

THE PELICAN

JULY/AUG 2015 NEWSLETTER OF GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON

www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org



G R E A T
S A L T L A K E
A U D U B O N

A public screening of “The Sagebrush Sea” is coming to Salt Lake City.

This remarkable documentary was filmed partly in Idaho and Wyoming. It recently premiered on the award-winning PBS series NATURE. The Sagebrush Sea follows the Greater Sage-Grouse – an increasingly rare bird with an otherworldly display – through a year on the sagebrush steppe, a vast wilderness spanning more than 250,000 square miles.

The public will be invited to watch this documentary on the large screen sometime in late August to early September (date, time and place to be announced). Following the screening, a panel discussion will be offered. Panelists will include some of those involved in Sage-Grouse conservation efforts. The discussion will focus on the film, the science around this iconic bird, and the issue that has brought so many parties into the discussion about this species’ future.

Check our website, www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org for further details which will be posted shortly. This event will be co-sponsored by Great Salt Lake Audubon, National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy.

BLUEBIRD BOX TRAIL THRIVING

reported by Jeanne LeBer

On Saturday, June 6, 2015 Great Salt Lake Audubon folks visited the Per Fluge Langeland Bluebird Box Trail in Strawberry Valley. The weather started out rather cool and threatening. By mid-morning, the sun came out, the risk of rain diminished and pleasant temperatures prevailed. It was a wonderful day to be in Strawberry Valley checking on the 100 nest boxes that have been maintained by GSLA since 1987.

Many thanks to volunteers Meme and Rajah Ibrahim, Jeanne Le Ber, Rob Leipold, Nancy Sakahara, Ray Smith and Mark Voge. We divided into four teams with the goal of determining what birds were using the boxes, was a nest present and were there any eggs or chicks to be counted. We were most surprised by the occupancy rate of 89%! Only eleven boxes were empty and no boxes were missing! The table below is a record of what was counted.

	# Nests	# Eggs	Chicks	Fledged
Mountain Bluebird	22	29	31	0
Tree Swallow	52	81	5	0
House Wren	15	13	3	0

As you can see from the numbers, the swallows have the most nests and eggs, but the bluebirds have the most chicks. The bluebirds seem to be the earlier nesters and we note that the swallow are susceptible to the cold weather based on the ten dead swallows removed from the bottom of empty boxes.

In the fall, we will return to Strawberry Valley to clean, repair and replace boxes and poles as needed. Please consider joining us! It is like opening a gift package, a surprise in every box.

Benefits Reminder to National Audubon Society Members:

New National Audubon Society (NAS) members will receive *The Pelican* **free** as a courtesy, as part of their first year membership. Thereafter, should renewing NAS members wish to continue to receive *The Pelican* either in paper form or electronically, they will need to join GSLA. All other benefits such as participation in field trips, bird counts, general meetings, legislative representation, will continue to be granted to all NAS members.

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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

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Submission Guidelines: Original articles and photos are welcomed. The editor reserves the right to choose and edit as needed. Email articles to newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org. *The Pelican* is published 6 times a year. Submission deadline for the Sept/Oct issue is August 10, 2015.

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BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH/APRIL 2015

Secretary, By Heather Griffiths, Secretary

We are sad to say that Jenn Waterhouse has stepped down as Secretary and Education Committee Chair. We thank her for all her hard work and wish her the best in her future endeavors. The Board welcomes Heather Griffiths as the new Secretary. Heather graduated from USU in 2010 with a degree in American Studies with a focus on environmental studies and writing. She is a stay-at-home mom and has started an outdoor educational co-op that has been running for one year. She is very excited to be a part of the board. Educating people about the preservation of the natural world has been a passion of hers for a long time.

The Board is currently seeking volunteers to fill the positions of Webmaster, Vice President, Membership Committee, Conservation Committee, Hospitality, Event Planning, Volunteer Efforts Coordinator, and Audubon Council President. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Heather Dove at president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org.

Birds 'n Bites will take its usual break for the summer, but will return in September. We are planning more interesting and varied programs for this series. Also stay tuned for our Great Salt Lake Issues Panel which is a special program we are planning for the fall.

The 2015 Basin & Range was held June 13-14 at Great Basin National Park. We hope you enjoyed this annual event. We certainly did!!

Enjoy the summer and good birding to you.



Plant seminar with Bill Gray at the 2015 Basin & Range, Photo by Nancy Howard



Rollie and Martha Westman manning the ever popular interactive bird identification board at the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival.
Photo by Nancy Howard



From National Audubon

Resource Alert: Pope's Encyclical on Climate

The Pope's declaration that climate change is a moral issue has galvanized people of faith worldwide. We recognize the opportunity to foster conversations and partnerships during this critical time and are providing resources to help. Check out faith groups already taking action on climate change and read Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report (climate.audubon.org)

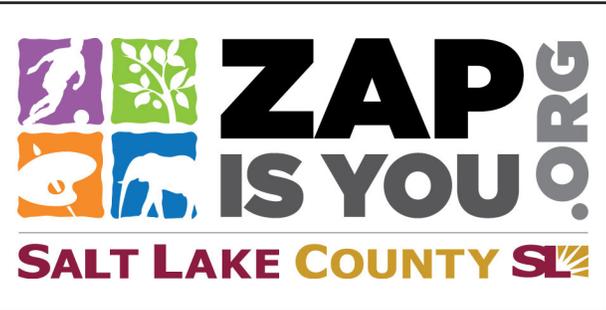
And check out this link.

How to Make a Bird-Friendly Sanctuary

https://www.audubon.org/news/how-make-bird-friendly-sanctuary?utm_source=engagement&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20150618_Encyclical

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

Calendar of Events including Field Trips for July/Aug 2015

Beginning birders are especially welcome. We encourage carpooling on our field trips. Contributions towards gas money would be appreciated.

Be sure to call the field trip leader to confirm that arrangements are still as published.

Physical Difficulty:

EASY - little or no walking, smooth paths.

MODERATE - 1 mile or more, possible rough terrain.

DIFFICULT - extensive walking which could include rough terrain and significant changes in altitude.

Despite our best efforts, ratings for the field trips are still somewhat subjective. Please consult with the leaders.

**Monday, July 6th, 7AM Moderate
MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION AREA, PARLEY'S CANYON**

Leader: John Middleton

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 John (801-322-2171) if you plan to attend.

**Saturday, July 11th from 7:30AM to Noon
BRIGHTON BIRD COUNT – Easy or Moderate or Difficult**

Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith

Please join Great Salt Lake Audubon for our annual Brighton Bird Count. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. 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 after a pleasant morning. 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 27th 6AM- Easy
INLAND SEA SHOREBIRD RESERVE (Kennecott's Mitigation Wetlands)**

Leader: Bryant Olsen

We have obtained permission to do a monthly bird survey of the Inland Sea Shorebird Reserve from Rio Tinto/Kennecott Utah Copper. This is seldom open to the general public and features all of the familiar Great Salt Lake wetland habitats and birds that we usually have to travel farther north to find. Who knows what new birds we can document for Salt Lake County out there? We will also explore areas around Lee Kay ponds, the International Center and Saltair/Marina, depending on time and where birds are being reported. We meet at Shopko at 6am to carpool. **PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED** as there is limited space on these field trips.

Contact Bryant Olsen at 801-498-0362 or bryant_olsen@yahoo.com to sign up.

**Wednesday, July 29th, 7/7:30AM
FARMINGTON BAY PLUS - Easy**

Leader: Bryant Olsen

Join us for our monthly bird survey.

#1 Meeting Place: Meet in SE corner of the ShopKo parking lot in Sugarhouse by 7AM to carpool OR meet at 7:30AM at the GSL Nature Center on Glover Lane in Farmington (I-15 exit 319 in Centerville, then Frontage Rd north 4 miles to Glover Lane overpass OR I-15 exit 322 in Farmington, then backtrack 2 blocks on Frontage Rd to the overpass.

#2: Afternoon Birding Option: After birding "The Bay" for the morning, anyone interested can continue birding northward with Bryant.

Call or email Bryant if you plan to attend. (801-498-0362) bryant_olsen@yahoo.com

Saturday, August 1st Time TBD Easy
BIRD BANDING IN RED BUTTE CANYON

Leader: Pomera Fronce

This is a special opportunity for us to observe bird banding by biology researchers at the University of Utah in an area that is usually closed to the public.

A message from the lab: In the Sekercioglu Lab at the University of Utah, our work focuses on the world's threatened biodiversity and ecosystems, especially in human-dominated landscapes where we study the co-existence of people and other species. The causes and consequences of bird extinctions around the world are a major component of our research, including the ecological factors behind the extinction-proneness of certain groups.

We established bird-banding operations at Red Butte Canyon Research Natural Area in the spring of 2012. These ongoing banding operations contribute to our understanding of local avian ecology, and provide valuable information on bird populations and migrations, and will allow for analysis of the demographics of the bird populations to determine population trends for resident species.

All details for this trip have not yet been determined. Contact Pomera Fronce (801-272-2755) or pinkstring@xmission.com to register and obtain further information.

Wednesday, August 5th, 7AM Moderate
**MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION AREA, PAR-
LEY'S CANYON -**

Leader: John Middleton

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 John (801-322-2171) if you plan to attend.

Saturday, August 22nd, 7AM

ISSR – Easy

Leader: Bryant Olsen

(see write-up for July 27th)

Wednesday, August 26th, 7/7:30AM

FARMINGTON BAY PLUS - Easy

Leader: Bryant Olsen

See description for July 29th

Call or email Bryant if you plan to attend. (801-498-0362) bryant_olsen@yahoo.com

Wednesday, September 2nd, 7:30AM

**MOUNTAIN DELL RECREATION AREA, PAR-
LEY'S CANYON - Moderate**

Leader: John Middleton

Since we began surveying birds here some 8 years ago, 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 John (801-322-2171) if you plan to attend.

Urgent Alert to Protect Migratory Birds

One of the oldest environmental laws in our country, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), is coming under attack by Members of Congress. The House of Representatives has passed a provision in the Fiscal Year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill that would bar the Department of Justice from enforcing the MBTA - essentially declaring that it's open season on birds! A similar amendment may be brought up in the Senate.

The MBTA is the primary piece of legislation in the United States established to protect over 1,000 species of migratory birds and makes it illegal to harm these birds except under very specific circumstances.

The Senate version of the CJS bill has passed out of the full Senate Appropriations Committee without any amendments that would prohibit the Department of Justice from enforcing the MBTA. The Senate FY 2016 CJS bill now proceeds to the floor for full consideration by the Senate sometime in the near future. There is a chance a companion to Rep. Duncan's amendment will be offered.

Please write to your Senators using the following link: support.abcbirds.org/ProtectMBTA

Urge your Senator to vote NO on any amendments threatening migratory birds that may come up when this bill is called to the floor.

Action Alert: Proposed Legislation Could Prevent Millions of Bird Deaths

U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) and Rep. Morgan Griffith (VA-09) have introduced the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act (HR 2280). The bill is designed to prevent the deaths of millions of birds by calling for each public building constructed, acquired, or significantly altered by the General Services Administration (GSA) to incorporate, to the maximum extent possible, bird-safe building materials and design features. Many buildings constructed by GSA are already, in fact, bird-friendly. The legislation would require GSA to take similar actions on existing buildings, where practicable.

"Migratory bird season in Chicago reminds us that birds are not only beautiful animals telling us that warmer weather is on its way; but they help generate billions of dollars annually to the U.S. economy through wildlife watching activities," said Rep. Quigley. "However, collisions with glass buildings claim hundreds of millions of bird lives each year in the U.S. The Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, a cost neutral bill, would help prevent these deaths by including bird-safe building materials and design features across federal buildings."

Please urge your U.S. Representative to support the 2015 Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, which would help prevent the deaths of millions of birds by including bird-safe building materials and design features across federal buildings.

Update on the Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee is a very important group that helps GSLA define its positions on various environmental and conservation issues affecting local wildlife and habitat. Janice Gardner has served as the Chair of this committee for the last 5+ years. Janice, an avian biologist by profession, has expertly applied her scientist's mind in helping us craft many carefully thought out comment letters and position statements.

Currently our Conservation Committee consists of Jordan Herman, a PhD candidate in Ornithology at the University of Utah, Karri Smith who is a wetland restoration scientist and manager of the JRMBR, and our most recent addition, Deb Drain, a recently retired soil scientist and passionate conservationist. GSLA appreciates the education and brains that these three women bring to the job.

There are many local conservation and environmental issues that we track and try to weigh in on. We could always use more volunteers to cover all the changes and threats we are experiencing in Utah. If you are passionate about the environment and preferably if you have a science background, consider joining this amazing Conservation Committee. Contact Heather Dove (president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org) to discuss how you might contribute.

Wind Turbines Being Installed in Sensitive Bird Habitat on Massive Scale

New research supported by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) shows that more than 30,000 wind turbines have been installed in areas critical to the survival of federally-protected birds in the United States and that more than 50,000 additional turbines are planned for construction in similar areas. More than 27,000 of these turbines exist in or are planned for federally identified or designated areas, including 24,000 turbines in the migration corridor of the Whooping Crane, one of the nation's rarest and most spectacular birds, and, almost 3,000 turbines in breeding strongholds for Greater Sage-Grouse, a rapidly declining species recently considered for Endangered Species Act protection.

“Attempts to manage the wind industry with voluntary as opposed to mandatory permitting guidelines are clearly not working,” said Dr. Michael Hutchins, Director of ABC's Bird Smart Wind Energy Campaign. “Wind developers are siting turbines in areas of vital importance to birds and other wildlife, and this new data shows that the current voluntary system needs to be replaced with a mandatory permitting system.”

The Associated Press (AP) independently calculated data on which the ABC based its report and reached a similar conclusion that large numbers of turbines are being built in important bird habitats. The AP report is available at http://www.bostonherald.com/business/business_markets/2015/05/advocacy_group_wind_turbine_rules_needed_to_protect_birds. The analysis was based on an interactive Wind Development Bird Risk Map produced by ABC that identifies specific areas across the United States where birds are likely to be particularly vulnerable to impacts from wind energy development. These include major migratory routes, breeding areas, and other sensitive bird habitats. Key areas on the map are colored red or orange to indicate the level of potential risk to birds, with red areas regarded to be of “Critical Importance”—the highest level of risk. According to ABC, these red areas have high potential for negative impacts on federally protected birds, but comprise less than nine percent of the total U.S. land area.

Locations of wind turbines analyzed in the study were derived from data supplied publicly by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for proposed turbines, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for existing turbines. These data sets provide specific locations for individual wind turbines in GIS format.

In February 2015, ABC updated and re-filed an earlier petition with the federal government requesting that it regulate the wind industry with regard to bird impacts. It now appears that they are beginning to see the shortcomings in the current federal guidelines for the wind industry. In December 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) solicited comments on the government's efforts to manage the wind industry and stated: “We are currently in the process of evaluating the efficacy and use of the Guidelines, and the Service is considering regulatory options.” Additionally, FWS commented that the current guidelines, in some cases, have not been “...successful in preventing wind energy facilities from being constructed in areas of high risk to wildlife.”

Because of the threat of rising bird mortality and the explosive growth of the wind industry, ABC and a coalition of more than 70 conservation organizations earlier requested that the U.S. Department of the Interior develop a National Programmatic Wind Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify appropriate areas for wind energy development, as well as areas where development should be avoided completely to conserve federally protected birds and especially sensitive habitats. However, in a letter dated July 31, 2014, Interior responded that they “currently do not have the resources to undertake the nationwide process.” Such resources, however, could be made available under a paid permitting system already proposed by ABC.

By 2030, it is estimated that more than 1.4 million birds could be killed annually by wind turbines, not including losses at associated transmission lines and towers. There is currently a once-only opportunity to minimize this mortality through mandatory permitting, leading to proper siting and mitigation for bird fatalities before tens of thousands more turbines are built. Read more about the study at http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/wind_siting.html.

ABC's efforts to establish Bird Smart wind energy in the U.S. are made possible in part by the generous support of the Leon Levy Foundation. GIS analysis for the study mentioned in this release was conducted on behalf of ABC by Eric Wengert, a graduate student in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at Mississippi State University.



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