



THE PELICAN

JULY/AUGUST 2010

NEWSLETTER OF GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON

www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

JOIN US

Thursday, September 16

Ninth Annual Great Salt Lake Audubon Gala Fundraiser

"Bucks for Birds"

At the new Episcopal Church Center
75 South 200 East

Dinner, Drinks, Live Music, Auction, Easy Parking & More

PLEASE SEE INSERT TO REGISTER

All proceeds benefit GSLA educational and restoration projects.

IMPORTANT EVENTS COMING UP

Saturday, July 10th, 7:30AM to Noon

BRIGHTON BIRD COUNT

Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith

See page 4 for details.

THE SUNFLOWER SEED FUNDRAISER

Great Salt Lake Audubon will have a sunflower seed sale again this fall. Please watch for the information and order form in the September/October Pelican.

AUDUBON COUNCIL FALL MEETING: SEPT. 18-19TH IN LOGAN

Council president Christopher Cokinos will try to get the Stokes Nature Center in Logan for us. Of course, there will be good bird outings and if anyone's interested we can watch the USU football game Sat. night. Details will appear in the next Pelican. Contact Chris at www.christophercokinos.com for more information.

TIM AVERY WILL OFFER A CLASS

August 31st at 7pm,

"Migrant Traps & Nocturnal Migration".

It will be at the HawkWatch International office,
2240 S 900 E, SLC. Cost will be \$5.00 Contact Deedee @ 801
272-8060 if you have questions.

See page 5 of the calendar for a brief description of the class.



Short Eared Owl, photo by Mark Mossing

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR OLD BATTERIES?

Recycle them at
INTERMOUNTAIN BATTERY
3662 South Main
801-266-7465

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THE PELICAN

NEWSLETTER OF GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON

Printed on recycled paper.

Mission Statement: Great Salt Lake Audubon is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat for wild birds, animals and plants, and to maintaining healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the state.

GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON DIRECTORY

www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

OFFICE

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OFFICERS

President, Jen Hajj.....801-671-9505
Vice PresidentOpen
Secretary.....Open
Treasurer,Open

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Term Ending 2012

Janice Huebner..... 801-550-8181
Nancy Sakahara.....801-487-4025

Term Ending 2011

Tara Poelzing.....801-463-2776

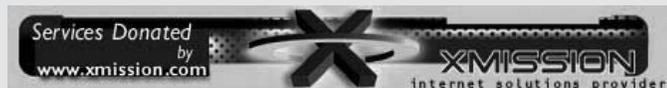
Term Ending 2010

Heather Dove.....801-424-0010

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Newsletter Editor, Nancy Sakahara.....801-487-4025
Public Outreach, June Ryburn.....801-576-0103
Education open
Field Trips, Sylvia Gray.....801-532-3486
Field Trips, Deedee O'Brien.....801-272-8060
Jordan River Site, Keith Johnson.....801-467-6497
Membership, Heather Dove801-424-0010
Programs, Sarah Nelson.....
Publicity, Jeff Bilsky..... 801-842-4013
Conservation, Janice Huebner.....801-550-8171
Executive Director, Bruce Heath.....801-512-7290

Submission Guidelines: Original articles and photos are welcomed. The editor reserves the right to choose and edit as needed. E-mail articles to newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org. *The Pelican* is published 6 times a year. Submission deadline for the Sept./Oct. issue is August 11, 2010.



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by Nancy Sakahara/ Heather Dove

The monthly program meeting at the Tracy Aviary was a resounding success. Thank you, Sarah Nelson and Matthew Utlej. It was wonderful to be outdoors, the company was good, the ice cream delicious and the information provided was stimulating and informative. As a result of what I learned, I personally am planting Scarlet Runner Beans for the Hummingbirds.

The general membership business meeting was held as planned on May 18th and was well attended. A presentation by Jen Hajj included an overview of the mission and vision of GSLA and the ongoing activities and programs that are offered by our organization. A discussion ensued about what people value about the organization and what activities and efforts the members particularly appreciate and enjoy. Jen then listed the ongoing volunteer personnel needs the organization has, ranging from people to occasionally help out with one-time duties, to committee members, to board members and officers. The attendees then circulated among various stations manned by committee chairs. A lively discussion ensued and people were asked to volunteer according to their interests and time constraints. We were very encouraged by the enthusiasm that was evident at this meeting and we will follow through on contacting those people that volunteered.

Finally Jen Hajj, our very capable leader for the last year, announced her intention to step down as president at the completion of her term, May 31st. We owe a great debt of gratitude to this wonderful lady who has been so generous with her time, ideas and wisdom. She has graciously agreed to stay on informally to continue to guide us as we work to identify and install a new president. We extend our most heartfelt thanks to this wonderful champion of birds, habitat and conservation of the environment.

Please contact June Ryburn (801-576-0103) to volunteer for Public Outreach events.



GSLA thanks the voters of Salt Lake County for their support of the Zoo, Arts & Parks program.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 2010

by Nancy Sakahara/ Heather Dove

Heather Dove reported on the nominating committee. The committee has identified a few people who may be interested in joining the board. We hope to recruit more potential nominees at the upcoming general meeting on May 18th as we have many openings available. Vigorous recruitment efforts will continue as we work to fill out the board roster, as well as replace the outgoing president.

Sylvia Gray & all have been busy planning the gala – please see page 6 for volunteer opportunities.

Tara Poelzing reported on the Jordan River restoration for which the cooperative agreement including funding is almost finalized.

Deedee O'Brien has discontinued the Yahoo event list effective May 1st. All future GSLA event notices will be posted by email via the SLBnet listserv. See sign up information from Jeff Bilsky at the bottom of this column.

Janice Huebner joined us via speakerphone to report on her work as conservation chair.

A draft of the June 2010- May 2011 fiscal year budget was presented by Jen Hajj. The numbers were reviewed, discussed and approved by the Board". In line with our efforts to economize, we discussed the cost of a number of the services we use on a regular basis. The rental agreement for the Sugarhouse Garden Center will be revisited to determine if we can reduce the rental amount for our limited use of this space. Nancy Sakahara reported on the printer bids for the newsletter, it was decided to stay with our current printer, Corporate Edge since they provide fine service at a price that was comparable to two other bids.

Other development committee activity: Bruce Heath presented information about grant applications in progress.

Heather Dove has agreed to serve a second term on the Board.

The board agreed to meet again to organize the format for the general membership business meeting on May 18th

SLBNET SIGN-UP INFORMATION from Jeff Bilsky

There are a couple of ways you can handle this:

- 1) People sign themselves up here: <http://www.utahbirds.org/connections/E-hotlines.htm> or
- 2) Send Jeff an email at Greatsaltlakeaudubon@gmail.com with the subject line "Sign up for SLBNet event alert service". He will compile and send requests to Milt who will then sign these people up directly.

BRUCE'S BLOG: OIL SPILLS

By Bruce Heath, Executive Duiirector

As this is written, an untold number of gallons of oil continue to spew out around the cap in the Gulf oil spill. In our own backyard, the pond in Liberty Park is surrounded by an orange fence keeping the curious out of the way of the workers in white uniforms sucking up the oil from Red Butte into three big tankers. Fortunately, the captive birds in Tracy Aviary have been spared because their ponds now come from their own source of groundwater; but what is the effect on the geese, gulls, shorebirds, and passerines who normally drink and bathe at the big pond? Fortunately for us, the Red Butte spill enters the Jordan River downstream from our Restoration Project -- but think how devastating the impact would have been had it polluted Willow Creek, which flows through it and all of those ponds we created, and on the wildlife which use it.

The scenes of dying turtles and dolphins, nests and wetlands polluted, scrubbing of birds (who may die anyway from ingesting oil). It's personally horrifying. Anguish. Such a sense of helplessness.

My 6-month old grandson Max has been visiting. He's very active, but helpless. All his needs are met by his parents. He reminds me of the plight of all of the other species who share our planet – they don't realize how dependant they are on we humans not to destroy the environment they live in.

Why do we do things like this? Greed. Profits. Materialism. The life-style we lead. I say "we" because I use gasoline when I drive, my house is heated by natural gas, my electricity is generated from coal or dams on rivers, even cooking on my stove while camping uses propane. Max is only one of a generation of grandchildren who continue to increase the demand for energy. We're all in this together. Thankfully the demand and production of alternative energy sources is also increasing.

In a free-wheeling free-market economy like ours, the fundamental need for adequate government oversight and regulation seems obvious to me. It's also obvious after a decade of work that habitat restoration is far more expensive, time-consuming, and requires much more work than destruction of habitat.

Hopefully, this catastrophe of a generation will increase public awareness enough to help prevent future such disasters. National Audubon has taken a leading role in addressing the Gulf spill. To help, contact them at www.audubonaction.org/howto-help. More details are available at audubonaction@audubon.org. We at GSLA will continue working on our corner of the world, doing restoration, participating in conservation issues, increasing the public's appreciation of birds, educating it about the necessity and responsibility of maintaining habitat for them. We always welcome and continue to appreciate your participation in this cause.

If you want to personally express your thoughts, please share them with people who understand on our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/greatsaltlakeaudubon>.

Calendar of Events including Field Trips for July/Aug 2010

BEGINNING BIRDERS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME
We encourage carpooling on our field trips. Contribution towards gas money is always appreciated. Be sure to call the field trip leader to confirm that arrangements are still as published.

****PLEASE NOTE: EXPECT FIELD TRIPS TO LEAVE ON TIME SO ARRIVE 5-10 MINUTES EARLY TO ARRANGE CARPOOLS****

Wednesday, July 7th, 7:00AM
MOUNTAIN DELL REC., PARLEY'S CANYON
Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

Come and join us for our monthly bird survey. Last year we saw 39 species in July. We'll meet by 7AM in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 East for a morning of birding. Call Jack (801-255-7989) or Sylvia (801-532-3486) if you plan to attend.

Saturday, July 10th, 7:30AM to Noon
BRIGHTON BIRD COUNT

Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith

Please join Great Salt Lake Audubon for our annual Brighton Bird Count. We will meet at 7:30AM at the top of Big Cottonwood Canyon in the parking lot adjacent to the Silver Lake Visitor Center. Birders can select one of three birding options: 1) Silver Lake (easy walk), 2) Lake Solitude (moderate hike), 3) Twin Lake (strenuous hike). Novice to expert birders are welcome to participate. A potluck lunch follows at Noon. Bring a dish to share and your own eating utensils, plate, cup. GSLA will provide cold drinks. To carpool meet in the parking lot at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon by 7AM and then proceed to Silver Lake. Please call Jeanne LeBer or Ray Smith at (801-532-7384)

Monday, July 12th, 7:45AM
JOHNSON MILL at MIDWAY plus HEBER
Leader: Sylvia Gray

We will be visiting our long time friend, Charlene Johnson, and walking the grounds of Johnson Mill which is adjacent to the Provo River, for a couple of hours. Then we'll head to Heber to look for Bobolinks. Bring water, snacks, etc. We'll meet by 7:45AM in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 East for a morning of birding. Call Sylvia (801-532-3486) for more information or to let her know you'll be there.

Wednesday, July 14th
OQUIRRH LAKE AT DAYBREAK, SOUTH JORDAN
Leader: Pomera Fronce

This is our third bird survey of an area that is new to us. Who knows what we might find! To get to Daybreak from I-15, take the 10600 South exit westbound. Continue west until you reach Bangerter Highway and turn south. Go south to 11400 South and turn west into Daybreak. Follow Daybreak Parkway to Kestrel Rise Road (4695 West). Street parking is available. Our walk around the lake will cover 2-3 miles on flat paved trails. Contact Pomera at 801-272-2755 or pinkstring@xmission.com for starting time and to arrange carpools.

Sunday, July 18th, 7:30AM until Noon
JORDAN RIVER PARKWAY

Leader: Roberta Wherritt

A popular local urban birding area, this walkway extends along the Jordan River from the south end of the Salt Lake Valley almost to Farmington Bay. This trip focuses on the central part of the Salt Lake Valley north from 5300 South. Possible species include Yellow Warbler, Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Red-Winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, and ducks. Meet at Jordan River Parkway parking lot on the north side of 5300 South at 1070 West. (1070 West is the third stop light west of I-15 on 5300 South.) Call Roberta (801-274-3058) if you plan to attend.

Friday, July 23rd, 7:30AM
CORNER CANYON TRAILS, DRAPER

Leaders: Mark Mossing and Melanie Hoffman

This is our newest monthly field trip. We will start at the Coyote Hollow Trail Head (14200 S/1850 E – adjacent southeast to the Draper Temple) and bird until late morning. This field trip will be different each month as there are numerous trails in the system. Last month's trip revealed plumbeous vireos, flycatchers and gnatcatchers. Meet at the trailhead by 7:30AM. Bring your own snacks and water. Call Mark (801-571-4894) or Melanie (801-558-4134) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday, July 28th, 7:00/7:30AM
FARMINGTON BAY AND NEARBY AREA
Leaders: Bob Huntington and Deedee O'Brien

Join us for our monthly half-day visit to Farmington Bay. Meet inside the McDonald's just north of the Centerville exit from I-15 at 7:00am for breakfast and camaraderie or 7:30 am to head out. Bring your own water and snacks. Call Deedee O'Brien (801-272-8060) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday, August 4th, 7:00AM
MOUNTAIN DELL REC. AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON
Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

Come and join us for our monthly bird survey. We'll meet by 7AM in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 East for a morning of birding. Call Jack (255-7989) or Sylvia (532-3486) if you plan to attend.

Friday August 6th, 8:30AM – 1PM

CANYON WALK: MILL D NORTH FORK, BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON

Leader: Allene Keller

This will be a not-too-difficult morning birding hike in the Cottonwood Canyons. It will be about three miles on good trails with some elevation gain. Bring snacks and water. Meet in the parking lot at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Call Allene (801-467-3960) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday, August 11th

OQUIRRH LAKE AT DAYBREAK, SOUTH JORDAN

Leader: Pomera Fronce

This is our fourth bird survey of an area that is new to us. Who knows what we might find! To get to Daybreak from I-15, take the 10600 South exit westbound. Continue west until you reach Bangerter Highway and turn south. Go south to 11400 South and turn west into Daybreak. Follow Daybreak Parkway to Kestrel Rise Road (4695 West). Street parking is available. Our walk around the lake will cover 2-3 miles on flat paved trails. Contact Pomera at 801-272-2755 or pinkstring@xmission.com for starting time and to arrange carpools.

Friday, August 20th, 7:30AM

CORNER CANYON TRAILS, DRAPER

Leaders: Mark Mossing and Melanie Hoffman

This is our newest monthly field trip. We will start at the Coyote Hollow Trail Head (14200 S/1850 E – adjacent southeast to the Draper Temple) and bird until late morning. This field trip will be different each month as there are numerous trails in the system. Last month's trip revealed plumbeous vireos, flycatchers and gnatcatchers. Meet at the trailhead by 7:30AM. Bring your own snacks and water. Call Mark (801-571-4894) or Melanie (801-558-4134) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday, August 25th, 7:00/7:30AM

FARMINGTON BAY AND NEARBY AREA

Leaders: Bob Huntington and Deedee O'Brien

Join us for our monthly half-day visit to Farmington Bay. Meet inside the McDonald's just north of the Centerville exit from I-15 at 7:00am for breakfast and camaraderie or 7:30AM to head out. Bring your own water and snacks. Call Deedee O'Brien (801-272-8060) if you plan to attend.

Sunday, August 29th, 6AM

ANTELOPE ISLAND and CAUSEWAY

Leader: Bob MacDougall

Come join us for a day of birding along the causeway and on the island. We'll be looking for migrants and any of the island year round inhabitants. Meeting at Shopko at 6:00AM. will afford us an arrival on the causeway at sunrise. Remember to bring snacks, water and insect repellent. Call Bob (801-971-6077) for more information or if you plan to attend.

JULY/AUG

August 31st, 7PM

MIGRANT TRAPS & NOCTURNAL MIGRATION

Speaker Tim Avery

HawkWatch International; 2240 S 900 E

Cost: \$5.00

Contact Deedee @ 801 272-8060 if you have questions.

See below for a description of the class.

We all know that each spring and fall, a variety of species of birds make short and long migrations for their survival. Every fall songbirds, shorebirds, owls, ducks, etc., make their way south for the winter. They head for warmer climates with food to keep them fat till the spring, when they turn around and head back north--to breed all over the United States and Canada. But did you know that most of these species do the majority of their migration in the dark of the night? That's right, most of the birds we see during the day migrate at night! In this class we will talk about what we do know about this odd ritual that takes place--and also discuss some of the theories and unknowns behind it. Did you know that most species of birds have unique night flight calls? Did you know that you can monitor migration via radar? These are just a few of the things we are going to explore.

As a second part to this unique class we will discuss migrant traps, and migrant trap birding around Utah. We will discuss some of the best times to visit migrant traps, and what can make them such spectacular birding locations at times, and empty trees on other days. And of course, the class wouldn't be complete without talking about how nocturnal migration relates to migrant trap birding.

Join me and Great Salt Lake Audubon for a presentation about an interesting and little talked about area of birding!

Wednesday, September 1st, 7:30AM

MOUNTAIN DELL REC. AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON

Leaders: Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray

Come and join us for our monthly bird survey. Since we began this survey we have seen well over 100 species. We'll meet by 7:30AM in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 East for a morning of birding. Call Jack (801-255-7989) or Sylvia (801-532-3486) if you plan to attend.

BEAR RIVER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE will once again be offering guided tours in June, July and August. The tours will be given on Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and Saturday morning from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. You may caravan with the group in your own vehicle, or reserve seats in the refuge's van. The tours are appropriate for ages 10 and up.

Great Salt Lake Audubon is continuing its annual search for new board members. This year's nominating committee consists of Jen Hajj, Heather Dove and Nathan Darnall. Please contact Jen, Heather or Nathan if you are interested in serving on the board or if you would like to nominate one or more individuals to serve on the board.

GSLA is looking for people with one or more of the following experience or backgrounds: prior experience with a nonprofit, accounting or financial, attorney or legal, marketing, business, real estate, fund raising, natural resources, biology or environment, teaching or education, public administration, public policy, and event planning.

You do not need to be an expert birder or have lots of money to serve on the board. However, board members are asked to attend monthly board meetings and serve on at least one committee. Some committees meet monthly, some quarterly, and some only as needed which may be once or twice a year. The average time commitment may be as little as two hours per week or could be as much time as you'd like to contribute.

The Audubon name is well-recognized and thought of highly. Because of this, other organizations seek our input and we are able to work with them to influence public policy that benefits wildlife, which in turn will benefit people. In addition, GSLA engages people in learning about birds and nature through field trips, monthly programs, field seminars and various booths. We are also creating valuable bird habitat along the Jordan River.

Please consider helping GSLA achieve even more by volunteering to serve on the board or by asking others to do the same.

ANOTHER WONDERFUL WEEKEND AT BASIN & RANGE!!

THANK YOU, KEITH JOHNSON !

Weather was perfect, beautiful location
Great instructors. Seminars were interesting, very informative and fun. I was happy to get away from the TV and radio, the Gulf oil spill and all the other bad news.

Instead, I learned about the early peoples in Utah from Lori Hunsaker, Pahvant Butte, Lake Bonneville from William Lund, the different habitats and resident birds of the Oak Creek area from Frank Howe. Saw the Hermit Thrush on her nest, the Great Horned Owl fledge and drop down in front of us.
Whoops, big mistake!

Attendees who went with Jane Beckwith, Ty Harrison and Rob Wilson returned with big smiles and appreciation for their new knowledge.

Thank you to the other campers who helped me out with my two boys who found the seminars too dry but the setting quite magical and exhilarating. For those of you that didn't make it, maybe next year. This year was filled to capacity, anyway.

By Nancy Sakahara

MEMBERSHIP

by Heather Dove and Melanie Loucks

Local Membership, new and renewals
David Wiener, Tony Morgan , Bob & Sally Wilkinson June Ryburn Janice Huebner, Kathleen Digre, Lawrence & Amanda Barusch, Richard Kimball, Geoff Hardies, Cindy Lund, Pomera Fronce, Heather Dove & David Druker, Marge Neilson, Jeanie Boynton, J Scott Maddox, Ann O'Connell, Floyd Johnson, , Bill Yates, Victor Westfall, Reatha Whiting, Don & Nancy Bill, Florence Shepard, Dr. Marvin Rallison, , Rob Lang & Bev Lynch, Joan Digiorgio, Polly Nevins, Tara Poelzing,

New NAS members:

Jessica Earl, Suzanne Barton, Jeanne Plumhof, Michelle McDaniel, W. V. Svedin, Kurt Higgins, S. Wilkins, Alan L. Mueller, Michele Laursen, Mr. Rob Dubuc, and Mindy Rabideau

We welcome you and encourage you to join us at our meetings, field trips and other events and lend your talents and time as a volunteer on our many projects.

Electronic delivery of the Pelican: If you wish to receive your newsletter electronically rather than the paper version, please send an email to Heather Dove (hdove@xmission.com.)

THE GALA/AUCTION PLANNING COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP NOW to make our fundraiser a success. Please consider DONATING AND/OR SOLICITING DONATIONS for the auction from friends and businesses you support. We need interesting, useful, or fun quality items, services or experiences that will attract bidder competition for the fun of it and the benefit of GSLA. [weekend getaways, time shares, event tickets, restaurant gift certificates, outdoor recreational experiences, health & fitness offerings, food items, cooking lessons.... your ideas]

BE PART OF IT!

Contact one of the following with donations:

Nancy Howard @ 801-487-4925; nehoward58@yahoo.com
Nancy Sakahara @ 801-487-4025; nsakahara@earthlink.net
Deedee O'Brien : 801-272-8060; d-dobrien@comcast.net

In addition, we will need volunteers during the event:

Setting up displays on Sept. 16th

Welcoming guests

Check in/ Check out

Finally before and after:

Publicity

Creating Name Tags

Thank you letters

If you can help or would like more information please contact:
Sylvia Gray (801-532-3486) OR pdggray@xmission.com

Thank you.

HOME SWEET HOME

BY KEITH EVANS

In addition to information on 150 birding hotspots, the book entitled, “*Utah’s Featured Birds and Viewing Sites*” is full of information on habitat types. Is habitat as important as size, color, wing-bars, and bill shape for bird identification? Probably not, but being habitat aware sure helps. And, for the birds, habitat is everything. This month-by-month series is based on information from the book with a few anecdotes to add interest. *(Please note: we are picking up the series late. The full series is on our website)*

Repeat of June in Mountain Shrub and Aspen. Mountain-shrub and aspen forests are often listed as two separate habitat types, but I’ll cover them together as many bird species are found in both. Approximately 7.5% of Utah is classified in these habitat types. Trees and shrubs include: aspen, Gambel oak, big tooth maple, serviceberry, mountain mahogany, chokecherry, elderberry, and snowberry. Depending on the moisture regime the understory can be fairly barren, or very dense. Many early spring flowering plants bloom before June as the sunlight reaching the ground is more intense before the leaves on the trees are fully developed. Many of the birds found here also utilize the riparian areas and include: Red-naped Sapsucker, Mountain Chickadee, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee, Virginia’s Warbler, and Western Scrub-Jay. At higher elevations look for American Three-toed Woodpecker and Cassin’s Finch. Back in 1985, John “helped” me add a Williamson’s Sapsucker to my lifelist. John owned a great 4-W, high clearance vehicle, but we decided to take my low riding Plymouth. The roads would be good was our reasoning. We headed to the Daniels Pass area south of Heber City where Williamson’s Sapsuckers had been regularly reported. Well, I did add the sapsucker to my lifelist as well as scraping off the muffler and a few other problems. Due to the distance, this was also an all day trip. At the very next Audubon meeting, a member reported seeing Williamson’s Sapsuckers along the paved road by the Monte Cristo Campground. Oh well, my memories and stories are much better this way.

July in the High Country. Finally, the mountain snow cover has been reduced to small patches on the north slopes and roads only used by snowmobilers a few months ago are open to auto traffic. By July in the high elevation mountains of Utah, the flowers are blooming and the birds are singing – in some cases the mosquitoes are hungry. All roads heading east from the Great Salt Lake Valley go uphill. Three of the best are US-89 to Bear Lake, UT-39 from Ogden east over Monte Cristo Pass, and the Mirror Lake Road from Kamas, Utah, to Evanston, Wyoming. Every stop along these roads offers opportunities to identify flowers (bring a flower guide) as well as observe and listen to birds. Some characteristic birds include: Warbling Vireo, Red-naped Sapsucker, Western Tanager, Mountain Chickadee, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Chipping Sparrow and Mountain Bluebird. There are “specialty” spots throughout these areas: the Purple Martins at the Curtis Creek road just over Monte Cristo Pass on UT-39; the Cassin’s Finch and Pine Siskins in the top of trees at the Bald Mountain picnic area on the Mirror Lake Road; and, the American Dippers and Fox Sparrows observed along the Logan River on US-89. I remember driving towards Monte Cristo when a hen Dusky Grouse stopped in the middle of the road and stopped all traffic. When all of her chicks made it safely across the road, the hen followed. This experience gave us a chance to talk about the recent split in the Blue Grouse group changing the name of what we always called Blue Grouse to Dusky Grouse. Those birders along the Pacific Coast now call their “Blue Grouse” the Sooty Grouse. Each time I look at my photo of this Dusky Grouse, I’m reminded that you don’t always need to rise early to enjoy a great bird sighting. I took this photo at high noon and the bird’s shadow is projected directly down onto the paving.

August in the Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands. The pinyon-juniper woodlands (P-J habitat) are common in Utah and comprise almost 20% of the state. Due to arid conditions, this conifer woodland is often called the pygmy forest as trees are small. The P-J habitat is quite variable and occurs in small patches associated with the shrub-steppe type, the mountain shrub type, or the mixed conifer type as well as in extensive stands covering large areas of the landscape. P-J bird species rarely found anywhere else during the breeding season include: Gray Vireo, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Gray Flycatcher, Pinyon Jay, and Juniper Titmouse. Because of the immense size of the P-J woodlands and the low productivity per acre birds are rarely concentrated. The extensive size makes up for the low productivity when ranking the importance of the P-J woodlands. Many birders will say, “Don’t go in August; it’s hot and the summer birds have quit singing.” This may be true, but consider that the specialty species numbers are the highest with all the juvenile birds of the season and many species begin to flock preparing for fall migration. In addition, there is a challenge in identifying many of the juvenile birds. When you become tired of hearing, “what flycatcher is that,” the flocks of busy Bushtits, noisy Juniper Titmice, and flashing Chipping Sparrows provide a distraction from the non-descript flycatchers. The first time I visited the Clear Creek Campground in the Raft River mountain range managed by the Sawtooth National Forest I was surprised to find P-J habitat. The Clear Creek Road is in the bottom of the valley and provides good birding for riparian species. However, the south facing slope (north of the east-west running road) is covered with a nearly pure stand of pinyon pine. I really enjoyed the flocks of Pinyon Jays mixed in with Gray Flycatchers and highlighting a diverse range of riparian and P-J birds.



THE PELICAN
Great Salt Lake Audubon
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GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON
(LOCAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY)

Please enroll me as a member of GSLA, my membership fee of \$25.00 includes a 1-year subscription to The Pelican

Please clip and send your application and check to:

GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON
P.O. BOX 520867
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84152-0867

Name _____
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If you would prefer to save some trees and receive the Pelican electronically, please make sure you have provided us with your email address and check this box _____. Great Salt Lake Audubon does not share your information with any other organizations.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Please enroll me as a member of National Audubon Society. Please send Audubon Magazine and my membership card to the address below:

___ My check for \$20.00 is enclosed. (Introductory price only)

Please clip and send your application and check to:

National Audubon Society Membership Services
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

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