



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society

Vol. 38, Number 6 November/December 2019

WAS Meetings and Happenings

SPEAKERS WILL START AT 7:00PM, WITH MEETING AND SOCIAL TO FOLLOW

Tuesday, November 19, 2019 – 7:00PM

Re-Bisoning the West: Restoring an American Icon to the Landscape

Kurt Repanshek, an award winning journalist whose work has appeared in "Smithsonian," "Audubon," "National Geographic Traveler" and others. He is also the founder of National ParksTraveler.org, the only editorially independent media organization dedicated to daily coverage of national parks and protected areas. He lives in Park City, Utah. In his book "Re-Bisoning the West," Kurt Repanshek traces the history of bison from their near extinction to present-day efforts to bring them back to the landscape—and the biological, political, and cultural hurdles confronting these efforts. Repanshek explores Native American relationships with bison and presents a forward-thinking approach to returning bison to the West and improving the health of ecosystems. He will have copies of his book available for sale at the meeting.

Tuesday December 17, 2019 – 7:00PM

This meeting will be a fun social and slideshow. Come and enjoy catching up with friends or getting to know new ones!

Meet at the Ogden Nature Center located at
966 West 12th Street, Ogden
**PLEASE JOIN US
AND BRING A FRIEND!**

LET'S CAP ANOTHER YEAR WITH GUSTO!

By Keith Evans

Yes, it's time for another round of Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). This season marks the 120th year of Christmas Bird Counts and results in the longest bird survey database in the world. Wasatch Audubon sponsors four counts. We need your help to make this the best year possible. We will start with the Ogden count (celebrating its 40th anniversary) on **December 14, 2019**. Then we will continue with the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge count on **December 18, 2019**; the Morgan count on **December 26, 2019**; and finish with Antelope Island State Park on **January 1, 2020**. Look in the Calendar section of this newsletter for specific information on where and when to meet.

From a state-wide perspective, there usually are about 25-26 counts in Utah, with approximately 190 individual bird species recorded each year. As expected, the counts with the highest number of observers commonly record the most species (more eyes = more sightings). Utah usually has 1-3 counts with 100 or more species. None of the four counts sponsored by Wasatch Audubon have ever reached the 100 mark, but it's possible as both Logan and Salt Lake City have topped it. The most scientific importance is in the "trend" data provided by this long-term database. However, the unusual or rare species often contribute the most excitement. In Utah, there usually are approximately 30 species that are recorded on only one count.

Spotting an adult Bald Eagle majestically soaring overhead on a cold winter morning is a breathtaking experience, but so is spotting a totally unexpected species (like a Least Sandpiper) along the Antelope Island causeway. Please plan to join your friends and fellow birders for some great memories, along with the satisfaction of providing valuable information on our State's birdlife.

Photo by Billy Fenimore



Enjoying Christmas Bird Count at Antelope Island



**SMILE! AND SUPPORT
WASATCH AUDUBON**

Wasatch Audubon Society
Website: <http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

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Treasurer	Betty Evans	801-476-0232
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2018/2019	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2018/2019	Billy Fenimore	801-301-3756
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Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Field Trips	Vacant	
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Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
Hospitality	Jeane Taylor	801-721-9432
Membership	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Newsletter	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
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>.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to Wasatch Audubon Society.

Just sign in to <https://smile.amazon.com> and select Wasatch Audubon Society as the organization you wish to support, or go directly to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/87-0411832>.

Thank you for your support!

President's Pipeline

By Dan Johnston

The two new Corvids of the month for September and October are the Steller's Jay and Green Jay. These are two of the most strikingly beautiful birds in North America.

The Steller's Jay is a jay native to western North America, closely related to the Blue Jay found on the rest of the continent, but with a black head and upper body. It is also known as the Long-crested Jay, Mountain Jay, and Pine Jay. It is the only crested jay west of the Rocky Mountains. It is also sometimes colloquially called a "Blue Jay" in the Pacific Northwest. The Steller's Jay occurs in most of the forested areas of western North America as far east as the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains from southern Alaska to northern Nicaragua. Although the Steller's Jay primarily lives in coniferous forests, it can be found in other types of forests as well. It is common in residential and agricultural areas with nearby forests.

Steller's Jays are omnivores. Their diet is about two-thirds plant matter and one-third animal matter. Steller's Jays will visit feeders and prefer black-oil sunflower seeds, white striped sunflower seeds, cracked corn, shelled raw peanuts, and are especially attracted to whole raw peanuts. Suet is also consumed, but mostly in the winter season.

Steller's Jays breed in monogamous pairs. The clutch is usually incubated entirely by the female for about 16 days. The male feeds the female during this time. Though they are known to be loud, during nesting they are quiet in order to not attract attention. The nest is usually in a conifer but is sometimes built in a hollow in a tree. The Steller's Jay and the Blue Jay are the only New World jays that use mud in construction of their nests.

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The Steller's Jay is a noted mimic. It can imitate the vocalizations of many species of birds, other animals, and sounds of non-animal origin. It often will imitate the calls from birds of prey such as the Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Osprey, causing other birds to seek cover and flee feeding areas.

Johann Friedrich Gmelin named the bird after German naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller, who collected one on Kayak Island near Cordova, Alaska in 1741. He used the notes Steller had taken on the bird to formally describe it. Steller was on an expedition with Vitus Bering to Russian America from 1740 to 1742.

The Steller's Jay is the provincial bird of the Canadian province of British Columbia. A group of jays has many collective nouns, including a "band", "cast", "party", and "scold" of jays.

The Green Jay, known locally as the Rio Grande Jay, is a tropical species whose range extends into southernmost Texas. Slightly smaller than other jays, it is a striking bird with a lime-green body, yellow outer tail feathers, and black-and-blue head.

Seven similar subspecies range from Texas to Honduras. Another very different and geographically isolated set of subspecies inhabits northern South America. These differ in having tufted forecrowns and bright yellow bellies. The South American species is collectively called the Inca Jay.

Green Jays forage together in family flocks that rove woodlands and thickets, searching all levels of the vegetation for insects, fruit, and small vertebrates, maintaining contact with noisy calls. A Texas Green Jay flock consists of a breeding pair, the current year's nestlings, and 1-year-old nonbreeding jays from the previous year's nest. The 1-year-olds defend the territory, which aids the parents, but they are ejected from the family flock soon after the current year's nestlings have fledged. The Green Jays are highly social and territorial year-round, driving away rival Green Jays and mobbing predators such as owls or snakes. They readily visit feeders for fruit and seeds.

Green Jays, like the more familiar Blue Jays, are excellent mimics. In Texas, they may imitate the call of various hawks to frighten away other bird species (such as Plain Chachalacas) from food they want to eat. Green Jays use sticks to pry up loose bark, exposing insect prey. They are among the few North American bird species known to use tools. Green Jay populations in Texas grew an estimated 6.9% per year between 1966 and 2015 as the species' range expanded northward.

November/December 2019

I loved seeing the Green Jay at the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas. They seemed to be everywhere. I also saw their close cousin, the Inca Jay, when in Ecuador.

Good Birding, *Dan*

VOLUNTEER FIELD TRIP LEADER NEEDED!

Field trips are usually scheduled for the Saturday following our 3rd Tuesday WAS meetings. Generally, the field trips cover a local area and last for one-half day.

If you would like more information or are interested in volunteering, please contact Dan Johnston by email at danielj47@comcast.net or by phone at 801-645-8633

PICTURES ARE NEEDED FOR THE DECEMBER 17 MEETING
Please email to Susan Snyder at naturescall@gmail.com

EXCELLENT BIRDING OPPORTUNITY

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
James V. Hansen Education Center
Hours
Tuesday through Friday 8:00AM – 5:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Closed Sunday, Monday & Federal Holidays
Auto Tour Loop open every day of the year

Conservation Corner

PELICANS OF GREAT SALT LAKE

Lynn Carroll

Gunnison Island in Great Salt Lake's north arm is a nesting ground for American White Pelicans. Every spring thousands arrive at this barren island and set up housekeeping for about 12 weeks. The 154-acre island with its tiny neighbor Cub Island are a Wildlife Management Area where human visitation is not allowed. Continued on page 4

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A pelican pair will cooperate in piling sand and gravel and shaping a nest about two feet in diameter. Two eggs are typically laid, and the pair take turns sitting on the nest; one is always there to protect the eggs and young from gulls. (California Gulls also nest on the island). Breeding success is low. A study in the 1970s found only one-fourth of the nests fledged a single bird. The island is hot and exposed, and the closest place for a pelican to find food is 30 miles away in the Bear River. If the fishing parent is away too long, its partner will abandon the nest rather than starve.

Nevertheless, the remote location has protected the pelicans from land-based predators, and the Gunnison Island colony is one of the largest anywhere. In 1992, over 10,000 nests were counted (over 20K birds). A 2014 Standard-Examiner article reported that the population was stable at 6000-12000 nesting adults. However the falling level of the lake, which would allow coyotes and foxes to gain access to the island, prompted Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) biologists to increase their monitoring of the pelican population.

While aerial nest surveys go back decades, banding and tagging of juvenile pelicans each summer began in 2011. Birders are asked to look for green wing-tags on any pelicans seen up close. If one can be read, report the details (when, where, who, tag color, number and letter) to johnneill@utah.gov and to www.reportband.gov.

Numerous partners have joined DWR in the PELI project. Fifteen pelicans were equipped with "backpack" GPS transmitters. The migration paths of individual birds can be viewed on the PeliTrack website. These have confirmed that the most common path is south to the west coast of Mexico, but also revealed some surprising deviations, such as flights over the California Sierras. In 2017), 15 cameras (PELICams) were installed on Gunnison Island. One transmits a live image of the main nesting area throughout the breeding season. The other 14 are motion-triggered cameras placed close to nest sites and where coyotes might pass. School children and interested public can help review the multitude of images at zooniverse.org/projects/jaimibutler/pelicans

Coyotes were seen on the island's south shore, where land bridges lead, as early as 2017, and that year's count of adults was low. This year was worse. The plentiful rain failed to cover the land bridges. The count of adults was down to 3500. On the day of the annual juvenile round-up, only a few abandoned nests were found on the south shore, and only 74 juveniles could be tagged instead of the usual hundreds. Puddles of rain water on the usually dry island may have allowed coyotes to stay there longer, preying on pelicans.

We must continue to fight further water diversions from Great Salt Lake. The pelicans may bounce back or disappear from the island. The good news is, the species is generally doing well.

BIG SIT – A Resounding Succes\$!

The Big Sit was held on October 12th, with very cold weather in the morning (22 degrees), but warmer sunny weather in the afternoon (60 degrees). There were 13 individuals that came out to help us count 41 different species of birds. Everyone had a great time. We wish that more had come out to help us count birds for the chapter fund raising event. We gather pledges from friends to help raise funds for our chapter projects and events. This is our main fund raising event because we no longer sell sunflower seeds to raise funds for our chapter. A very big thank you to the participants that came out to help us count the birds on a great fall day.

Report on The Utah Audubon Council

By John Bellmon

The Utah Audubon Council held their fall meeting at the Ogden Nature Center hosted by our Wasatch Audubon chapter. We had a good turnout for the meeting that included representatives from the Audubon Saline Lakes Program, Audubon Rockies and Audubon New Mexico offices. Many local and state issues were discussed among the chapters and with our policy advocate. A very big thank you to all the individuals in our chapter that helped make the council meeting such a great success.

CALENDER



NOVEMBER

6 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Kay's Creek Parkway: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Dr., South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the trailhead at 9:00. Directions: Take 2000 E off of State Highway 193. Then left onto Deer View Dr. then left onto 2125 E and continue to the trailhead parking lot.

9 Saturday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Ogden Nature Center: Meet at Jeremiah's Restaurant (1307 W 12th St.) for breakfast at 8:00 or at Ogden Nature Center parking lot west end at 9:00.

13 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk South Ogden Nature Park: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Dr., South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the parking lot at 9:00.

19 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting "Re-bisoning the West" by Kurt Repanshek who traces the history of bison from their near extinction to present-day efforts to bring them back to the landscape.

20 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Two Rivers Trail: Meet at Denny's (21st St. in Flying J Plaza) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the trailhead at 9:00.

23 Saturday 8:00am Ponds Field Trip: Meet at the large parking lot by Wendy's in Roy (1900 W 5600 S) at 8:00am. We will visit the following ponds: Meadows Creek, Clinton, Jensen, the resting pond at Farmington Bay, and Kaysville Ponds. This is an all day trip – bring a lunch.

27 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk East Mountain Wilderness Park, Kaysville: Meet at Village Inn (1765 E Skyline Dr., South Ogden) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the trailhead at 9:00.

DECEMBER

3 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Board Meeting Ogden Nature Center: All members are welcome to attend. 966 West 12th St, Ogden.

4 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Willard Bay State Park: Meet at the Rusted Spoon (2645 US89, Perry UT) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the ponds on the N side of the park at 9:00. We will check out the canal before entering the park. Remember, the park is a fee area.

11 Wednesday 8:00/9:00am Bird Walk Ogden River Parkway: Meet at Dylan's (12th St. and Monroe) for breakfast at 8:00 or at the Ogden Botanical Garden off Monroe at 9:00.

14 Saturday 7:00am Ogden Christmas Bird Count: Meet at Denny's (21st St. in Flying J Plaza) 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 6:00pm at UCC Church (3350 South Harrison Blvd.) for compilation of data. Bring table service and a dish to share.

17 Tuesday 7:00pm WAS Meeting, Holiday Social: We will enjoy pictures, food and each other!

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

26 Thursday 7:30/8:00am Morgan Christmas Bird Count: Meet at the Utah DWR (515 E 5300 S, South Ogden) to carpool at 7:30. Or meet at Arnold Smith's house in Morgan, 796 N 700 E, at 8:00am. It is an all day trip so bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars.

JANUARY

1 Wednesday 8:00am Antelope Island Christmas Bird Count: Meet at the parking lot at Antelope Island State Park entrance kiosk at 8:00am. It is an all day trip so bring water and lunch. Walkie talkies on frequency 11-22 will be used to communicate between cars. Fee area.

Trip Report – Bluebird Box Cleanup

By Nancy Arnett

The original nest box cleanout date was Saturday, September 21st, but we learned the night before of the Huntsville Marathon starting at Monte Cristo and ending in Huntsville on that Saturday. The cleanout was rescheduled to Tuesday, September 24th.

The weather on Tuesday could not have been any more perfect. Blue sky, cool temperatures and not a person in sight made for a picture-perfect day. Laura and Dan Johnston and John Bellmon and I paired up to cover three of the four routes along fence lines in the Monte Cristo highway area. The boxes are used by Mountain Bluebirds, House Wrens and Tree Swallows to raise their young. Many of the boxes had been used by Mountain Bluebirds and House Wrens and a few Tree Swallows. Some boxes were empty.

In the past John and I have seen a flock of a couple dozen bluebirds as we walked along the fence line. We didn't see as many this year but we did see a variety of other birds. They include: flicker, chickadee, robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Cooper's Hawk.

It was a successful day and the approximately 120 nest boxes are ready for the 2020 breeding season. Thank you to Laura, Dan and John for their help. Thank you also to Arnold Smith for cleaning out the nest boxes on the fourth route on a different day.



Board Member Spotlight

By Jeane Taylor



I have always loved birds! I used to listen to them when I was young. Then I married Dave, who was a duck hunter, and knew all the birds that would come from the marshes. Our trips to Yellowstone were many and we loved to watch the animals and the birds – actually, I can watch grass grow!! I do it often in my back yard. I keep binoculars close at hand so I see who is visiting my yard. I live by the Ogden River Green Belt, so have many visitors year round.

I grew up in Roy and have lived in our home on 16th St. in Ogden for 48 years. Dave and I have two children, Richard and Paul. Paul died at a young age and Richard is retiring in two more years. He lives in Eagle, ID, with his wife. I enjoy my grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

My favorite bird is the Snowy Egret...but then no, maybe its the Lazuli Bunting...oh, maybe I love what I am currently watching. I do not keep track of birds I see, and don't really have a birding bucket list. I did have a pet albino Cockatiel, "Benny," who lived for 19 years. I loved this bird a lot. She was good company. The picture of myself and Benny was taken when I was much younger, approximately in the late 1980's.

We enjoyed our trip to Kearney, NE to see the Sand Hill Crane migration in 2005. That was Wow! I also enjoyed a birding trip, with Road Scholar, to Sierra Vista, AZ in 2010. Birds in Mexico, Alaska or wherever you see them are way fun!!

I am a cancer survivor. My husband and I had cancer at the same time. He did not survive his cancer. Life is good and birds make it better!

It was Les Talbot, who used to visit me at Canyon View School, where I worked at the front desk, as head secretary, who told me all about birds. He invited me to become a member of Wasatch Audubon Society and I have been so happy, because I have enjoyed all the trips I have gone on, and also the friends that I have made – who love birds!! Thank you for helping me to become better acquainted with all the feathered friends who live in our area.

<u>New or rejoining members</u>	
Gordon Allred	John Meyer
Jim Barney	Barbara Moreland
Julie Berntsen	Cole Patton
Brit Bigelow	Scott Richards
Anna Cich	Ms. Evelyn Shaeffer
Nicole Culbertson	Sandra W. Smith
Terry Emmons	William Smith
Jackie F. Okarma	Holidae Swan
Mark Hanrion	Sharon Swenson
Irene Helmcke	Ms. Terry Taylor
Laura Johnston	Ms. Sharon Thompson
Heidi Kapanka	Nancy Allen
James Lombardo	Cheryl Watson
	Cathv Welch

LISTS

By Jay Hudson

Life is lists! Everyone makes lists. We make them in our heads, on the palm of our hand, in our computers or stuck on the refrigerator. The Sumerians made shopping lists on clay tablets and I’ve made bird lists on the back of scrap paper while sitting out the weather in some distant café. If you take a guided birding tour you will spend every evening with your printed check list listening to the guide tell you what the group saw so you can tick off the ones you witnessed. I once saw a lady on a birding trip check every bird the guide said was seen that day whether she saw it or not. This leads me to wonder the ethics of bird lists. Should you tick off a bird if you only heard it? What about a fly by with little time to see any distinguishing features? How about the guide aboard the boat that calls out the name of a bird bobbing on the waves a quarter of a mile away. Sure you saw all those fleeting flitters but is it fair to tick them off?

If you are serious about listing you will be doing trip, state, country, backyard, international, special event, species and “want” lists. Here’s a question; if you see a bird in Mexico in the winter that summers in the U.S., can you count it as a U.S. bird?

Once you say you’re a “birder” be it level 1 or 10, you need to set personal standards. I’m comfortable with mine and although they may not be as high as they could be (perhaps the Chickadee could publish the “official” sighting rules), I know that a glimpse is good enough for my life list but not good enough to describe the bird to a

friend. Quite frankly, I enjoy the story behind the hunt, describing the topography, the unusual circumstances involved and the fact that, in many cases, I will probably never again get a better glimpse of that species. I stand in awe of those who can describe a bird’s color patterns, habitat requirements, nesting techniques, hunting strategies and mating prowess, but my sights are set a bit lower only because I’m lazy.

I know birders who have never kept a written life list but if you named a bird, they can tell you if they have seen it, where, when and under what circumstances. These are birders with passion, with libraries, the latest optics and go-anywhere vehicles. But they still list; written or not. They can tell you the books in their library, the binoculars they have had and the vehicles they have had over the years. I hope that novice birders look forward to acquiring this wisdom, this experience, this story telling potential.

I will never reach the level of that medical doctor that reveled in lists and wound up having a book named after him (Roget’s Thesaurus) but I love going over my list of birds and remembering the circumstances under which I saw the bird, be it a glimpse or a long studied look.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK. Go to www.wasatchaudubon.gov and click on the FACEBOOK logo.

Contacts for Field Trips:

Wednesday Walks – Paul Lombardi
pslombard@gmail.com

2nd Saturday Walks – Dan Johnston
 801-645-8633

Field Trips on the Saturday after the WAS Tuesday meeting – Dan Johnston
 801-645-8633



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

AUDUBON
Membership Application

Membership in **Audubon** automatically enrolls you as a member of **Wasatch Audubon**. When you join, you will receive four issues of **Audubon** magazine and six issues of our chapter newsletter, **The Mountain Chickadee**, each year. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of **\$20**, please go to the following website:

<http://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=W54>

(By using this special page, you give our chapter credit toward a monetary reward)

Local Chapter: Wasatch Audubon Society – W54



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** _____

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