



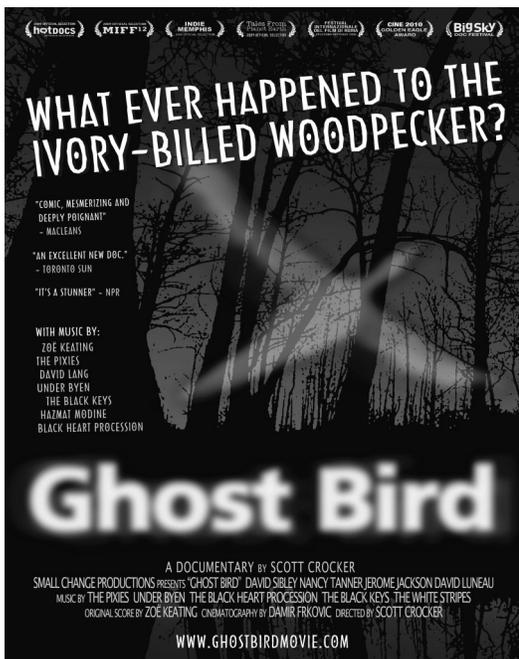
The Stilt

Volume 39, Issue 7
September 2010

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Bridgerland Audubon's September Event

Is it Back?



Watch Scott Crocker's acclaimed film "Ghost Bird" about the Apparent Rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

"Ghost Bird" wades into a murky swamp of belief and obsession in this cautionary tale about birders, ornithologists and the citizens of Brinkley, Arkansas, who are certain they keep seeing a giant woodpecker that's been extinct for over half a century.

"It's a stunner."
-NPR

"Comic, mesmerizing, deeply poignant."
-Macleans

Featuring music from The Pixies, The White Stripes and David Lang

Thursday, September 9 at 7 p.m.
Logan Arthouse and Cinema, 795 North Main

Was the elusive Lord God Bird found again five years ago in Arkansas? Cornell University and the press seemed to think so, but did Cornell control its spin too carefully? Are there now more books about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker than birds of that species? How have residents of rural Arkansas been affected by the news—or hype—of the bird's rediscovery? Is the Ivory-bill back?

Your \$5 donation will help fund our efforts to preserve wildlands in Cache Valley, but no one will be turned away!

Local author Christopher Cokinos will sign copies of his book *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers: A Personal Chronicle of Vanished Birds* after the film. His book includes a moving narrative about the last known stronghold of Ivory-bills in the southern U.S.

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USU Delivers on Climate Action

(a major focus of the National Audubon Society: www.audubon.org/globalWarming/)

 In January 22, 2007, USU President Stan L. Albrecht became a Charter Signatory of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) document, and the first university president in Utah to sign the Commitment. The ACUPCC has as its goals the development of climate neutrality for member campuses, as well as educating students to achieve the same for society at large. President Albrecht's signature and leadership have set in motion numerous actions and activities directed at transitioning USU to a carbon neutral institution by 2050.

Fortunately, USU has a history of implementing sustainable practices and energy conservation, allowing us to "leapfrog" past several common barriers to this effort, especially in the areas of energy generation, physical plant operation, transportation, and waste management. Early impetus came in 1991 with President Stanford Cazier's signing of the Tallories Declaration, a declaration for sustainability created for and by presidents of institutions of higher learning. The Declaration called for institutions of higher learning to become world leaders in developing, creating, supporting, and maintaining sustainability. President George Emert renewed USU's commitment to the Declaration in 1993. In 2001 President Kermit Hall named a committee that produced the AggieEcology Report in 2003. The Report served as a national model for campus sustainability. Given the tradition of such activities, it was no surprise that USU was recently included in the "Princeton Review Guide to 286 Green Colleges" for its strong commitment to sustainability.

Following his signing of the ACUPCC, President Albrecht appointed a University Sustainability Council comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The Council created several standing committees to develop outreach, education, research, and conservation/sustainability efforts. The main focus of the Council is to achieve the goals outlined in the President's Climate Commitment, most specifically to reduce carbon emissions with the goal of achieving climate neutrality.

One of the first products of the Council was the USU sustainability policy:

"Utah State University (USU) is one of the nation's premier, student-centered, land-grant, and space-grant universities. The University is committed to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities by promoting sustainability in its operations and academic and service missions.

USU will develop appropriate systems for managing environmental, social, and economic sustainability programs with specific goals and objectives. This policy supports the goal of the USU statewide system to prepare students, faculty, and staff to proactively contribute to a high quality of life for present and future generations."

USU seeks to implement sustainable practices in all areas of the University, with students serving key roles, particularly in special events such as Sustainability Week, Earth Day, multicultural events, and the Bioneers and Sustainable Landscapes conferences. Most recently, an effort was launched to involve all incoming freshmen and new students in USU's mission through workshops and exhibits during the Student Orientation Advisory and Registration (SOAR) and Connections programs.

Some of the more visible efforts include a very ambitious recycling program, university participation in RecycleMania, transforming the Aggie Shuttle system with CNG buses, the Aggie Blue Bikes loaner program, water efficient landscaping with interpretive signing, and several new LEED-certified buildings (both silver and platinum). In addition, the implementing of the Campus Wellness program promoting healthy lifestyles included maps showing campus walking routes and more sustainable meal choices in the University's dining areas. For further information, visit their website: <http://sustainability.usu.edu/>.

—Jack Greene

Audubon Calendar

September 2010

9 Screening of “Ghost Bird” 7 p.m. Logan Premiere of the acclaimed documentary “Ghost Bird” at the Logan Arthouse and Cinema! See front page for details.

11 Salmon Spawn Come watch the spawning of Kokanee salmon at Porcupine Reservoir! Join Reinhard Jockel for this annual trek to see an important part of the lives of our inland salmon. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Back by afternoon.

18 Audubon Council of Utah meets in Logan. See story on page 5 for details.
Shorebird Identification Ryan O'Donnell will help you unpuzzle the mysteries of shorebirds. Fall shorebirds are one of the most notorious challenges in birding. We will tackle this problem head-on by learning to identify fall shorebirds by body shape, bill shape and plumage. This is a good time of year to practice identification of the common peeps, such as Western, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, and to find rarities like Stilt Sandpipers. Stops may include the Polishing Ponds, Amalga Barrens, Sue's Ponds and Hyrum Reservoir, as water levels dictate. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Back by afternoon or, if you wish to participate in the council meeting, we'll return to Logan by 9 a.m. for the meeting's start.

25 Field Trip: HawkWatch Station in the Wellsvilles Let local naturalist and avid hiker Reinhard Jockel lead you on a hike up to the crest of the Wellsville Mountains to witness one of the wonders of the avian world. Thousands of raptors migrate along the Wellsvilles during the fall migration season. On a good day, we'll see more than 100 raptors of a number of different species. We'll hike up Deep Canyon and plan to eat lunch while watching raptors drift by. The trail gains three thousand feet in approximately four miles, so be prepared and be sure to wear appropriate footwear. Bring plenty of water. Since it is usually cool and windy up on top, a change of layers, a warm sweater, and a good wind shell make the experience more comfortable. Bring binoculars, lunch, and water. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan fire station. Carpooling will be available. For further information, contact Reinhard Jockel at birderjockel@gmail.com.

Announcing Our New Event Format

Bridgerland Audubon Society is experimenting—no, we don't have a lab. We're moving to a quarterly event format this year rather than the monthly “meeting” format. We will be moving to a new location, though with our sincere thanks to the Cache Valley Learning Center for allowing us to meet cost-free in their space in the past.

Look for forthcoming announcements for our Nov. 11, Feb. 10 and April 14 events.

We may also move to a late afternoon time slot to allow more people to attend.

One thing that won't change is the April gathering will be our annual banquet at the Coppermill, an event that is always special and fun.

Local Bird Spotlight

Woodpeckers

In recognition of the upcoming screening of “Ghost Bird,” we thought it might be appropriate to focus our attention on woodpeckers for this issue. More than 200 species of woodpeckers are recognized in the world, with 22 species occurring in North America. Seven species of woodpeckers are listed on the BAS bird checklist for the Cache Valley area. Three species belong to the genus *Picoides*, also referred to as “typical woodpeckers,” including the Downy, Hairy and Three-toed Woodpeckers. Two species of “sapsuckers,” genus *Sphyrapicus*, are found in the area and include the Red-naped and Williamson’s Sapsuckers. The Northern Flicker, genus *Colaptes*, is our most common and conspicuous woodpecker. Rounding out the list is an occasional sighting of a Lewis Woodpecker from the genus *Melanerpes*. All of these species, with the exception of the Lewis Woodpecker are known to breed in the area.

Woodpeckers are interesting birds in a lot of ways. Adaptations including a strong, chisel-shaped beak, shock-absorbing muscles in the head and neck, long tongues, stiffened tail feathers, and a zygodactyl toe arrangement (two toes forward and two toes backward), all of which enhance a woodpecker’s ability to climb around on trees and chisel out cavities to search for or store food or build nests. Most woodpeckers also have a characteristic undulating flight pattern—flap, flap, glide, flap, flap, flap, glide—that is easy to recognize even at long distances. Cavities created

by woodpeckers are often used by other birds for nesting and can be very important habitat in areas where cavities would otherwise be limited. Unfortunately, undesirable species like the starling also utilize woodpecker cavities. On several occasions I have watched pairs of Northern Flickers work their tails off to excavate a nest in my ash trees, only to be evicted by family groups of starlings when all the work is done.



Woodpecker behavior is diverse and entertaining. Almost all species engage in a behavior called drumming, whereby they rapidly beat their beak on a tree or other resonating surface to attract mates and establish territories. In many species this behavior has replaced the song for attracting mates and can be very specific in its pattern and duration, thus making it possible to identify species using their

drumming pattern. The sound of a drumming woodpecker is a very recognizable and primal sound in a deep, dark forest. I have personally grown quite familiar with the drumming pattern of the Northern Flicker. Each spring a male flicker establishes a territory around my house and has chosen my water heater flue as its favorite drumming location. Unfortunately, the flue passes through the wall in my bedroom and the flicker’s favorite time to drum (very loudly) is about 5 o’clock in the morning. Who needs an alarm clock?

The two most common woodpeckers in the valley are the Northern Flicker and Downy Woodpecker. They will come to feeders, especially if you put out suet, and can be seen year-round in the valley. These two species have been featured in the Local Bird Spotlight in past issues of *The Stilt* and can be found at the BAS website <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org/>. (Downy Woodpecker by Lyle Bingham in May ’08 and the Northern Flicker by Nancy Williams in February ’08.) The Hairy Woodpecker frequents riparian forests in the mountains and valleys and is very similar in appearance to the Downy, only larger. The Red-naped Sapsucker frequents orchards and other woodlands in the valley and mountains while the Williamson’s Sapsucker is more commonly found at higher elevations especially in the summer. Sapsuckers are so named because of their habit of drilling rows of shallow holes in trees, then returning to the holes to drink the sap and eat the insects it

Continued-From Page 4

attracts. The Three-toed Woodpecker is most common in coniferous forests in the mountains and can be locally abundant, especially during insect outbreaks. As the name implies, the bird has lost a toe for some reason in its evolutionary past.

So that's a quick rundown of our local woodpeckers. They are fun and interesting birds to listen for and watch. If you are a baby boomer like myself, memories of the lovable Woody Woodpecker cartoon character (which, by the way, was modeled after an Acorn

Woodpecker) add an iconic edge to this group of birds. I can only think of a couple of other birds that have been so immortalized by popular culture.

—Bill Masslich

Carnivorous Plants in Utah

From Wild About Utah, heard on Utah Public Radio

Carnivorous plants stoke the imagination and spawn Hollywood films. They have bizarre adaptations to aid in the absorption of nitrogen in the nutrient-poor environments in which they live. Venus Fly Traps are perhaps the most famous, their moving lobes snapping shut like a purse around the insect prey to be digested. The far more numerous Pitcher plants produce a simple pit trap. Butterworts and sundews both deploy sticky hairs to ensnare prey. There are other carnivorous plant types, but here in Utah we have only 3 species of Bladderworts in the genus *Utricularia*.

Our three species are denizens of the water, and as such are scattered among the ponds, lakes, and sluggish streams of the state. Their finely divided leaves efficiently capture sunlight. Bladderworts are often found floating freely on the water surface. Despite their aquatic nature, bladderwort flowers are showy and held above the water surface to attract passing pollinators with their yellow loveliness.

How can an aquatic plant be carnivorous? The plants produce bladder-like utricles along the submerged stem that look much like cancerous growths. These hollow bladders have tiny hair-like extensions that respond to motion. When stimulated by any wee swimming creature, the hairs cause the flattened bladder to inflate, sucking in both water and prey.

Of all the carnivorous plants, Bladderworts are the easiest to grow ... a warm aquarium and some pond mud is all that is needed to keep a Bladderwort happy and healthy. So next time you visit one of our natural ponds or lakes, look for these carnivorous plants. You may even hear the faint crackling sound of the utricles closing as you lift them from the water.

—Michael Piep

Audubon Council of Utah Update

Christopher Cokinos is the new president of the Utah Audubon Council. Bridgerland Audubon will be hosting the fall meeting of the council in Logan the weekend of Sept. 18-19. For more information, contact Chris at chris.cokinos@usu.edu. The council helps to coordinate chapter responses to pressing conservation issues and maintains a lobbying presence in the state legislature. In the coming session, we hope to sponsor a conservation bill rather than only responding to other issues. The fall meeting will discuss this possibility and other conservation priorities. Although only the chapter representatives to the council are allowed to vote, all are welcome to attend.

Teams of Ten Fundraiser for the Bear River Bottoms a Success!

Thanks to all BAS members who responded to our fundraising letter for the Bear River Bottoms conservation easement. We sent out 225 letters, and received over \$10,815 from 54 individuals or families. That is an outstanding response rate for any organization, especially in summer!

These funds will go toward managing the 500-acre easement and provide a match for year two of the Intermountain West Joint Venture Capacity Building Grant.

If you have yet to make your donation, it's not too late! Send your check to BAS, POB 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501. Also look for more volunteer opportunities this fall, as we complete some fencing to keep cattle out of the wetlands, plant native shrubs and trees, and remove tamarisk and other noxious weeds. For more information, contact bdixon@xmission.com, 435-752-6830, and join the Econet by sending an email to that address.

—Bryan Dixon



Teams of Ten Contributors

\$500-\$2,000

Leroy and Debra Beasley, Patricia and Noel Holmgren, Pam Riley and Bryan Spykerman, Robert Atwood, Bryan Dixon and Jean Lown, Gary and Tie Meunier, Multicultural Adventure Outdoors Foundation and Jack Greene, Diane Browning and Bill Oblock

\$250-\$499

Carl Cheney, Ted and Debi Evans, David Lewis and Kim Corbin-Lewis, Richard Mueller and Susan Durham, Ron Ryel and Melanie Spriggs, Charles and Sarah Rule Salzberg, Gene Schupp and Janis Boettinger, Tim and Jeanne Sullivan, Robert Taylor and Helen Taylor, Lynn and Brad Carroll

\$100-\$249

John Ellsworth, Ivan Palmblad, Jim Cane and Linda Kervin, Joseph Andrew Hays, Nathan and Chris Hult, Mimi Recker and Neil Larsen, Craig Reger, Jim Sinclair, Anonymous

Up to \$99

Martha H. Balph, Eddie H. Berry and Stan Laughlin, Swede Dahl, Alvan and Maribeth Evensen Hengge, Patricia M. Lambert, Bruce Pendery and Kim Sullivan, Thomas J. Schroeder and Hsiu-Ming Chiang, Star Coulbrooke, Terry Barnes, Eric and Arla Meyer, Jeff Allan and Jennifer Hoffmann, Fred Baker, David and Patricia Behmer, Jacques De Jonge, Al and Kay Forsyth, Larry Jacobsen, Joyce Kinkead and David Lancy, Terry Peak, Robert and Leslie Perry, Frederic and Marilyn Wagner, Brandon Spencer, Ryan O Donnell, Dan Miller and Diane Bush, Anonymous

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Lila P. Bommer Krista Moe
 Leslie Brown Margaret Procter
 Lula C. Devalve Mike Wolford
 Ilona Jappinen Robert Young

Renewing Members

Dennis D. Austin Barbara Campbell Susan Jelus
 Patricia Bahler Christopher Cokinos Connie McManus
 Mr. David J. Behmer Phyllis Conover Bruce Pendery
 Mark W. Brunson Norbert V. De Byle Janet Wallace

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2008-2011 Jim Cane, 713-4668; William Masslich, 753-1759; Richard Mueller, 752-5637
 2009-2012 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Frank Howe, 787-1859 Robert Schmidt, 755-9262; Bret Selman, 257-5260
 2010-2013 Chris Cokinos, 245-7769; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Reinhard Jockel; Ryan O'Donnell, 232-8146

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

President Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net
 Vice Pres. Open. Nominated: Robert Schmidt
 Secretary Open. Nominated: Ron Hellstern
 Treasurer Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-4935, jennifer.hoffmann@comcast.net
 Asst. Treasurer Susan Drown
 Outings Reinhard Jockel, birderjockel@gmail.com
 Conservation Richard Mueller, 752-5637, rmueller@biology.usu.edu
 Education Jack Greene, 563-6816, jackisgreene@yahoo.com
 Newsletter Chris Cokinos, 245-7769, chris.cokinos@usu.edu
 Circulation Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu
 Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu
 Hotline Nancy Williams, 752-4780, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
 Webmaster Ryan O'Donnell, 232-8146, ryan@biology.usu.edu
 Webhost www.xmission.com

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, due on the 10th of each month. Send to chris.cokinos@usu.edu.

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter, *The Stilt*, and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

_____ **New** member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



Please send all checks payable to National Audubon Society with this card to:
 National Audubon Society
 PO Box 422250
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250
 Membership Source Code: COZW520Z

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8-week delay, contact Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.



The Stilt

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3501

Logan, Utah 84323-3501

Email: birdnerdut@gmail.com

Visit our website: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org>

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Where We Stand

At a meeting of the Bridgerland Audubon Society board this summer, pressing needs and changes were discussed. Mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter is our exciting new approach to public and member education: quarterly events rather than monthly meetings. Part of that change was fueled by sharing programming duties among Val Grant, Ron Goede, Jack Greene and Chris Cokinos, rather than having a single vice-president in charge of programming.

This sharing by committee approach is also reflected in *The Stilt*. Formerly edited with great verve by the recently departed (to Ohio not the sky) Brandon Spencer, *The Stilt* will be produced by a team of designer Leslie Brown, content editor Chris Cokinos and regular contributors Bill Masslich (species profiles), Jack Greene (issues column) and Ryan O'Donnell (outings). You may see "Wild About Utah" pieces republished here as well. We hope to include more local conservation news, too.

A number of wonderful people were discussed as new board members and officers, and as slots are filled, we'll let the chapter know how the posts are taking shape. For example, outings will now be coordinated by Reinhard Jockel, Frank Howe, and Ryan O'Donnell. A hearty thanks to all of them. On the conservation committee, Dick Mueller continues to chair, with help from Bryan Dixon, Frank Howe, and Jim Cane.

Pressing conservation issues include furthering our progress with the Amalga Barrens property and assisting with the efforts of Bryan Dixon and others to create a local land trust and to continue shaping the Bear River Bottoms area toward conservation ends.

We have a lot on our plate. Thanks to all who are helping out—and who want to help out.

—Val Grant, President