Join us for our monthly informative and entertaining programs. The meetings are free and open to all and presented in the Education Building at the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park. Doors open at 6:30 PM for refreshments and socializing; the programs begin at 7 PM. Enter Liberty Park at 600 E 900 South.

Tuesday, March 21st, 7 PM, “Find the Bird Festival for You”, Karin Kirchhoff, GSLA Board of Directors and Programming Chair.
Karin will present an overview of selected bird festivals in the US. Information on how to find bird festivals, the different types of bird festivals, and the advantages of each festival will be offered. Some festivals identified are migration focused, some are focused on a specific bird, like cranes, and some have a specialty focus such as photography. Target birds from these festivals will be shown with an opportunity for audience identification. If you have ever wanted to go outside of Utah to a bird festival, this information will help you select one that meets your needs. There may be one that you have not heard of but now would want to attend. Karin has been to these festivals or these areas so will be offering practical advice about each site.

Tuesday, April 18th, 7 PM, “Burrowing Owls of Antelope Island”, Jolene Rose, Wildlife Biologist, Antelope Island State Park, Utah State Parks & Recreation
Burrowing owls are small owls that live primarily in prairies, grasslands, rangelands, shrub-lands, deserts, and agricultural areas of North America. In Utah, the burrowing owl is included on the “Utah Sensitive Species List” as a Species of Special Concern and is listed by USFWS as a National Bird of Conservation Concern (2002). It has been listed as such because of declining populations throughout its range. The foremost threat to burrowing owls is the loss of habitat. Expanding human settlement and road construction have depleted habitat available to burrowing owls.
Wildlife Biologists have initiated the use of artificial nest sites for the Burrowing Owl. These artificial sites provide protection from predators, shifting sands and bison. While helping in the Conservation of a “Sensitive Species”, these artificial sites also provide great Watchable Wildlife opportunities. We will have the opportunity to learn about the Burrowing Owl and the conservation efforts of the Antelope Island State Park biologists.
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
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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 May/June issue is April 10, 2017.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY/FEBRUARY
by Heather Griffiths

Thank you to everyone who participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count. There were a number of surprising birds spotted including White Throated Sparrow and Eastern Bluebirds. There was a total of 105 species seen and 37,000 individual birds.

Great Salt Lake Audubon is happy to support local Boy Scouts in their Citizen Science projects. We recently approved a grant to fund construction owl nest boxes to be located in the Alta Ski Area.

GSLA has continued to offer eBird classes. They have been well attended and well received. Many thanks to Janice Gardner and friends for their well-prepared presentations and clear instruction.

Our chapter president, Heather Dove, spoke at the 2017 Air Quality Fair in January. The event took place at Trolley Square and was attended by hundreds of people. There were many organizations and vendors. The event provided a great opportunity to get the word out about conservation, air quality, and the health of humans and wildlife in the Salt Lake Valley.

Mark your calendar for two events taking place here in northern Utah: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival (May 18-22) and National Audubon Society Convention in Park City (July 14-17). Don’t forget to register online or by phone for the Bird Festival (www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com, 801-451-3286). Registration opens Feb 27th. Stay tuned for more info on the Convention as it becomes available.

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 Bird Festival May 18-22, 2017
by Neka Roundy

This is an exciting 19th Festival! We have as our keynote speaker and guest, Noah Strycker.

Noah Strycker, 30, is Associate Editor of Birding magazine, the author of two well-regarded books about birds, and a regular contributor of photography and articles to all major bird magazines as well as other media; he blogs regularly for the American Birding Association. Strycker set a world Big Year record in 2015, and his book about the experience will be released in fall 2017. Strycker has studied birds on six continents with field seasons in Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Australia, Antarctica, the Galapagos Islands, and the Farallon Islands. He also works as a naturalist guide on expedition cruises to Antarctica and Norway’s Svalbard archipelago, literally spreading the inspiration of birds from pole to pole. His first book, Among Penguins, chronicles a field season working with Adélie Penguins in Antarctica (Oregon State University Press, 2011) and his second, The Thing with Feathers, celebrates the fascinating behaviors of birds and human parallels (Riverhead Books, 2014). Strycker is also a competitive tennis player, has run five marathons, and hiked the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. He is based in Oregon, where his backyard has hosted more than 100 species of birds. Visit his website at: www.noahstrycker.com

Utah has many great birders, several have even accomplished their own Utah Big Year. Perhaps you have even contemplated a Big Year of your own. If so, start this May and let Great Salt lake Bird Festival jump start your list. The Festival boasts an impressive list of Birds Seen in Utah. Come join us. See the whole program at www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com

Our Utah State Parks, sites for many field trips, are celebrating their 60th Year #UtahSP60. Great Salt Lake Bird Festival offers several guided trips to the state parks in northern Utah. As you visit Utah’s State Parks you can create a story to share with others at #UtahSP60, #DiamondsofUtah, #CelebrateUtah, #ExploreUtah!

This is a good year to have a BIG YEAR!

Registration for the 2017 Festival begins on February 27, 2017 at 9 am MST. Online registration is the preferred method of registering, however, our team will do the best we can to accommodate all forms of registration.

http://www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com/

By phone with your credit card.
Call 801-451-3286.

By mail with payment. Make checks payable to Great Salt Lake Bird Festival.
Mail to: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival, P.O. Box 618, Farmington, UT 84025
Beginning birders and nonmembers are always welcome. We encourage carpooling on our field trips. Contributions to drivers for 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, March 1, 8:30am, Wednesday April 5, 8:00am & Wednesday May 3, 8:00am—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 at 8:30 am in the parking lot just west of REI on 33rd South and 3285 east for a morning of birding. Call John (801-707-9182) if you plan to attend.

Sunday, March 19, 8 am-10 am—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 atimbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming or if you would like more information.

Tuesday, March 21st, 7 PM, Birds ‘n Bites, “Find the Bird Festival for You”, Karin Kirchhoff, GSLA Board of Directors and Programming Chair.
See pg 1 for details. Doors open at 6:30 PM for refreshments and socializing.

Monday, March 27th, 7 am—EASY Inland Sea Shorebird Reserve (Kennecott’s Mitigation Wetlands)
Leader: Byrant 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 7am 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, March 29, 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.

Friday, April 7, 5:30 am—EASY Greater Sage Grouse Lek, Henefer
Leader: Jeanne Le Ber and Ray Smith
This is a wonderful opportunity to witness the spectacular pageantry of male Sage-Grouse strutting on their ancestral lek at dawn. You may leave afterwards or join us for breakfast in Morgan, and continue birding in the Henefer area. Meet in the parking lot just west of the REI on 33rd South and 3285 East by 5:30am sharp to receive handouts giving directions and lek etiquette information, and to arrange carpools. The drive to Henefer takes about an hour. Contact Jeanne and Ray at 801-532-7384 if you would like to go.
Calendar of Events including Field Trips for Mar/Apr 2017

Saturday, April 8, 7:30 am—EASY
Jordan River MBR
Leader: Maureen Wilson
Join us for a field trip to the Jordan River Migratory Bird Reserve and see how GSLA’s years of restoration work has helped Utah’s birds. We had such a great outing last August that we decided to see what birds are preparing to use this area for breeding before the nesting season kicks into high gear. We will meet at 7:30 am at the SE corner of the Sugarhouse ShopKo parking lot for carpooling. There will be at least one water crossing, so wear boots or be prepared to get wet. Contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com to let him know you are coming.

Saturday, April 15, 7:30 am—EASY
Jordan River, 4500 S to 5400 S
Leader: Ian Batterman
One of the great bird watching spots along the Jordan River, this area houses many different bird species thanks to its wide array of habitats. Not only are there plenty of waterfowl and other aquatic species, but many songbirds can be found along this stretch of the Jordan River. There is also a large sandy bank which is home to nesting Bank Swallows and Belted Kingfishers. We will meet at 7:30 am in the parking lot to the Jordan River trail on 4800 S between Sunstone Rd and Riverside Dr. Please contact Ian Batterman at 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com for directions, more information, and to let him know if you plan to attend.

Tuesday, April 18th, 7 PM, Birds ’n Bites, “Burrowing Owls of Antelope Island”, Jolene Rose, Wildlife Biologist, Antelope Island State Park
See pg 1 for details. Doors open at 6:30 PM for refreshments and socializing.

Saturday, April 22, 7:00 am—EASY
Bear River Bottoms & Amalga Barrens
Leader: Bret Mossman & Ian Batterman
In this special joint field trip between Great Salt Lake Audubon and Bridgerland Audubon, we will be heading to the vast northern marshes along the edge of Bear River and Cutler Reservoir. This area is one of the most diverse birding spots in Cache County, so we should see a wide variety of birds. For those near SLC, meet at the Sugarhouse ShopKo at 7:00 am as it will take a while for us to get there, and plan for a long trip as we may not get back until mid afternoon. We will meet at Ibis Café in Logan at around 8:30 am for those coming from the North. Please contact Ian Batterman 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Monday, April 24, 7 am—EASY
Inland Sea Shorebird Reserve (Kennecott’s Mitigation Wetlands)
Leader: Bryant Olsen
See Monday March 27th trip for description and details.

Wednesday April 26, 7 am-noon—EASY
Farmington Bay followed by areas north for those interested
Leader: Bryant Olsen
See March 29th trip for description and details.

Friday, May 5 to Sunday, May 7—EASY/MODERATE
Lytle Ranch, Washington County
Leader: TBA
Depart at 6am on Friday morning, with a couple of stops en route to St. George (Oak Grove and Red Cliffs Campground). Cox Park, Spring Pond, and Tonaquint Park are on the agenda for late day. We’ll stay in motels (everyone is responsible for their own accommodations) 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). We are still looking for a leader for this trip, so if you are interested, please contact Ian Batterman at imbatterman@gmail.com.

2017 Audubon Convention
“Elevating Audubon: America’s Most Effective Conservation Network”
Park City, Utah, July 14-17, 2017

Join us for this exciting and informative biennial convention. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to learn, network, collaborate, and bird!

Early bird registration will open March 15, 2017.
http://www.audubonconvention.org

For general queries, contact National Audubon at convention@audubon.org.
SAGE GROUSE: BLM alarmed by ‘serious’ population declines in NW Utah
by Scott Streater, E&E News reporter

The Bureau of Land Management is increasingly concerned about an isolated group of greater sage grouse in northwest Utah that has suffered what it calls a “serious decline” in population. As a result, BLM announced today the dwindling counts have set off “monitoring triggers” mandating adaptive management measures called for in the sweeping federal sage grouse conservation plans that the Obama administration finalized in 2015.

Overall, the “vast majority” of sage grouse populations in the state “remain at normal populations and habitat levels,” BLM said today in a news release. The concern is a population of grouse in Juab, Tooele and Utah counties — dubbed the Sheeprocks area — that has declined by 40 percent in the last four years, the agency said. The Sheeprocks grouse population “is geographically isolated and distinct from other populations in the state,” said Kimberly Finch, a BLM spokeswoman in Utah. Counts last year of male birds at sage grouse breeding grounds, called leks, reported 19 males — a significant drop from counts of 122 males just a decade ago. Mark Salvo, vice president for landscape conservation at Defenders of Wildlife, called these counts “very small numbers for any grouse species.”

BLM said actions will include making the area “a focal point for fire suppression.” BLM will also work to minimize impacts contributing to the decline, including off-highway vehicles and other development, as well as pinyon-juniper encroachment into the sagebrush steppe the bird depends on for survival. It will also prioritize habitat restoration efforts in the Sheeprocks area.

BLM is working with the state, academic researchers and other federal agencies to restore this population of grouse. About half of the habitat occupied by grouse in the state — about 5.4 million acres — is on federal land. In the past five years, BLM and other partners on the state and county level have been working with researchers and the public on “a variety of proactive measures ... to address the concerning trends in population and habitat, including: habitat restoration, translocation of birds, fire and fuel management, intensive monitoring efforts, and predator control,” the agency said in the release.

The efforts by BLM that are triggered in the federal grouse plans come as those plans are under attack by congressional Republicans. That effort is being led by House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah), who last month filed H.R. 527, which among other things would forbid the Interior secretary from altering the Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2015 decision not to list the grouse for protection under the Endangered Species Act until at least Sept. 30, 2027.

FWS decided the bird does not need ESA protection in large part because of the federal sage grouse conservation plans.

Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) last week filed an identical bill, S. 273, which would also allow state governors to block any provisions in the federal grouse plans that do not conform to state-approved grouse conservation strategies (E&E Daily, Feb. 3).

Facebook and Instagram: Reaching Out
by Heather Griffiths

We have been working to maintain our Facebook account to keep you updated on the latest news regarding Utah conservation as well as the occasional encouraging or entertaining birding related article. We hope you are enjoying the items we share. We will continue to work hard to include more of what you want to see. Please follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/greatsaltlakeaudubon/ We also welcome input on the types of articles you would like to see more of.

GSLA is also on Instagram! Instagram is a social media app you can download on your smartphone that is dedicated to sharing photos. To follow us, visit https://www.instagram.com/greatsaltlakeaudubon/ We love to feature local photographers and share photos regularly. If you would like to share one of your birding photos with us, you can tag us on Instagram with #greatsaltlakeaudubon or email your photo and caption to us at newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org.
Winter Adaptations - How Birds Persevere!

In February, winter is still full on in the Rocky Mountains. Though we may begin to see longer breaks in the storms, summoning slight flashes of what spring may bring, animals are largely still coping with the constraints of cold and unpredictable weather.

Without the ability to layer on mitochondria-rich brown fat cells like mammals, birds seek different means and methods of keeping warm enough to stay alive. The first obvious method is “Head South!” – that’s right, migration. Though not devoid of a huge energy expense, migration at least ensures a more promising clime for the winter.

Another method requires both large seasonal and daily caloric uptake. Birds don’t gain insulative value from their feeding efforts like, for example, a whale. Rather, the advantage of added fat is a metabolic gain. Chickadee, for example, are especially active during the coldest of wintery days, as they source food to keep them going another day. Some non-migratory dark-eyed junco species in Michigan carry an additional 14% body fat during the winter (compared to their southern counterparts). This fat reserve, however, must be continually replenished every 24 hours. That’s a lot of work!

Birds work to maintain an almost constant body temperature. Some birds increase their feather weight by nearly 50% during the winter to counter cold temperatures. Birds will also commonly fluff their feathers to reduce thermal conductivity while roosting. Some winter residents, such as the willow ptarmigan, will dive into the snow for a short-term, sheltered roost.

Another phenomenal effort is called “shivering thermogenesis.” Ever seen a crow or raven shivering while roosting on a power line? When flying, there is no need to shiver, as adequate energy is generated in flight. However, maintaining body heat while perching is a whole different game. Active means of controlling thermoregulation for energy reserve can also be seen when birds utilize a torpor state – essentially hunkered and inactive, but strategically managing reserves.

Ever wondered how waterfowl tolerate near-freezing sloshy lake water? They possess an adaptation called “countercurrent heat-exchange.” This process maintains a steady temperature down into their naked legs. As the cooler blood returns to the heart via veins, adjacent arteries supply warm blood, which in turn warms the returning venous blood. That means that the arterial blood returning to the feet is pre-cooled, preventing excessive heat loss. Pretty cool!

Excerpted from Audubon Rockies Feb 2017 Newsletter
http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=6e38aae74b0a0ffe3610ff4ca&id=8a33a57a1&c=ebc56bd843

Join our email list
We regularly send out event reminders, action alerts and legislative updates via email. If you would like to receive this important info, send an email request to Heather Dove at membership@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org. GSLA does not share your email information with any persons or organizations.

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