Vol 36, Number 4

July/August 2017



## WAS Meeting and Happenings

### Tuesday, July 18, 2017

There will be no WAS meeting.

### Tuesday, August 15, 2017

#### WAS Meeting 7:00 PM

#### Annual Potluck Dinner!

It's time for our annual potluck.

Soft drinks will be provided.

Please note:

#### **NO GRILL THIS YEAR.**

Bring a dish to share and your dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent.

After dinner there will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences.

Meet at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

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

## WHITE RAVEN

by Jay Hudson

Everyone knows ravens are black. But in northwest British Columbia in a small museum, there is a true albino (white) raven. Albino comes from the Latin *Albus* or white. In an area of the heaviest concentration of North America's common raven (*corvus corax*), there did live an albino raven. It shared the deep forest of an island with a partial albino bear and a mutant Sitka "golden" spruce tree that shown as gold. It was a world that Disney would have created. There is a photograph of the white raven sitting on a downed tree with a slanting shaft of sunlight bringing an illustrator's imagination to life. None had ever been seen before.

How could it happen? They say that an albino raven chick is understood by its siblings to be different, possibly a threat. Something to be killed! Could it have been an only egg surviving without competition? Whatever the dangers of growing into a mature raven, this anomaly fought its way to adulthood.



White Raven  
Photo By Devlin

Could it have found comfort in the hallowed sterile lone golden spruce which also shined an uncommon color in bleaching sunlight? Hadia Indian lore tells that a white raven ushered the "first humans into the world". It turned black when it flew out the smoke hole of the "bighouse" bringing back the light stolen by an evil chief. It is ironic that after an evil white man cut down the revered golden spruce with a chainsaw, the white raven landed on a power line, died, and the town went black.

In the northlands of Europe, legend has it that Odin, the Allfather of Norse gods had two common black ravens that sat on his shoulders. One was named Hugin (thought) and the other Munin (memory). Each morning they would fly around the kingdom and return at night to whisper the news of the empire. This intelligence gathering was mirrored in Joseph Stalin's dreaded NKVD which was tasked in rooting out any threat to the communist regime. These murderers drove around in black automobiles which threw fear into the streets. These cars were called "Black Ravens" because of the nature of ravens to feed on dead bodies which piled up when the NKVD were around. It is rumored even our own CIA trained ravens to place listening devices shaped like pieces of roofing tile on the window sills of communists. Never underestimate the value of a raven.

With the help from John Vaillant's "The Golden Spruce".



**Wasatch Audubon Society**

Website: [wasatchaudubon.org](http://wasatchaudubon.org)

**Officers**

President	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Vice President	Keith Evans	801-476-0232
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
Past President	Katie McVey	715-216-2605

**Board of Directors**

2016/2017	Nancy Arnett	801-388-0637
2016/2017	Bruce Perry	801-726-9705
2016/2017	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
2017/2018	Taylor Abbott	980-622-9889
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**Committee Chairpersons**

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
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Field Trips	Les Talbot	801-589-2591
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Programs	Susan Snyder	801-388-4201
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**

by Dan Johnston

The White-headed Woodpecker is the woodpecker of the month for May. It lives in the pine forests of the mountains of California, Oregon, and Washington. It is the only North American bird that has a white head and a black body.

The White-headed Woodpecker, like most woodpeckers, nests in holes in trees. This species prefers to make holes in dead trees, snags, stumps, and even leaning and fallen logs. When the White-headed Woodpecker forages at unopened pine cones it usually clings to the sides and bottoms of the cone to avoid making direct body contact with the sticky sap. The woodpecker wedges a large intact pine seed into a crevice in the bark of the tree where it hammers the seed to break it apart. It also forages for insects on trunk and limbs, and among needle clusters in conifers. Typically it pries off flakes of bark rather than knocking them off, so foraging tends to be quiet. Sometimes it catches insects in flight. Males and females often have different foraging behaviors, but this varies with place and season



White-headed Woodpecker

Both the male and female incubate the eggs, with the male doing all the nighttime work. They are very attentive to each other during incubation, and often communicate by soft drumming from both inside and outside the nest cavity. The oldest recorded White-headed Woodpecker was a female, at least 4 years, 1 month old, when she was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Washington.

Laura and I have been missing during the month of June. So in honor of that, the Woodpecker of the month for June is the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, who's last official sighting was in 1944. It is now considered extinct. There have been several possible sightings since then, even as late as 2004, but none have been officially confirmed. Spotting an Ivory-bill Woodpecker is made very complicated because of the very rugged swampy area it lived in and their similarity to the Pileated woodpecker.

(Continued on page 3)

## **President's Pipeline**

(Continued from page 2)

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was the largest woodpecker north of Mexico. The destruction of old-growth Southeastern forests caused severe population decline in the 1800's , and only a handful remained into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker had a large red crest, black body, large white patches on its wings and a pale ivory bill. It would strip bark from recently dead trees to reach insects, especially beetle larvae; and would excavate conical holes deep into wood.

I'm so sorry they are all gone.

Happy birding and stay cool.

Dan



**Ivory Billed Woodpecker**  
*Painting by John James Audubon*

## **Utah Audubon Council Spring Meeting April 29, 2017**

by John Bellmon

The Utah Audubon Council spring meeting was held at the Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, hosted by Great Salt Lake Audubon. Three chapters were represented and discussed many issues that they have been involved in during the last six months. Steve Erickson, our Policy Advocate with the state legislature, presented an overview of the last session and some issues that will be upcoming. The new office of National Audubon's Saline Lakes in Salt Lake City was represented by Marcelle Shoop. She stated that the Audubon Strategy Pan will be reviewed and the Western Water Initiative would be incorporated into their work strategy. The next council meeting will be hosted by our Wasatch Audubon this coming fall. A place and date will be determined at our next board of directors meeting.

### **National Audubon Convention**

**July 14 - 17, 2017, Park City, Utah**

Don't miss this unique opportunity for learning, collaborating and birding.

- Hear from special guests Dr. Drew Lanham, Kenn Kaufman, and more.
- Network with Audubon chapter, state, national, and international leaders from across all four flyways.
- Join conservation, science, and outreach workshops and training sessions led by a variety of experts and Audubon chapter leaders.
- Enjoy exciting field trips and birding adventures (Utah's mountains, wetlands, deserts, and sagebrush host more than 450 bird species).

For more information, go to  
[audubonconvention.org](http://audubonconvention.org).

## "BLUEBIRD" NEST BOX PROJECT – A 30-YEAR SUMMARY

by Keith Evans and Jack Rensel

It took an idea (provided by Don Paul, then Non-game Biologist for Utah Division of Wildlife Resources) and enthusiastic support (provided by Jack Rensel, charter member of Wasatch Audubon Society) and the Bluebird Nest Box Project took flight. In August of 1984, volunteers and members of the Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS) held a workshop to construct nesting boxes for Mountain Bluebirds. Then, in September of 1984, volunteers installed 168 boxes along UT-39 from Limestone Springs, over Monte Cristo pass, ending 3.5 miles into Rich County. We thank Don and Jack for taking the initiative to plan and lead this effort; and, we thank the countless volunteers who spent many hours maintaining these nest boxes and gathering use data for the past 30 years. Over the years, box construction style and materials varied due to the number of individuals and scouting groups contributing to the effort. However, most boxes had an outside measurement of approximately 7x7x12 (width, depth, height) inches with a 1.5-inch entrance hole.

In 1992, the route was modified, with fewer boxes along UT-39 and additional boxes added to fence posts in the Ant Flat area and along a fence heading south from UT-39 in Rich County (near the junction of Rich, Cache, and Weber Counties, Utah). Four major factors were considered in the decision to change the routes: (1) the danger to the volunteers surveying and maintaining a route along a busy highway with increasing traffic each year; (2) limited parking space along the shoulder of UT-39 to avoid traffic; (3) increasing vandalism of the boxes; and (4) a concern for the safety of adult birds flying back and forth across the highway when feeding young. In addition, heavy snow had knocked down many boxes and high use by House Wrens indicated the boxes were not in ideal Mountain Bluebird habitat. Most boxes had been originally placed in aspen stands. The "new" route location placed most boxes on fence posts in non-forested habitats. Twice a year for 31 years, volunteers from Wasatch Audubon Society collected data, built, placed/replaced, repaired, and otherwise maintained 99-175 bird nesting boxes. The majority of the boxes were used by Mountain Bluebirds, House Wrens, and Tree Swallows; and data analyzed are for these three species. However, occasionally Mountain Chickadee, Cassin's Finch, Flying Squirrel, and mice have utilized the boxes.



Photo by Keith Evans

Nancy Arnett checking nest box.

Over the years, the box-use rate has varied from a low of 47.0% (1991) to a high of 93.2% (2005), with an average of 75.2% of the boxes used each year. Over 30 years, boxes used each year by species included: Tree Swallows used from 5-58 boxes per year, with an average of 25.2; Mountain Bluebirds used from 7-33 boxes per year, with an average of 19.7 boxes per year; and, House Wrens used from 10-80 boxes per year, with an average of 41.9 boxes per year. For the 16-year period from 2000 to 2015, data were collected to facilitate an estimation of the number of young fledged each year. It is estimated that Tree Swallows fledged from 29-221 young per year, with an average of 85.1; Mountain Bluebirds fledged from 39-93 young per year, with an average of 65.7; and, House Wrens fledged from 38-288 young per year, with an average of 149.6. It is believed that over 4800 young birds fledged from these boxes between 2000 and 2015, and it is estimated that over 8,000 young birds fledged from the boxes over the history of the project.

This nest box effort has been a very successful project for WAS and the various birds that nest in the area. More information and details of the year-by-year analysis of this effort can be found on our website at [www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org).



## CALENDAR

### JULY

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

**Willard Bay SP:** Meet at the Rusted Spoon (2645 US 89, Perry) for breakfast at 8:00am or at the pond north of the SP at 9:00am. Note: the State Park is a fee area.

**12 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am** *Bird Walk*

**Riverdale Parkway:** Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave., Ogden) for breakfast at 7:00am or at the trailhead parking lot (from Riverdale Rd., north on 700 W for two blocks, right on 4300 S, then right on 600 W to the parking lot) at 8:00am

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

There will be no WAS meeting.

**19 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am** *Bird Walk*

**Green Pond (Snowbasin Area):** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast at 7:00am or at Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) to carpool at 8:00am.

**22 Saturday 8:00am** *Flower Walk Trip*

We'll meet in the Northwest corner of the Smith's parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> street and Harrison Blvd.) at 8:00 am and car pool from there. Bring a lunch and drinks. We'll have lunch at the South end of the Curtis Creek Road while we look for Purple Martin. The mosquitoes were bad at the campground last year, so be prepared.

**26 Wednesday 7:00/8:15am** *Bird Walk*

**Mantua Reservoir:** Meet at Rusted Spoon (2645 US 89) for breakfast at 7:00am or at the parking lot on the east side of the reservoir at 8:15am.

### AUGUST

**2 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am** *Bird Walk*

**Riverdale Parkway (South):** Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant (3558 Wall Ave., Ogden) at 7:00am for breakfast or at the trailhead (from Riverdale Rd., south on 700 W for one block, then left on 4600 S to lot on right at end of the road) at 8:00am.

**9 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am** *Bird Walk*

**Ogden River Parkway:** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast at 7:00am or at the MTC Park on the Ogden River off Monroe at 8:00am. This park is also called the Ogden Botanical Gardens.

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

**Annual Potluck Dinner!** It's time for our annual potluck. Soft drinks will be provided. Please note: **NO GRILL THIS YEAR.** Bring a dish to share and your dishes and utensils. Don't forget insect repellent. After dinner will be a time for socializing and sharing experiences. Meet at the Ogden Nature Center, 966 West 12th Street, Ogden.

**16 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am** *Bird Walk*

**Morgan's Mickelsen Mile:** Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Drive, South Ogden) for breakfast at 7:00am or at the restaurant parking area to carpool at 8:00am.

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

**Farmington Canyon:** We will meet at the DWR office at 515 E 5300 S (Adams Avenue) in Ogden at 8:00am and carpool from there. Bring a lunch and drinks. We will drive up Farmington Canyon and come back down into Bountiful.

**AUGUST (cont)****23 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am**      *Bird Walk*

**Jefferson Hunt Campground (trail starts on the west side of the campground):** Meet at Dylan's (12<sup>th</sup> and Monroe) for breakfast at 7:00am or Smith's Parking lot (12<sup>th</sup> and Harrison) to carpool at 8:00am.

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

**West Haven Hiking and Biking Trail, west of I-15:** Meet at Denny's Restaurant (North on 1100 W from 21<sup>st</sup> in the Flying J Plaza) at 7:00am for breakfast or on frontage road in front of Stevens-Henager College to start walk at 8:00am.

**SEPTEMBER****6 Wednesday 7:00/8:00am**      *Bird Walk*

**Dale Young Nature Park (formerly Perry Nature Park):** Meet at Rusted Spoon (2645 US 89, Perry) for breakfast at 7:00am at the park (1200 W Davis Street off US 89 at 2250 S, Perry) at 8:00am.

**FIELD TRIP LEADER NEEDED**

In August 2017, Lester Talbot is retiring from the position he has held for over 17 years. Les has planned and led some great field trips over the years, but we are now in search of someone to take over that task. Our meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month and field trips usually are scheduled for the Saturday following our meeting. Generally, the field trips cover a local area and last for one-half day. Occasionally, a trip can last all day. If you would like more information or are interested in volunteering to lead field trips, please contact Dan Johnston by email at [danielj47@comcast.net](mailto:danielj47@comcast.net) or by phone at 801-645-8633.

**Contact Persons for WAS Outings**

**Wednesday Walks** - Paul Lombardi  
[pslombard@gmail.com](mailto:pslombard@gmail.com)

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

**Other Field Trips** - Mike Hearell 801-529-8693

**The Lek Field Trip Report**

by Les Talbot

The Lek was buzzing with activity this year. There were 40 males and maybe two females. They were strutting on both sides of the road and in the middle of the road. Just after the sun came up a Japanese couple pulled off the road. He got out and let his dog out. Then the lady got out. So that ended the strut for that morning.

At the lek Dan invited a couple of ladies from Texas to join us.

There were 27 Common Loons on East Canyon Reservoir. That is the largest number of loons we have seen there.

There is a Bald Eagle nest in a tree at the gate where they close the road to Jeremy Ranch. We didn't see anything on the nest. A local photographer had been there for a while and said he saw an eagle earlier in the day. There was a Golden Eagle on the west side of the canyon.

One of the ladies from Texas had not seen a dipper before. We stopped on a bridge for East Canyon Creek. A dipper was sitting on a rock. A Cooper's Hawk saw it, flew towards it and chased it off. The hawk landed on the roof of a house and the dipper came back to the rock.

Altogether, we saw 28 species on the trip.

**CORRECTION**

Last month we announced that Jack Rensel has retired as the only Program Chair Wasatch Audubon Society has had. We asked that you share a favorite story about Jack or one of the programs you especially enjoyed. Unfortunately, one of the email addresses provided in the article was incorrect. If you sent an email to John Bellmon to share with Jack, please send it again. The correct email addresses for John is: [bellmonj@comcast.net](mailto:bellmonj@comcast.net). If you have not already sent an email to be shared with Jack, we encourage you to send a note to either John Bellmon or Keith Evans. Keith's email is: [bkevans4@comcast.net](mailto:bkevans4@comcast.net). We apologize for any inconvenience because of this error and thank you in advance for sending a memory to share with Jack.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

*by Lynn Carroll*

Please join us in welcoming those who recently joined or rejoined.

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Donald Andrus    | Marie Fulmer        |
| Anthony Baker    | Colette Greenwood   |
| Robert Banghart  | Peter Griffiths     |
| Ann E. Barker    | William H. Kirshner |
| Renee Beard      | Chris Kleinsmith    |
| Larry Bennington | Marsha M. Knight    |
| Georgia Bennion  | Rebecca Lammert     |
| Roberta Beverly  | James Lombardo      |
| Nancy Brown      | Glen R. Loper       |
| Daniel E. Carter | Ken Martin          |
| James Chapman    | Tiffany Pershing    |
| Laura Coplin     | Marylyn Rands       |
| Trent Draper     | Frank Roskelley     |
| Linda A. Eesley  | F. K. Smith         |
| Julia Etcheverry | V. Arnold Smith     |
| George Fairbanks |                     |

**Coming Soon!**

"heads-up" reminder

**The Big Sit**



is coming up in October. We don't really have a date or place, but stay tuned for more information.

It is like a Big Day or a bird-a-thon in that the object is to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard from the 17 - foot circle.



**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*



**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**