

Top 10 Reasons Why Birders Should Say NO to UDOT's West Davis Freeway

1. The GSL and its surrounding wetlands are tremendously important as breeding areas and stopover points for migrating birds. The GSL has
 - the largest stopover numbers for Wilson's Phalaropes (500,000 birds annually) and Eared Grebes (2,200,000 birds)
 - represents the only staging area in the interior United States for the Marbled Godwit.
 - some of the highest concentrations of American Avocets (250,000 birds), Black-necked Stilts (65,000 birds), Snowy Plovers (over half the breeding population in western North America), Western Sandpipers (150,000 birds observed in a day), and Long-billed Dowitchers (32,000 birds observed in a day)
 - the world's largest breeding population of White-faced Ibis, and
 - one of three of the largest breeding colonies of American White Pelicans (20,000 breeding birds annually)

Waterfowl, song birds, raptors, and game birds also rely on the Great Salt Lake for habitat and food. In total, 237 avian species are known to use the Great Salt Lake. **On any given day during migration, there are hundreds of thousands of phalaropes, eared grebes, American avocets, white-faced ibis, and other birds utilizing areas that would be impacted by the freeway.**

2. Utah has lost **90%** of its wetlands since the white settlers arrived in the 1800s. The GSL and its shoreline wetlands are globally unique and are part of the remaining 10% of the total wetland acreage in the entire state of Utah, from when white settlers first arrived. The lower 48 states have lost over half of their original wetlands. Half!! **Wetlands provide vital ecosystem services, and anything that jeopardizes remaining wetlands is unacceptable.**
3. Studies have shown that noise pollution disrupts bird breeding behavior. Studies have also shown that light pollution disrupts daily bird behavior. **UDOT's freeway would be built right into the wetlands where birds breed, nest, rest and stage the next leg of their migration.**

4. **The wetlands of Farmington Bay and the Shoreland Preserve will be degraded by this freeway.** Fossil fuel runoff will leach into soils and eventually make their way into the wetlands. Litter along the freeway will make it into the wetlands. Both fossil fuel runoff and litter will have impacts on breeding birds in the area.
5. **We would lose hundreds of Barn Owls and Short-eared Owls as they hunt low to the ground and frequent the areas where the WDF goes through. We're already losing a startling number along Legacy Parkway.** Northern Harriers also fly low, hunting along the Glovers Lane and GSL shoreline upland and wet meadow habitat.
6. The highly successful Great Blue Heron rookery constructed by boy scouts is located near the Great Salt Lake Nature Center. It produces numerous fledglings each year that learn to fly and fish in the open water east of the rookery, right where the freeway is proposed. **The extreme proximity of the Glover Lane alternative will likely mean the end of this rookery.**
7. Nesting Avocet colonies and their fledglings use the north ponds of Farmington Bay. **This vital area which supports critical habitat for these migratory birds would be lost if the freeway is built in West Davis County.**
8. Hundreds of annual roosting wintering American Bald Eagles in the mature cottonwoods and willows along Farmington Bay entrance road and Glovers Lane. **These magnificent raptors would lose their winter home if this freeway is allowed to be built.**
9. Farmington Bay is one of the best spots for bird watching and duck hunting along the Wasatch Front. **This freeway would drastically change one of our favorite spots.** Picture a 4 lane 65 mph elevated freeway with heavy trucks, billboards and lights – just 100 yards north of the Great Salt Lake Nature Center and the Great Blue Heron Rookery!
10. **No degree of mitigation or creation of enhanced habitat will compensate for the permanent loss of this high quality, complex wetland mosaic which now exists along Farmington Bay and the GSL natural shoreline.**