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. BIRDS ‘n BITES will take a summer break, programs will resume in the fall.

May 17th - Ashley Soltysiak of the environmental nonprofit, HEAL Utah.

Ashley Soltysiak is the Senior Policy Associate for the Salt Lake City based environmental nonprofit, HEAL Utah. Ashley will be discussing the outcomes of the 2016 legislative session, highlighting bills that impact air quality and renewable energy. Additionally, she will discuss the future of these campaign areas, go over clean air/clean energy legislative grades, and discuss grassroots activism and coalition building between environmental groups.

There will also be a short general membership meeting at the beginning of this evening. Come out and meet the Board of Directors, and give us your comments or suggestions for the organization.

**TWO SPECIAL EVENTS**

Saturday June 4th
BLUEBIRD BOXES IN STRAWBERRY VALLEY
See details on page 5.

June 11th and 12th
2016 BASIN AND RANGE
to be held at FREMONT INDIAN STATE PARK
Look for the brochure in this issue.

FUN FAMILY EVENT

Please join us on Saturday, May 21st, 9:30AM – 11:00AM, for a fun family birding/nature walk on the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. All ages are encouraged to participate. We will focus on the enjoyment of and appreciation for nature, especially birds. We have a limited supply of binoculars we can furnish, but if you have your own please bring them.

We will meet at 9:30 AM in the lower parking lot of the Natural History Museum of Utah, 301 Wakara Way, SLC, 84108 (near the University of Utah). Light refreshments will be available after our walk.

SATURDAY, MAY 7TH
AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING
Hosted by Red Cliffs Audubon in St. George
Please Contact Ray Smith @801-532-7384 if interested.
All members are welcome!!
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 July/August issue is June 10, 2016.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS, MAR/APRIL
by Karín Kirchhoff and Heather Dove

Kimberly McDonald has resigned from the Treasurer position due to personal life issues. We’re sorry to lose Kimberly but thank her for the time she was able to give us and wish her the best. Janet has graciously agreed to fill the post for a max of another 1-2 years. We will work on identifying an appropriate person to take on this position.

Heather Dove testified at the Citizens Hearing on Public Lands Initiative on March 2nd and followed with a letter to the editor at the Deseret News. Go to this link to read the article: http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865649957/Letter-PLI-a-bad-bill.html

The 2016 Legislative Session proved to be a bruising one for the environment. Many bad environmental bills were passed. Great Salt Lake Audubon along with 26 other organizations submitted a letter to Governor Herbert, urging him to veto SB 80, the Water Infrastructure bill that would fund the proposed Lake Powell Pipeline and the proposed Bear River Diversion. Unfortunately, Governor Herbert chose to cave to the pressures of Senator Stuart Adams and his cronies. Go to this link to read the letter: http://x.greatsaltlakeaudubon.org/pdfs/SB_80_Veto.pdf

Several Board members met with Brian Trusty, National Audubon Society VP Central Flyway. He discussed changes that will be made in National Audubon including more local input and more communication. They will be finalizing their strategic plans shortly.

NAS regional elections were held. Each chapter was encouraged to vote. GSLA has submitted our three votes allowed. Results will be determined May 1st.

GSLA is planning on augmenting our website to include a tab about Climate Change. Students at Westminster will be helping us to design this section. Additionally we are hoping to offer a screening of the film, The Messenger, this summer. This film addresses birds and climate change.

The Sans Blas trip went off well. Unfortunately, the Oaxaca trip was cancelled due to Mark Stackhouse having some health issues. We wish Mark a speedy recovery.

Basin & Range is coming right up. We have another excellent program planned this year. We encourage our members to check out the enclosed brochure and get reservations sent in right away. Last year this event sold out in two weeks!

We hope you are getting out to enjoy the spring migration. Good birding to you all!!
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 subscription 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.

Utah Junior Duck Stamp Winner Announced at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Brad Gray, age 17, took Best of Show at the 2016 Utah Junior Duck Stamp Contest with a pair of Canada geese, titled, “Holiday Honkers”. Brad created the winning artwork in mixed media including prisma colored pencil, tempera paint, and airbrush.

From Utah, Brad’s art will compete in the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest, April 22, at the J. N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, Florida. Brad’s winning Utah 2015 Junior Duck Stamp entry went on to win third place in the national contest last year.

The judging event was held at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, March 29, where Brad’s work was evaluated by a panel of 5 judges, comprised of expert birders, art educators, and a wildlife photographer. He comes from a long line of talented artists - His parents, grandmother, and siblings all share a passion for wildlife and conservation. Brad is surrounded by a family who not only nurtures a love for nature but encourages its translation into beautiful art. Additional support and encouragement comes from Brad’s art teacher, Darin Wilding, from Weber High School, Ogden.

The panel of judges all agreed that Brad’s entry would represent the waterfowl species well on a “Junior Duck Stamp” and showed excellent attention to detail. Other comments from judges included, “Good contrast in color and texture”, “Subjects are anatomically correct”, “Environment rendered beautifully in snow and water”, and “Habitat carried viewer’s eye around the canvas without detracting from subjects”.

A big congratulations goes to Brad and a big thank you goes to all young wildlife artists who submitted their entries. The 2016 award ceremony will be held, Sat., May 14 (12-3) at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

Students, from kindergarten through twelfth grade are encouraged to enter their artistic renditions of North American waterfowl into the annual contest. Information on the National Junior Duck Stamp contest can be found at http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/.

Great Salt Lake Audubon board member Anne Terry (center) won the Vern A. Fridley Environmental Educator of the Year Award presented by the Utah Society for Environmental Education (USEE) at their annual conference in March.

Anne serves as chair of the GSLA Education Committee and is Senior Educator at Tracy Aviary. Anne was nominated by her coworker Annie Young and presented with the award by USEE Board President Dr. Nat Frazer (left) and Tracy Aviary’s Director of Education Dr. Michelle Mileham (right).
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.****

Wednesday, May 4th, 8AM MODERATE MOUNTAIN DELL REC. AREA, PARLEY’S CANYON
Leader: Jack Clark
Join us for our monthly bird surveys. May ought to be a good month to see a variety of birds as the spring migrants are beginning to return. Ospreys and Red-tailed Hawks are already nesting. We’ll meet by 8AM in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 east for a morning of birding. Contact Jack at :(801) 255-7989 or murdad@hotmail.com.

Friday, May 6th to Sunday, May 8th - EASY LYTLE RANCH, WASHINGTON COUNTY
Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith
Depart at 6AM on Friday morning, with a couple of stops en route to St. George (Oak Grove and Red Cliffs Camp-ground). Cox Park, Springs Pond, and Tonaquint Park are on the agenda for late day. We’ll stay in motels (everyone is responsible for their own accomodations) and drive to the ranch early Saturday morning, checking for desert species along the way, then stop at Gunlock and Ivins reservoirs on the way back to town. Up early on Sunday morning to bird at Washington Fields, Sand Hollow, Grandpa’s Pond, and other spots before heading home. This trip is limited to 15 people (4-5 cars only). Call Jeanne or Ray (801-532-7384) for more information.

Saturday, May 7th, 10AM Audubon Council Meeting
Hosted by Red Cliffs Audubon in St. George
Please Contact Ray Smith @801-532-7384 if interested.

GREAT SALT LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL, May 12-16, 2016
Register online @www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com.

Tuesday, May 17th - 6:30/7PM
BIRDS 'n BITES, HEAL Utah
Education Building in the Tracy Aviary

Saturday, May 21st, 9:30AM – 11:00AM EASY FAMILY BIRDING/NATURE WALK ON THE BONNEVILLE SHORELINE TRAIL.
See details on pg 1.

Saturday, May 21st, 8AM MODERATE/DIFFICULT YELLOW FORK CANYON
Leader: Ian Batterman
Down in the Southwestern corner of Salt Lake County is Yellow Fork Canyon, a wonderful hiking spot and a unique area for birding in the county. Here you will find a mix of mountain and desert species that in many cases can only be found in the more remote areas of the state. This will be a somewhat strenuous hike, so please remember sunscreen and water. We will meet at the Sugarhouse Shopko at 8AM to arrange carpools. Please contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com if you are interested.

Monday, May. 23rd 7AM ISSR INLAND SEA SHOREBIRD RESERVE (Kennecott’s Mitigation Wetlands) - EASY
Leader: Bryant Olsen
ISSR is located on the south shore of Great Salt Lake. Come and enjoy the property and see which birds are making use of it at this time. PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED as the number of cars allowed is limited. Call or email Bryant if you plan to attend. (801-498-0362) bryant_olsen@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, May 25th, 7AM– noon EASY FARMINGTON BAY + areas north
Leader: Bryant Olsen
Meet at the SE corner of the ShopKo parking lot in Sugarhouse by 7AM to carpool OR 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). Afternoon Birding Option: after birding “The Bay” for the morning, anyone interested can continue birding northward with Bryant. Destinations will likely be Kaysville Ponds or Antelope Island depending on what birds are being seen. Call or email Bryant if you plan to attend. (801-498-0362) or Bryant_olsen@yahoo.com.
Saturday, May 28th, 7AM EASY
ANTELOPE ISLAND
Leader: Ian Batterman
Come join us at one of the greatest migratory stopover sites in Northern Utah. We will be start at the causeway, looking for migrating shorebirds, and then travel on to the island including stopovers at the Visitor Center, Buffalo Corrals, and Garr Ranch to see what’s around. This will be a fairly long birding trip, so please plan accordingly. For those carpooling, meet at the Sugarhouse Shopko at 7AM. If coming from the north, you can plan on meeting us in the parking lot just outside of the entrance kiosk at the Causeway by 7:45AM. If you have a park pass, please bring it. Contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or imbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming.

Wednesday, June 1st, 7:30AM MODERATE
Mountain Dell Rec. Area, Parley’s Canyon
Leader: John Middleton
Come and join us for our monthly bird survey. Our summer visitors will be here so come and help us find them. 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.

Saturday, June 4th, 8AM MODERATE/DIFICULT
BLUEBIRD BOXES IN STRAWBERRY VALLEY
Leaders: Jeanne LeBer and Ray Smith
Please join us. We will meet at 8AM in the South-east corner of the Shopko Parking lot in Sugarhouse or 9:15AM at the Strawberry Valley Visitor Center. The morning will be spent checking the boxes and recording the species using each box, and if there are eggs or young birds. It’s very exciting – you never quite know what you are going to find! Afterwards we will gather for lunch. Please bring your own sandwich; GSLA will provide cold drinks. Call Jeanne or Ray at 801-532-7384 if you have questions or to let them know you’ll be there.

Saturday June 11-Sunday June 12th
BASIN & RANGE 2016
FREMONT INDIAN STATE PARK
See brochure for details and to register.

Friday, June 17th, 7AM MODERATE
RESTORATION SITE IN FAIRFIELD AND POWELL LAKE, LEHI
Leader: Darwin Bundy
Darwin has a passion for the environment and has spent 20 years transforming his land (161 acres) from an over-grazed state to a place of diverse habitats using native trees, bushes and grasses. As a consequence, many birds and other animals find this a welcoming place. After spending time here we will drive back to Lehi with Darwin and tour the wetlands known locally as Powell Lake. We will meet in the SE corner of the Sugarhouse Shopko parking lot in SLC by 7AM for carpooling. Bring water and lunch. Contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or imbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming. This is a rare privilege to see this private oasis and the resident Short-eared Owls.

Saturday, June 25th, 7AM EASY
BEAR RIVER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE
Leader: Ian Batterman
Join us for a field trip looking at the many breeding and migrant wetland birds at one of the premier birding hotspots in Utah. This will be a fairly long field trip (at least 5 hours including driving time to the refuge) so please plan accordingly. We meet at Shopko to carpool and leave at 7AM. Contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming.

Monday, June 27th, 7AM ISSR, see description for May 23rd.

Wednesday, June 29th, 7AM– noon EASY
FARMINGTON BAY + areas north for those interested.
Leader: Bryant Olsen
See description for May 25th.

Wednesday, July 6th, 7AM MODERATE
Mountain Dell Rec. Area, Parley’s Canyon
Leader: John Middleton
Come and join us for our monthly bird survey. We’ll meet by 7AM, see description for June 1st.

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

MR. RINGER GOES TO WASHINGTON

By David J. Ringer
March 25, 2016

Editor’s Note: Our Chief Network Officer David J. Ringer is going coast to coast to hear and report stories about how Audubon chapters, centers, volunteers, and members are giving birds a fighting chance. Read about his discoveries in the new series “Stopovers.”

Where: Anacostia River, Washington, D.C.
Who: Audubon Society of the District of Columbia (D.C. Audubon) and Earth Conservation Corps

Alarm Went Off: 6:30 a.m.
Breakfast: Complimentary hotel granola bar
Habitat: River
Favorite Bird: Tundra Swan

It’s one of those cold, gray March mornings where your fingers get numb but spring keeps poking through the bleakness. We hear it in a robin’s song at the dock; we see it in a Red-shouldered Hawk carrying sticks to a big old sycamore fork. And we see it when a ‘What’s up there?’ turns into a ‘Tundra Swans!’ whoop. There are 45 in all, headed north, white against implacable gray clouds, necks long and straight. The swan-caller is Nick Lund, known to regular Audubon readers as The Birdist. He’s my age—a first-wave Millennial—and an environmental attorney working in Washington. He’s also a board member of the Audubon chapter here, D.C. Audubon.

Today we’re on a scouting trip as D.C. Audubon plans its spring field trip schedule. These boat-based trips are increasingly popular among Audubon chapters, and this expedition certainly shows us why: We get up-close looks at brilliant Common Mergansers, crazy-eyed Ring-billed Gulls, and a voguing Belted Kingfisher.

And then there are the eagles. We see at least two, majestic and oh-so-fitting here in the capital. Our guide and captain is Bob Nixon of Earth Conservation Corps, who knows the names of all six Bald Eagles nesting in the District of Columbia and since the 1990s has spearheaded efforts to bring them back to the District and keep them here. He’s brimming with partnership ideas for D.C. Audubon, including an eagle survey to track the three pairs as they hunt along the Anacostia and the Potomac.

We’re joined by three other D.C. Audubon board members, Sarah Kirchen, Chris Murray, and Liz Pomper. D.C. Audubon is undergoing a reinvention after a collapse several years ago. The new board is young and energetic, and they tell me that their field trip offerings have attracted diverse groups as large as 50 people. “It’s all ages, all languages, all people,” says Lund. “I get emotional about it.” They’ve recently started offering afternoon field trips too, to lure a younger crowd who likes birds but won’t get up too early on a Saturday.

I think that’s brilliant. Will I personally get up at 4 o’clock in the dark and empty morning to go look for birds? Sure. Will 99 percent of my bird-curious peers? Not even once in their lives. And 7 a.m. really isn’t much more realistic. You can bemoan that fact, or you can do something about it. D.C. Audubon is doing something about it. They’re also considering offering field trips guided in Spanish.

Speaking of field trips: Spring migration is upon us. As waves of birds start rushing across the continent in the weeks ahead, Audubon contingents will fan out across forests, fields, beaches, and, yes, rivers, to celebrate their passage and introduce thousands of newcomers to the joy of birds. If you’re curious, if you’ve recently moved, or if you always meant to look up other bird people near you, go to Audubon Near You now and find your closest Audubon chapter or nature center. Sign up for a field trip, and see what you discover.
CHASING THE IVORY-BILL
THE QUEST FOR THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER HEADS TO CUBA

Can two determined birders track down the most elusive—and possibly extinct—bird out there? Follow our daily blog to find out.

Tim Gallagher, author of *The Grail Bird, The Rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Imperial Dreams: Searching For the Imperial Woodpecker in the Wild Sierra Madre*, was one of two people who gave the initial first-hand reports of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in a muddy bayou in Arkansas in 2004. (The other was nature photographer and Oakland University professor Bobby Harrison, nicknamed Sobbing Bobby because when he saw the bird he wept.)

The report kicked off a multi-million-dollar search for the lost woodpecker, spearheaded by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which led to several follow-up sightings, a blurry video, and a firestorm of media announcing that the Ivory-bill had been rediscovered. But when the team failed to find indisputable evidence, the throngs of searchers recoiled and the Ivory-bill was tucked back into the drawer with all the other museum specimens of bygone birds.

While many have given up hope on the prospect of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker surviving extinction, Gallagher hasn’t. He still believes the phantom bird is out there, hiding in an Arkansas bayou or some faraway forest. One targeted location is Cuba, where excellent Ivory-bill habitat and people who’ve seen the bird still exist.

In January, Gallagher—joined by Dutch ornithologist Martjan Lammertink, journalist Mac McClelland (on assignment for Audubon), and photographer Greg Kahn—launched an expedition to Cuba to search for the grail bird. “Cuba is the one Ivory-bill area I’ve never explored, and I’m excited about going there,” Gallagher said. “I want to check the areas where this bird was last seen and also to track down people who knew the Ivory-bill well.”

Some might say it’s a fool’s errand; that the believers have built up this whole mythology about the species being incredibly elusive, a phantom bird that evades all attempts at photography.

Audubon field editor Kenn Kaufman understands the allure. “Maybe it’s like buying a lottery ticket when you have only a one-in-a-million chance,” he says “It’s highly unlikely, but if it does happen to hit, the payoff is huge. I used to dream about seeing an Ivory-bill, and I still do, sometimes.”

Gallagher never stops dreaming. On January 23, 2016, he and his team—loaded with two weeks’ worth of camping supplies, sunscreen, and bug spray—boarded a plane to Cuba to begin their quest.


Day 1: The Journey Begins
Day 2: On the Road to the Ivory-bill’s Hideaway
Day 3: Bureaucratic Snags and a Real Lead (Finally)
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