**BIRDS ‘n BITES**

Join us for our monthly informative, entertaining programs. The meetings are free and open to all and presented at the Education Building in the Tracy Aviary at Liberty Park. Doors open at 6:30 PM for refreshments and socializing, the programs begin at 7 PM.

**January 19th**

Join Bryant Olsen and Carolina Roa as they present Tracy Aviary’s Citizen Science Project including the project’s origins, goals, sites where they work and more! Learn about opportunities that are available to you, how to become involved, and how you contribute to science through your participation.

**February 16th**

Join Kelli Frame, owner of *Wild Birds Unlimited*, and Pomera Fronce for a discussion on backyard bird feeding. We’ll talk about how to turn your yard into a habitat that not only benefits birds, but brings song, color and life to your home. We’ll display different types of feeders and seeds, including a couple of our favorites, seed cylinders and Bark Butter. Other topics will include tips on cleaning feeders and how to deal with critters like mice, squirrels and raccoons. This get-together promises to be fun and informative. Hope to see you there.

**WINTER WEDNESDAYS AT TRACY AVIARY**

If you are seeking fun, family-friendly activities this winter, look no further than Tracy Aviary’s Winter Wednesdays! Each Wednesday from now through the end of March, admission to Tracy Aviary is only $1 per person, and that dollar goes directly to conservation projects that protect birds in the wild. Included with the $1 admission are a host of engaging programs. In the morning, stop by the Book and Boots program, perfect for young visitors, to hear a nature-themed story and then explore a spot in Tracy Aviary that matches the story. In the afternoon, tag along on the Raptor Roundup Tour to get to know our native birds of prey. Morning and afternoon indoor bird shows also provide a cozy place to meet some of the amazing animal ambassadors that make up the Tracy Aviary Bird Show collection.

For program times and more information, visit tracyaviary.org and click on “Schedule”.

**AUDUBON MEMBERS STAND STRONG FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS**

*Announcement from National Audubon*

When Duke Energy launched a Capitol Hill sneak attack on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Audubon members rose as one to turn back the assault. Nearly 60,000 of you unleashed a barrage of demands to uphold the MBTA, leading to a quick retreat by Duke and its allies.

**SAVE THE DATES!!!**

June 11th and 12th, 2016

BASIN AND RANGE

to be held at FREMONT INDIAN STATE PARK

May 12th - 16th, 2016.

GREAT SALT LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL
GSLA COMPLETES THE JORDAN RIVER MIGRATORY BIRD RESERVE AND DONATES LAND TO UTAH RECLAMATION MITIGATION AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

by Heather Dove

After 20 years of dedicated work by many volunteers and generous funding from US FWS, Rio Tinto, Patagonia, Utah Dept of Agriculture and Food, State of Utah McAllister Fund, the Sorenson Legacy Foundation and the benevolence of a corporate donor (Boyer Company) and many private individual donors, GSLA is happy to announce that the restoration of the Jordan River Migratory Bird Reserve (JRMBR) is finally complete. We have accomplished our goals of restoring this 120+ acre packet of land to a proper functioning riparian/floodplain wetland that supports many resident and migrating birds as well as other wildlife. We have also managed to keep this area undeveloped, despite the rapid urban development that has taken place all around its borders.

The Reserve has had an interesting and somewhat complicated ownership and management history. While GSLA owns a small portion (approximately 14.7 acres), the vast majority of the land is owned by Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC). URMCC is a specially formed executive branch agency of the federal government which was authorized under the Central Utah Project Completion Act of 1992. It was tasked with purchasing and managing wetlands within the State of Utah as mitigation for habitat destruction that occurred as part of the Central Utah Project in the 1980’s. The CUP was a huge project that diverted and delivered large quantities of water from numerous Utah rivers to meet the needs of central Utah’s citizens.

With the authorization of URMCC, GSLA has been the designated manager of the entire 120+ acre Reserve since its beginnings in the 1990’s. GSLA has had hopes for most of this period that we would eventually be granted ownership of the entire Reserve. As restoration neared completion, we explored this possibility with URMCC. As part of the discussion, the Board was charged with determining our intentions for the future and making an appropriate long term plan for the Reserve. It became clear, however, that GSLA is simply too small an organization to be able to finance a long term endowment fund and to adequately staff the management over the long run. But perhaps most importantly, GSLA does not have the legal power to be able to protect the land from eventual development. As we found out, even a conservation easement would not protect from possible rezoning, eminent domain actions or other strategies by local municipalities to
somehow take or repurpose the land. The only way to truly insure that the land remains as a natural conservation area is to obtain federal protection.

Thus, after much deliberation, the Board came to the conclusion that our best option for protecting the land was to transfer ownership of our portion to URMCC with the intention that it would remain with the other URMCC owned land. Through this action, the entire JRMBR would be under one owner and manager and would have the protection of the federal government. When approached about the possibility of the land donation, URMCC executive director Mark Holden said “The Commission agrees that management of the properties under one ownership will help protect and maintain the properties for the purpose they were originally obtained. And so, the Commission will accept the donation of the Audubon-owned properties.” Once this decision was made, the Board and Commission have been working on completing all the required legal procedures. The donation should be completed sometime in January 2016.

We would like to thank all the many volunteers and the donors for the time, effort and dollars they dedicated to this project. Two people of special note are Keith Johnson and Karri Smith. Keith shepherded this project through many years, organized the many troops of volunteers to plant and weed and water, and kept the Reserve going through multiple Boards.

In the last two years, Karri Smith, a wetland restoration professional, has been the Reserve Manager. The Reserve under Karri’s guidance has made especially great strides. Karri worked to dramatically improve the hydrology of the land by re-aligning important water laterals, and restoring old historic natural floodplain channels on the property. The Board also made the decision to allow beavers to remain on the property, as they greatly aid wetland restoration by working to slow and spread the water. With Karri’s hydrology efforts and the beavers’ engineering, water has been delivered to many more areas of the reserve that previously had been dry. Thus much of the land became able to support native riparian vegetation. Over a thousand native trees and shrubs have been planted along these new waterways in the last two years. There has been tremendous growth, with many previously planted water-starved trees springing to back to life and new trees surviving and putting on solid new growth. Under Karri’s professional guidance and efforts, weeds have been brought under good control. Many desirable wetland plants that had long remained dormant have re-emerged and are out-competing the weeds. We are happy to report that the bird surveys over the last two years demonstrate increasing numbers of resident and migratory species, and increasing numbers of individuals. There are also now beaver, river otter, deer and fox living on the property. In short, the JRMBR is now a lush and healthy natural environment with a thriving population of birds and other wildlife.

This decision was obviously a very difficult one for the Board. We as an organization have invested 20 years of time, money and effort in this laudable project. We want only the very best outcome for this Reserve and we believe that we have arrived at the best option. URMCC acknowledges our efforts. In a letter to the Board, Mark Holden, Exec Director of the Mitigation Commission, writes “Heather, we would like to thank you and all of the Great Salt Lake Audubon for the years of stewardship that you have provided on the Jordan River Migratory Bird Reserve. These properties along the Jordan River are supporting important wildlife values within the watershed and will do so for future generations due to your efforts.”

We will remain in contact with URMCC as we continue to follow the next phase of the Reserve. The Mitigation Commission assures us that they will work with us to schedule a field trip or two every year. So stayed tuned, as we watch the Jordan River Migratory Bird Reserve enter its next chapter of life.

**BEAR RIVER REFUGE WILDLIFE EDUCATION CENTER WILL BE CLOSED MONDAYS IN NEW YEAR**

The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Wildlife Education Center will be reducing its hours to the public starting January 5, 2016. Refuge Manager Bob Barrett states, “Due to a current staffing shortage, we need to reduce the hours we are open to the public. I apologize for the inconvenience and hope the public can visit during our regular Tuesday through Saturday hours.”

Regular hours for the Wildlife Education Center will be Tuesday-Saturday, 8AM—5PM. and Saturdays, 10AM to 4PM.

*The remaining parts of the Refuge and Auto tour Route will be open daily, from sunrise to sunset.*

The James V. Hansen Wildlife Education Center is located at 2155 W. Forest St., Brigham City, one block west of I-15 at Exit 363. The Center offers interactive exhibits, wetland diorama, and 2 miles of outdoor trail. For more information, call (435) 723-5887 or visit our website at: www.fws.gov/refuge/bear_river_migratory_bird_refuge/ Also, you can find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @USFWSBearRiver
Beginning birders and nonmembers are always 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.

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

**Friday, January 1st, EASY – DIFFICULT**
**JORDAN RIVER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**
Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith
Meet at 7AM.
Kneaders – Bakery and Café in DRAPER
177 East 13800 South | Draper, UT 84020
Ph (801) 838-7700
Assignments will be distributed and groups will start birding at 8AM. Team reports and count tally will begin at 6PM at the Sizzler on 9000 S. & State St. To sign up, or for more information, call Jeanne or Ray at (801-532-7384).

**Tuesday January 19th 7PM**
**BIRDS ‘n BITES**
**TracyAviary’s Citizen Science Projects**

**Saturday, January 16th, 8AM EASY**
**DECKER LAKE**
Leader: Ian Batterman, Martha Veranth
Near the Maverik Center in West Valley lies a quaint little marshy pond that offers refuge for many gulls, waterfowl, and shorebird species. The walk is short, but the birds are surprisingly numerous. Meet at the parking lot of Decker Lake located on Decker Lane in West Valley just off I-215 exit 18. For more information, contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com.

**Saturday, January 23rd, 8AM-10AM EASY**
**BOUNTIFUL POND**
Leader: Ian Batterman
Located on the outskirts of Farmington Bay WMA, Bountiful Pond is a lovely oasis for all kinds of birds. The large pond provides a stopover area for many gulls and waterfowl, and the surrounding trees and fields hide many songbirds, owls, and other birds with close viewing opportunities. Feel free to either meet at the SE corner of the Sugarhouse ShopKo to carpool at 8AM or at main parking area near the pond at 8:30. Contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming or if you would like more information.

**Wednesday, January 27th, 8AM– noon EASY**
**FARMINGTON BAY followed by areas north for those interested**
Leader: Bryant Olsen
Hunting season will be over, so if the weather permits and the dikes can be safely travelled, we will be allowed to bird behind-the-gates. As usual, meet in the SE corner of the ShopKo parking lot on 13th E in Sugarhouse at 8AM to carpool or at 8:30AM at the nature Center on Glover Lane in Farmington. Contact Bryant at 801-498-0362 or bryant_olsen@yahoo.com to let him know you are coming.

**Thursday-Saturday, January 28th-30th**
**St George Winter Bird Festival**
details at www.sgcity.org/birdfestival

**Saturday, February 13th, 9AM MODERATE**
**GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**
leader: Vivian Schneggenburger
The Great Backyard Bird Count is a nation-wide winter tradition and involves counting our local birds for one or more days from Feb.12th-15th. We can not only count our own backyard birds but also local parks, ski resorts or other hot spots. We have chosen to survey Parley’s Nature Park so join us at the trailhead on Saturday, Feb.13th by 9AM (2760 South and 27th east). Check with the leader for current conditions. Call Viv (801-518-1730).

**Saturday, February 13th, all day**
**BALD EAGLE DAY AT FARMINGTON BAY**
The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources hosts their annual Bald Eagle Day where these magnificent birds can be seen up close. This is a great family trip. Spotting scopes will be set up for closer viewing from 9AM to 4PM.

**Tuesday, February 16th, 7PM**
**BIRDS ‘n BITES**
**BACKYARD BIRD FEEDING**
Great Salt Lake Audubon, www.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org
(385) 313-0608
Calendar of Events including Field Trips for Jan/Feb 2016

Wednesday, February 17th – all day EASY
WINTER RAPTOR TOUR: PROMONTORY PENINSULA
Leader: Bryant Olsen
One of the great joys of winter is close views of all the wintering raptors, and few places have a greater opportunity to see these raptors than the lands to the north and west of Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. We will go west from Corinne to Golden Spike, then down the east side of the Promontory Peninsula, then up to Howell, and finish off the day around Salt Creek Waterfowl Management area looking for owls at dusk. Beside raptors, other birds potentially seen include Horned Larks and their tag-along Snow Buntings and Longspurs, Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse, plus Gray Partridge, Chukars and Pheasant, and maybe swans and other waterfowl. Note this will be an all day trip, from dawn to dusk, and subject to cancellation due to weather. Salt Lakers and those from the south, meet at Shopko in Sugarhouse at 7AM. Those from northern areas can meet up with us at the Bear River MBR headquarters. Contact Bryant at 801-498-0362 or bryant_olsen@yahoo.com to sign up.

Saturday, February 20th – noon until dark
6TH ANNUAL GULLSTRAVAGANZA
Leaders: Tim Avery, Kenny Frisch, and others TBD
Every winter as California Gulls congregate on the edges of the Great Salt Lake to search for food at nearby landfills, parks, wildlife management areas, and anywhere that may have open fresh water—other gulls that stray from their normal winter ranges end up mixed in.

This creates one of most unique inland gulling hot spots in the nation. Along with the thousands of California Gulls are smaller numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, and decent numbers of Herring Gulls. Mixed in with those you are likely to find a few Thayer’s Gulls. Aside from those 4 species a handful of others show up every year including: Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Mew, Lesser Black-backed, Western, and Iceland.

This February, join Great Salt Lake Audubon and the Utah Birders as we search for wintering gulls on the south shore of the Great Salt Lake during the now annual GULLSTRAVAGANZA!

Meeting location is yet to be determined, but will be either Lee Kay Ponds, Lake Park, or Farmington Bay. We will send out reminders and updates as we approach the event and finalize the meeting location based on where the gulls are, and what will work best.

For the 2nd year in a row this is an afternoon trip, where we will begin at 12 noon instead of early in the day.

Please bring $5 per person as a donation as part of the Utah Birders continued fundraising activities. The money will be donated to Great Salt Lake Audubon as part of our continued effort to support this great organization. It will likely be cold so bundle up and if you have scopes bring them as it will be an asset for scanning the large flocks of gulls.

Wednesday, February 24th
See description for January 27th.

Saturday & Sunday, February 27th & 28th
SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL NEAR DELTA
The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources hosts this annual festival at Gunnison Bend Reservoir near Delta, about a 2 1/2 hour drive from SLC. When they “cooperate”, about 20,000 Snow Geese can be seen on the water, in adjacent fields or flying overhead. Contact DWR at wildlife.utah.gov/dwr for more information.

Wednesday, March 2nd, 8:30AM MODERATE MOUNTAIN DELL REC. AREA, PARLEY’S CANYON
Leader: John Middleton
Our monthly bird surveys will begin again so we invite you to join us. Even in winter, interesting birds can still be seen. We’ll meet by 8:30AM 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.

GSLA thanks the voters of Salt Lake County for their support of the Zoo, Arts & Parks program.
BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
November/December 2015

November and December were busy months and filled with many activities and accomplishments. Along with 14 other environmental organizations, GSLA co-sponsored an environmental debate with mayoral and Salt Lake City Council candidates. We also presented a well-attended and highly informative special program “State of the Lake” panel discussion. GSLA participated in the first Wasatch Awareness sustainability event hosted by the U of U Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department. The event focused on connecting individuals with the outdoor community and organizations promoting sustainability and conservation of the Wasatch Range. This event was also a great success. The Android version of the Birding Utah app for mobile devices was released and made available for purchase. And last but not least, GSLA participated in Utah Audubon Council’s fall retreat.

We’re glad to announce that Deb Drain who recently joined our Conservation Committee has agreed to take the lead as Conservation Chair. Most recently, Deb has crafted a letter for GSLA opposing the proposal to build a highway through the Red Cliffs Natural Recreation Area and the desert tortoise preserve. She also assisted us in preparing comments on Holladay’s proposed Knudsen Nature Park.

As announced last issue, Ian Batterman officially comes on board as our new Field Trip Coordinator. Ian comes to us highly qualified and with great enthusiasm for watching birds. Read his article in this issue to find out more about him.

GSLA is sad to say that Alex Hoppus will be resigning from the Board as our ZAP Grant Coordinator. Alex has been a great help and resource for us and we wish him luck in his future endeavors.

Thanks to all who supported our Annual Sunflower Seed Sale and to the volunteers that helped us put it on. It was a great success.

MEET IAN BATTERMAN,
the new Field Trip Coordinator for Great Salt Lake Audubon.

Ian recently moved to Salt Lake City from Morgan-town, West Virginia with his wife Angie; although he is originally from De Pere, Wisconsin, a small town just outside Green Bay. He first became interested in birds when his grandmother took him on his first bird watching trip when he was six-years-old to see nesting Bald Eagles; after that he was hooked. In fact, he was so enamored with ornithology he went to the University of Wisconsin where he got a bachelor’s degree in zoology with a focus on ornithology. After college, Ian worked with birds in various intern and volunteer positions including the International Crane Foundation, Four Lakes Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, and the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia. Along the way, he has gone birding in 20 states and has encountered over 400 species of birds!

WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN CITIZEN SCIENCE?

We need You! Tracy Aviary’s Citizen Science Project studies birds in the Salt Lake Valley and is looking for volunteers. We are receiving volunteer applications until February 10, 2016; the project runs from April to July, and we offer training sessions sometime in late February, 2016 (date may change). Contact us at conservation@tracyaviary.org for more information.

CONSERVATION SCIENCE PROGRAM
Tracy Aviary
589 E. 1300 S. SLC, UT 84105
P: 801-652-1764

GSLA DONATES SEED AND SUET TO SUPPORT THE ALTA BIRD STUDY

This year GSLA donated six 40 pound bags of black oil sunflower seed to the Alta Bird Study. Bryant Olsen, who monitors and refills the feeders notes that this winter there has been a great deal of activity. He writes “With all the snow lately, the feeders at Alta have been hopping. We put up the Hopper Feeder donated by Bill Fenimore, and the Rosy-Finches and Pine Grosbeaks are now more visible. We also re-angled the camera so we can see some of the ground under the feeders, where the Rosy-Finches prefer to feed.” You can watch the webcam by going to http://www.ustream.tv/channel/friendsofalta-s-show

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR SISTER AUDUBON CHAPTERS FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.
http://www.wasatchaudubon.org
http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org
http://www.redcliffsaudubon.org

The Pelican
THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS

by Lynn Carroll, Conservation Chair, Wasatch Audubon

In my childhood, there was no problem with plastics. They represented “better living through chemistry.” During the 1960s their use for disposable items and packaging increased, and the problem was “litter” and the way Styrofoam broke into little pebbles that couldn’t be contained.

By the 1970s we were worrying about how population and consumption of raw materials were growing exponentially, and the problem was that plastics are made from petroleum. I thought that fossil fuels would become precious as they became harder to extract. I never imagined that methods like deep sea drilling and fracking wouldn’t cost too much for throw-away plastics to be used in the 21st century. But here we are--by not paying the environmental costs up front (or even knowing what they are), we have almost unbelievable amounts of plastic being produced and thrown away.

Statistics I found include:
- 300 million tons of plastic per year produced globally, about half for disposable products like packaging
- In 2008, 34 million tons of plastic was disposed in the United States
- Americans buy 29 (or 35) billion plastic bottles of water in a year

I don’t remember how long ago “biodegradable” became an important selling point for products. I guess it went out of fashion when it was realized that anything degrades slowly in a landfill. In its place, recycling got a big push, and plastic is “recyclable”. But now one problem is that recycling plastics isn’t nearly as efficient as, for instance, recycling aluminum. They have to be carefully sorted and cleaned, and the variety of additives they can contain and their sensitivity to heat reduce the quality of the recycled product.

Perhaps the biggest problem with plastics goes back to the biodegradable issue. Because the chemical bonds that join the units of these polymers together are not found in living things, no organisms have evolved with the enzymes to digest plastics. Plastic doesn’t usually decompose unless it is exposed to sunlight. UV rays will break and rearrange the chemical bonds, making the plastic brittle, so it breaks repeatedly. [Plastics for outdoor use have additives that protect them.] I made the mistake of trying to use plastic grocery bags to hold compost in my yard. When I tried to move them, they fell apart, and I never could get the ever-smaller pieces picked out of the dirt.

Plastics buried in landfills continue to take up space indefinitely. The lighter pieces that litter the landscape and waters harm wildlife in many ways. We hear of animals becoming tangled in fishing line or nets, strangled by the plastic rings of six-packs, starving because they’ve swallowed plastic bags; I even read about Condors feeding bits to their young. A study of plastic in the ocean listed over 267 species found to have ingested or become entangled in it.

It’s unclear what happens to the tiny pieces of UV-degraded plastic. Some may be eaten by creatures of the soil or water such as worms, but it won’t be digested. Toxic components such as the endocrine disrupter BPA may leach out of it, but the extent of any ecological damage isn’t known.

Given the size of the disposal problem and the possibility of adding new impacts on already stressed ecosystems, I agree with those urging us to have our groceries packed in reusable bags, not to buy bottled water, and to shun products with excessive plastic packaging. I will return to my car to retrieve the reusable shopping bags when I leave them behind!

Three ways to join or renew your membership:

1. Great Salt Lake Audubon-only membership is $30 a year. All dues support local education, advocacy, habitat restoration, field trips, newsletter publication, and more. (See membership form on page 8 of The Pelican). Local membership is very important, as GSLA is primarily self-supporting.
2. A new membership to National Audubon Society (NAS) costs $25, with renewal of $35 after the first year. Benefits include the quarterly national magazine and automatic membership in GSLA. Most of your dues support environmental campaigns at the national level. As a new NAS member, you will receive a courtesy subscript to our newsletter, The Pelican, for one year. Thereafter, if you wish to continue to receive The Pelican, please join Great Salt Lake Audubon.
3. You can join both GSLA and NAS if you wish to support both local and national activities.
GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON
(LOCAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY)
Please enroll me as a member of GSLA. My membership fee of $30.00 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_____________________________________________
Street_____________________________________________
City    ____________________________________________
State______________ZIP +4__________________________
Email_____________________________________________
Phone______________________Today’s Date____________

If you would prefer to 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.
Member fee $______ + Donation $______ = Total $______
Local membership does NOT include Audubon Magazine

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 $25.00 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

Name_____________________________________________
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____Check here if you prefer your free 1st year of THE PELICAN electronically and provide us with your email address

OFFICIAL USE
ONLY C0ZW500Z National renewals are now handled directly through NAS