BIRDS ‘n BITES

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 20th, 7 PM, “A Conversation with Bob Walters”

Bob Walters recently retired as the Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator at Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. He has been found with a scope at Bald Eagle Day or showing individuals how to spot the mountain goats at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Bob was also instrumental in starting the Peregrine Watch Program (tracking and protecting chicks as they fledged) in downtown SLC at the Joseph Smith Building. He will be discussing his career as a member of DWR and as a birder. Vivian Schneggenburger will be interviewing him since she has been involved in a number of these activities with Bob.

Tuesday, April 17th, 7 PM, “Tracy Aviary: Past, Present, and Future”, Tim Brown, President/CEO, Tracy Aviary

Tracy Aviary is celebrating its 80th anniversary and this is the Year of the Bird. It is fitting to hear about our avian treasure in Utah, the Tracy Aviary. Tim will present the history of the organization, discuss present activities and construction updates, and share future plans. Since many of us are involved with classes and Breeding Bird Surveys at the Aviary, this should be an interesting update. The picture of the hooded Merganser is just one of the beautiful birds found in the Aviary.
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, 2018.

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.

Time is flying and here we are, at the cusp of Spring. This winter has been a busy time for Great Salt Lake Audubon.

We have had some personnel changes and have been working to fill positions that had become open. Heather Griffiths signalled that she needed to lighten her load as she has been functioning as Secretary of the Board, Newsletter Editor, and Social Media Editor. Sharyn Isom graciously volunteered to take on the Secretary position. Heather will continue with her other duties. Many thanks to both Heather and Sharyn. Also, Deb Drain, who has served as Conservation Chair and has done an outstanding job, has resigned as she is moving to Montana later in the spring (see article on Deb in this issue). We are looking for someone to take this position, so if you are passionate about the environment and would like to help, please contact Heather Dove, president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org

As usual this winter, we hosted the Salt Lake Christmas Bird Count and the January 1st Jordan River Bird Count. Both events brought out a good turnout.
We have also held two eBird classes, thanks to our great instructor and former Board Member Janice Gardner.
We’ve also been tracking all the proposed projects in Northern Utah that have been threatening birds, habitat and our environment. There are many, but some of the main ones we have been focusing on are the developments in the Northwest Quadrant with the new prison, the industrial park and now the proposed Inland Global Port. All of these are being located adjacent to the South Shore Preserve and the duck clubs at the south end of Great Salt Lake—areas that are critical for migrating birds and that contain sensitive fragile habitat. We have also been monitoring the Promontory Point Landfill and its application for a Class V permit that would allow hazardous material from other states. This project is located on the north end of Great Salt Lake, another ecologically sensitive area. On all these projects, we have been collaborating with National Audubon’s Saline Lakes Program and other local organizations such as Friends of Great Salt Lake, the Utah chapter of the Sierra Club and various organizations dedicated to clean air.

At the national level, we are very disturbed by the current administration’s efforts to gut the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the protections it affords. We will be following National Audubon’s lead as we work to reverse this administration’s destructive actions.

On a brighter note, 2018 is the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Accordingly, 2018 has been declared nationally as The Year of the Bird. As part of the celebrations, we held a Great Backyard Bird Count and plan to participate in Lights Out Salt Lake at the beginning of March. Stayed tuned for various activities and events celebrating this groundbreaking piece of legislation.

The annual cycle of migration is about to begin. We hope you have a wonderfully birdy spring!!
Great Salt Lake Bird Festival May 17-21, 2018
by Neka Roundy, Great Salt Lake Bird Festival Coordinator

Come celebrate this 20th Anniversary of Great Salt Lake Bird Festival!
Thank you all for your support!

We started with just 6 field trips and 16 workshops. This year we offer 51 field trips and 14 workshops including options for all experience levels of birding and Family Programs. We have spotlighted birding areas in Davis, Weber, Box Elder, Morgan, Salt Lake, Tooele, Summit, Cache, Rich, Utah, and Wasatch Counties and into Wyoming. We offer great birding trips with the best guides. We have partnered with many local birding organizations/agencies and advertised nationally. Our guests have come from all over the world and from half of the states in America. Parents bring their children, friends bring friends, and passionate birders come alone. The Festival offers birding by car, van, bus, boat, kayak, and horseback. Guests can enjoy a full five days of guided bird watching.

The mission statement developed 20 years ago for Great Salt Lake Bird Festival:

- Increase public awareness and pride for birds found on and near Great Salt Lake;
- Increase the economic contribution of tourism to Davis County and surrounding communities;
- Educate the public to the values of Great Salt Lake; birds, ecosystem, brine flies, brine shrimp;
- Initiate a project to give back to the community;
- Coordinate agency efforts concerning awareness of the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival was started to spotlight birds in the greater Great Salt Lake ecosystem and provide education about the habitat of the Pacific Flyway. With the help of our volunteers, the program has expanded and shared on-site education at these great birding areas.

For 2018 we welcome George Archibald, co-founder of the International Crane Foundation as our Keynote Speaker. He will lead 2 field trips and offer a free workshop on Friday afternoon, May 18th. Don Paul and Neka Roundy will talk about the 20 years leading to this anniversary on Saturday, May 19th. Pretty sure you don’t want to miss this workshop!

On-line registration starts at 9 AM Monday, February 26th at www.GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com
See the complete schedule on the web site.

This is also the World Year of the Bird celebrating the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act’s ratification. Special events will be offered by National Geographic and Cornell Lab of Ornithology – see more #BirdYourWorld.

This is a good year to celebrate birds and birding at Great Salt Lake Bird Festival!

Many thanks to Deb Drain!!!

By Heather Dove

We are very sad to announce that Deb Drain, who has served as our Conservation Chair for the last two and and half years, is leaving us. She and her husband, Vance are moving to Montana sometime in the spring. She tells me that family, beautiful country, abundant birds, and clean air are calling.

Deb brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the job. After a long career as a soil scientist and an environmental consultant, she agreed to help us track the many issues affecting birds, habitat and the environment here in Utah. Her familiarity with the process of how business and government intersect was invaluable. Her incisive analysis and clear, accurate comments gained wide respect and appreciation within the environmental community. Her writing skills helped us express our positions in eloquent and powerful ways.

We will deeply miss having this dedicated conservationist, avid birder and passionate photographer in our midst. We hope she continues to track the myriad issues we face here in Utah and finds time to help us out from afar with an occasional comment letter or two.

Thanks for all you do, Deb. It is greatly appreciated!!
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.****

**Thursday, March 1, “Lights Out Salt Lake” 6pm-10pm, Tracy Aviary**

For details visit [http://tracyaviary.org/upcoming-events/birdsandbrewsmigration](http://tracyaviary.org/upcoming-events/birdsandbrewsmigration)

**Wednesday, March 7, 8:30am-11pm**

Mountain Dell Rec. Area, Parley’s Canyon—MODERATE

**Leader:** Bob Walters: 365-441-3957

Our monthly bird surveys will begin again so we invite you to join us. Even in winter, interesting birds can still be seen, especially this winter with how little snow we’ve gotten. We’ll meet at 8 am in the parking lot of the Mountain Dell Golf Course for a morning of birding. Call Bob if you plan to attend.

**Saturday, March 17, 8am-10am**

Bountiful Pond—EASY

**Leader:** Ian Batterman: 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com

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. We will meet at the parking lot outside of Bountiful Pond at 8am. Contact Ian Batterman to let him know you are coming or if you would like more information.

**Tuesday, March 20, 7pm, Birds ‘n Bites, Conversation with Bob Walters**

See page 1 for details.

**Monday, March 26, 7am-Noon**

Inland Sea Shorebird Reserve (Kenscett’s Mitigation wetlands)—EASY

**Leader:** Bryant Olsen: bryant_olsen@yahoo.com

We have obtained permission to do a monthly bird survey of the Inland Sea Shorebird reserve from Rio Tinto/Kenscett 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 the Sego Lily parking lot of Sugar House Park 7am to carpool. PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED as there is limited space on these field trips, so contact Bryant Olsen to sign up.

**Wednesday, March 28, 7am-1pm**

Antelope Island Causeway & Farmington Bay—EASY

**Leader:** Bryant Olsen: bryant_olsen@yahoo.com

The monthly trip to Farmington Bay continues, with a little twist. Because the gates into Farmington Bay do not open until 8am, we are going to plan on starting at the causeway of Antelope Island before continuing on to Farmington Bay afterwards. Meet at 7am at the Sego Lily parking lot of Sugar House Park or at the main parking lot outside the causeway at 8am. PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED as there is limited space on these field trips, so contact Bryant Olsen to sign up.

**Saturday, March 31, 7:30am-10am**

Oquirrh Lake—EASY

**Leader:** Ian Batterman: 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com

Daybreak is one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the Salt Lake Valley and in the middle of it sits Oquirrh Lake, a very oddly shaped man-made pond. It is a hotspot for many birds including ducks, gulls, and grebes, and a host of other open area and wetland species. We will meet at the West Valley Target parking lot at 7:30 am to carpool. Please contact Ian Batterman if you would like to attend.
Wednesday, April 4, 8:00am-11am  
Mountain Dell Rec. Area, Parley’s Canyon—MODERATE  
**Leader:** Bob Walters: 365-441-3957  
See March 7 field trip for more information.

**Tuesday April 10, 5:45am-Noon**  
Greater Sage-Grouse Lek, Henefer—EASY  
**Leader:** Sylvia Gray: pdggray@xmission.com  
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 5:45am to receive handouts giving directions and Lek etiquette information, and to arrange carpools. The drive to Henefer takes about one hour. Email Sylvia if you would like to go.

**Saturday April 14, 7:30am-11am**  
**Jordan River 4500S-5400S—EASY**  
**Leader:** Ian Batterman: 920-360-0805 or at imbatterman@gmail.com  
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 for directions, more information, and to let him know if you plan to attend.

**Tuesday, April 17th, 7 pm, Birds ‘n Bites, Tracy Aviary:**  
**Past, Present, and Future**  
See page 1 for details

**Monday, April 23, 7am-Noon**  
**Inland Sea Shorebird Reserve (Kennecott’s Mitigation wetlands)—EASY**  
**Leader:** Bryant Olsen: bryant_olsen@yahoo.com  
See March 26 description for more information.

**Wednesday, April 25, 7am-1pm**  
**Antelope Island Causeway & Farmington Bay—EASY**  
**Leader:** Bryant Olsen: bryant_olsen@yahoo.com  
See March 25 event for more information.
Invading Plants at Great Salt Lake’s South Shore Preserve
By Ella Sorensen, Gillmor Sanctuary Manager

Today National Audubon’s Society’s Gillmor Sanctuary on the south shore of Great Salt Lake is reaping biological consequences that began in October 1492.

Native Americans arrived in the Western Hemisphere in small migrations many thousands of years before with little evidence that they introduced Old World species. They successfully domesticated crops such as maize, potatoes and tomatoes from native plants.

Perhaps it was Vikings who more recently first touched ground in the New World, but Columbus’s discovery of the Americas was the epic event that launched two very different worlds on a path toward biological homogeneity irrevocably altering the ecology of vast areas of the Americans.

After the “discovery”, domesticated animals and agricultural plants immediately accompanied human migrations from Europe. The second voyage of Columbus in 1493 included goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, and cattle. The new settlers’ desire for foods from their homeland led to large-scale introduction of crops like wheat and grapes.

While much of the early plant and animal exchange was planned, others happened inadvertently. Diseases like smallpox, to which Europeans had developed immunity, ravaged large numbers of the native human population.

Most of the Old World plants that have found fertile ground in the Americas were not brought intentionally but hooked rides on ships, clothes, mixed with other seeds, in dung, fur, clods of mud, and numerous other ways.

Some of the introduced species lacked natural enemies, such as insects and disease, and having the ability to thrive in soils disturbed by human activities, raged across the continent, in some cases greatly outcompeting natives. The exchange of plants and animals between the two hemispheres continues. Today it is difficult in the valleys of Salt Lake County to find areas where exotics do not outnumber native vegetation.

The 3000 acre South Shore Preserve, consisting of Audubon’s Gillmor Sanctuary and Mitigation Lands has a rich array of native plants. Salt loving plants such as pickleweed, iodine bush, and inkweed have held their own in the saline mudflats of the site. The upland shrub community consists of greasewood, shadscale, rabbit brush and limited sagebrush—all native plants. Unfortunately between the shrubs the ground grows a carpet of forbs and grasses with exotics greatly outnumbering the natives. Exotic cheat grass is the predominant plant. A few natives like alkali sacaton, sand drop seed, and Indian rice grass still remain.

The state of Utah maintains a list of especially onerous plants called noxious weeds. Once established these hardy invasive plants can be notoriously difficult to eradicate. Several of these exotic plants are relative newcomers to the South Shore Preserve and are rapidly expanding, threatening to continue to invade and degrade larger areas.
GSLA thanks the voters of Salt Lake County for their support of the Zoo, Arts & Parks program.

Recruitment and training for 2018 Tracy Aviary citizen science projects
by Cooper Farr

Tracy Aviary is gearing up for our busy field season of citizen science projects! We are now recruiting citizen scientists for Alta Nest Box Monitoring, and Breeding Season Surveys.

For Alta nest box monitoring, a team of citizen scientists helps with weekly nest box checks for 20 songbird and 20 owl boxes placed in different habitat types around Alta Ski Area. We snowshoe, ski, or hike out to nest boxes and use cameras on extension poles to check for owl and songbird chicks. Nest checks go from March through July, and we have a few training sessions scheduled in February.

For the breeding season surveys, citizen scientists conduct point count surveys at 12 sites around Salt Lake to inform conservation and management. We welcome birders of any level, and we will teach you bird identification by sight and sound, data recording skills, and everything else you need to know to participate. Indoor training is at the end of February, and field trainings start in March. Surveys are conducted April-July.

Email Cooper Farr, cooperf@tracyaviary.org for more information and to sign up!

In Memoriam

Great Salt Lake Audubon would like to honor the following individual in whose memory a generous donation has been made:

Donna H. Rigby
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