

The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in Room 215 of the Business Building on the Utah State University campus.

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Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as to *Audubon* magazine.

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Bridgerland Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 3501  
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BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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THE STILT  
 BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol. 13, No. 8

April 1985

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

LOCAL MEETINGS, PROGRAMS, and FIELD TRIPS

- Tues. April 2: BAS Planning Meeting — 7:00 p.m. Call Chuck Warner for details, 752-7345
- Sat. April 6: Cache Valley Birding — 8:00 a.m. University Radio Tower at 12th East and 7th North; 8:10 a.m. at Logan Library. Return by noon. A trip to Newton Reservoir to see loons, osprey, waterfowl. Return through Benson for cranes, snipe, and many more.
- Mon. April 8: Library Film Series — 7:00 p.m. at the Logan Library. "Attracting Birds to your Garden." This slide show/talk will show the common birds that come to feeding stations in spring and how to attract them.

Thurs. April 11: BAS Monthly Meeting — 7:30 p.m. in Room 202 of the Food and Nutrition Building on the USU Campus. Tim Clark, Wildlife Biologist with Biota Research and Consulting in Jackson, Wyoming, will talk on "Black Footed Ferret Conservation and Recovery."

Fri./Sat. April 12/13: Overnight Camping Trip to Observe Grouse Displays — Camp at historic Twin Springs on the Old California Trail 30 miles north of Snowville. Arise before dawn to see both sharp-tailed and sage grouse do their ceremonial displays. See sage thrasher and pack rat dens as well. Leave as early Friday afternoon as possible and return early Saturday afternoon. **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** Call Al Stokes at 752-2702 for details, travel, coordination, and registration. This will be a great experience, so join us.

Sat. April 13: Spring Utah Audubon Council Meeting — 9:00 a.m. in Ogden. See "Utah Audubon Council Meeting" article in this issue.

Wed. April 17: Education Committee Meeting — 7:30 p.m. Natural Resources building on USU Campus, Room 112B. We will review the newest slide shows that have been developed by volunteers for use in the schools and with other community groups and make spring plans for the Audubon Youth Clubs known as "Audubon Adventures." Call Nancy Warner for more information, 752-7345.

Mon. April 22: Library Film Series — 7:00 p.m. at the Logan Library. Two films will be shown. One, "Animal Parents—The Evolution of Parental Behavior," shows the great diversity

in behavior of animals toward their young and how this affects the survival of the young. The other, "Animal War—Animal Peace," shows that while there is an advantage for animals to be able to fight for both critical resources and potential mates, there is an equally important advantage to be gotten from cooperation.

**Wed. April 24: Star Watch** — Time and place to be announced in posters and radio/newspaper announcements that week. A repeat but different program by Bill Lowry, former director of the Portland, Maine planetarium. He will show how to calculate latitude by the North Star, and how to recognize the planets and major constellations using self-made sky charts. For questions, call Bill Lowry at 750-2606.

### COMING UP IN MAY

**Wed. May 1: BAS Monthly Planning Meeting** — 7:00 p.m. Natural Resources/Biology Building on USU Campus. Room 112B. This promises to be an important meeting because it will probably be the last one before the fall activities begin. If you have an interest in the BAS inner workings, please plan to attend.

**Sat. May 4: Song Birds Field Trip** — Leave 8:00 a.m. at University Radio Tower and 8:10 a.m. at Logan Library. Return by noon. Excellent birding along the canal below First Dam and/or Edgewood Hall in Providence.

**Sat./Sun. May 11/12: Bear River Canoe Trip** — Details in the May *Silt*.

**Mon. May 13: Library Film Series** — "The Bald Eagle" will be shown. This movie takes an interesting look at Bald Eagles on their last two major nesting grounds in Alaska and Florida. Emphasis on research into their preservation.

**Mon. May 27: Library Film Series** — "A Second Chance" will be shown. This film documents some of the ways that utilities can actually create habitat favorable to wildlife. Examples shown include the Florida Manatee, Giant Canada Goose, and Prairie Chicken.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

This is a frantic week for me to be trying to put together a newsletter, so if you find more than the usual number of errors in this issue, please chalk it up to the burn-out of a teacher/mother/student, and forgive me. I promise to be better next month.

I hope you enjoy our new column by Alice Stewart. Please give her a call and contribute your sightings to help her expand her column.

I appreciated my friend John Carlisle calling and sharing his bird-feeder experience. His tale was so full of chuckles that I forgot to take notes while he was talking, so you're getting just the briefest summary of his story.

Nancy Warner gave me a wonderful quotation over the phone. Unfortunately, my shorthand is so lacking that I have only a vague notion of what she actually said. So I'll have to

find my own quote again this month—the moral of that story for me, is to keep a tape recorder by the phone. For you, it's write things down and send them to me, rather than relying on my frazzled brain to remember what you've said! My apologies. And that leads me to my quotation, from Jean Guittou's *A Student's Guide to Intellectual Work*, which I've chosen more for myself than for you: "The value of your job . . . is determined by the spirit and the inner order that you invest in them and in yourselves as you carry them out."

— Charlotte Wright

### UTAH AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING

Saturday, April 13 promises to be a fun and enlightening day as folks from Audubon chapters in Utah get together for the spring Utah Audubon Council Meeting in Ogden. According to Lucy Parkinson, President of the Ogden Chapter and coordinator of this event, we will have a field trip in the morning followed by a business meeting and discussion in the afternoon.

We will meet at the Ogden Nature Center at 966 W. 12th at 9:00 a.m. for the field trip to Fort Buena Ventura State Park where we will bird the area near the confluence of the Ogden and Weber rivers. Participants should bring a lunch for the fieldtrip. This should be a good chance to see some early spring migrants and perhaps even some spring flowers!

The afternoon's activities will begin at 1:00 at the Utah Gardens Complex at 468 3rd South. Paul Sturn, a geologist with the Utah Division of Natural Resources, will speak about the impacts of the rising Great Salt Lake on the surrounding marshlands and habitats. A business meeting and discussion will follow.

After the meeting, a 'no-host' dinner will be held at the Dragon Restaurant on 3rd and Washington, where both Chinese and American food is available starting at \$3.00.

If you're interested in attending any or all of the day's events, please call Chuck Warner for more information and carpooling. This is a great opportunity to meet some of the other Audubon supporters in Utah with whom we share so many interests.

### CANYONLANDS ED VENTURES FIELD SEMINARS IN UTAH NATIONAL PARKS

Canyonlands Field Institute of Moab, Utah is offering a series of "ED Ventures" that explore the natural and cultural history of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, near 13,000 foot mountains and the canyons of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Canyonlands ED Ventures are for adults and families who desire a personal and meaningful introduction to the geology, ecology, history and archeology of Southeastern Utah and Western Colorado.

CFI is a non-profit organization associated with the Professor Valley Ranch, home of the Wilson family. The late Bates Wilson is considered to be the "father" of Canyonlands National Park, and is remembered for his special way of connecting people and the land. Canyonlands Field Institute

continues this legacy, creating opportunities to share the insider's perspectives and pleasures in the canyon country.

There are three types of ED Ventures, all of which offer congenial guest instructors. Day Field Trips from the Moab area leave overnight accommodations up to the individual. ED Venture Vacations get you into the heart of the country by raft, horseback, jeep or leisurely hiking, and include all costs during the program (motel/camping combinations). ED Venture Workshops use the outdoors as classroom for a variety of courses and may base in town or at a base camp.

Group size is limited in order to aid personal interaction and learning. Credit is available for many ED Ventures. Following is a schedule of 1985 Ed Ventures.

#### APRIL

12-14 — Canyon Country Photography

#### MAY

10-12 — Warblers to Wildflowers

20-24 — Desert Ecology

25-27 — Natural History of the Dolores Triangle

#### JUNE

2-10 — Prehistoric Indian Cultures Raft and Hiking Trip

13-15 — Teacher Workshop in Natural Resource Education

16-21 — The Whole Healthy Woman

24-29 — Women Professionals Afloat—Management Raft Trip

#### JULY

4-8 — Slickrock to Timberline I

14-20 — Slickrock to Timberline II

25-27 — Geology of the Standing Up Country

#### AUGUST

9-11 — The Wilderness Idea and the Colorado Plateau

22-24 — Riparian Ecosystems

#### SEPTEMBER

6-8 — Nature Watercolor Workshop

13-15 — Canyon Country Photography Workshop

17-21 — Green River Canoe Trip

#### OCTOBER

11-13 — Rock Art of Fremont Indians

For further information contact Canyonlands Field Institute, Box 68, Moab, UT 84532; 801-259-7750.

### UTAH BASIN AND RANGE SEMINAR 1985

The third Utah Audubon Society Basin and Range Seminar will take place on June 8-9. The seminar will provide participants with an opportunity to understand and appreciate the unique basin and range ecology which comprises much of Western Utah. The relationships between plants, animals, and human communities and the physical characteristics of mountains, deserts and ancient seas will be emphasized.

Small groups of 10-12 participants will accompany instructors for three hour sessions in the morning and afternoon of June 8. Classes will be held in close proximity to Simpson Springs Campground in the Simpson Mountains. There will be a potluck cookout dinner on Saturday followed by an evening

camp fire and story telling program. There will also be Sunday morning classes from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Classes offered are: Mammal Ecology of the Great Basin, Ice Age Lakes and Glaciers in Utah, Plants and Ecology of the Great Basin, Basin and Range Birds, Nature Photography, Environment Ethics, Great Basin Fishes and Archeological and Historical Aspects of the Great Basin. The registration fee of \$20 covers both days and is due as soon as possible since space is limited. The registration fee is \$10 for senior citizens. For more information and a brochure contact Rick Van Wagenen, 467-5758, 2173 Preston St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84106. All Audubon members will receive a brochure in the mail. If you would like to help with any aspect of the planning and coordination please contact Rick.

### MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The State Arboretum of Utah is featuring a tour/seminar to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge May 23-27, 1985. The cost is \$330. Dr. Chuck Wullstein will conduct the trip. For further information call Dr. Betty Wullstein at the State Arboretum, 581-4938 or 581-5322.

### BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIPS

The Bridgerland Audubon Society is offering a \$500 scholarship to the Audubon Camp in the West this summer. Teachers, educators and others involved in community service are encouraged to apply.

The Camp in the West is located in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains adjacent to the Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area. Ecology short courses, along with recreational and social activities, contribute to the experience that past attendants claim is "unforgettable." College credit is also offered through the University of Wyoming. Three two-week sessions at the camp run June 23-August 2.

Applications are due on April 26, John James Audubon's birthday! For applications or more information about the camp, contact Allen Stokes, 752-2702, or Nancy Warner, 752-7345, or mail a request to Scholarship Committee, P. O. Box 3501, Logan, Utah.

### BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS

A Fish and Wildlife Service statistician was traveling in northwest Colorado when he saw a long buff-colored creature with a black mask whose eyes shown green in the headlights. He immediately broke into a sweat, because having been through a black-footed ferret identification course, he was sure he had spotted one of these elusive creatures. Later, he contacted Bureau of Land Management biologists, who went out to the area and found a prairie dog town—critical ferret habitat. Now things began to get exciting, and after several phone calls, the Fish and Wildlife Service brought to the area specially-trained dogs to sniff out ferrets. By this time, everyone was excited to think ferrets might actually be found in the area, so all involved were poised for a Great Discovery.

Why all the excitement? The black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), a close relative of the weasel, is probably the rarest mammal in North America, if not the world. It was formerly distributed throughout the Great Plains, being closely associated with prairie dogs, its chief prey. It was never common, but eradication of prairie dog towns and secondary poisoning by compound 1080 have drastically reduced ferret numbers, leading to their classification as an Endangered Species. Ferrets are approximately 2 feet long, weigh 2-3 pounds, and are buff-colored with a black mask and black-tipped feet and tail. They breed in spring and give birth to 4-5 young 40 days later; the young reach adult size in 4 months and are sexually mature in one year. Black-footed ferrets are solitary and mostly nocturnal, spending much of their time below-ground in prairie dog tunnels.

In spite of all the excitement, no black-footed ferrets were found in the area. The dogs did not share in our excitement, having found no ferret scent. Just as the BLM and Fish and Wildlife people were leaving the area, a Siamese cat was seen prowling around. Such are the pitfalls of looking for "mystery mammals."

A population of black-footed ferrets has been found near Meeteetse, Wyoming, however. This group is being studied in hopes of learning how to bring this species back from the brink of extinction. Come to the BAS monthly meeting and hear Tim Clark of Biota Research and Consulting in Jackson, Wyoming, tell us more about the ferrets near Meeteetse.

## THE "200 CLUB" AND BIRD HOTLINE

A reminder that the "200 Club" will give an Audubon patch to anyone reaching 150 species, and a Bridgerland Audubon "200 Club" cap to anyone reaching 200 species sighted within Cache County. Also, remember to call the bird hotline when you sight a rare bird within the county. John Barnes is in charge of both the hotline and the "200 Club." Keep him busy by calling 563-3910 with your information.

## "EARLY BIRD" NOTES

The spring migration is on. The American robins are back en masse. Every juniper or stand of sumac seems to be filled with hungry robins. Betty Boeker has had an invasion of RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS since mid-February. When I stopped to see Betty's feeders at her home north of Hyrum, there was a large flock of red-wings that had taken over. The only other species still braving the influx of blackbirds were WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS and SONG SPARROWS.

By March 13, I counted 80 red-wings at my feeder. They are such an aggressive bird that many of the other 16 regular species which come to my feeders had left. I have had an immature HARRIS SPARROW coming to a ground feeding station since November 23. However, I have not seen it the past few days since the red-wings became so numerous.

Another person reporting red-wing invasions is Ron Lanner, who also has a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD feeding.

John and Terry Barnes have been enjoying a flock of ROSEY FINCHES at their feeders in Smithfield since February 1. They said they peaked at about 500 finches the first week in March. When I talked to John at the March 14 Audubon meeting, he said they only had about 30 finches left, and a lot of red-wings.

During the Christmas count on December 17, and also on the mid-winter count on February 2, there were PINE GROSBEAK, RED CROSSBILL, WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL and three COMMON REDPOLL. The Smithfield cemetery has been a hot spot for the first three species, while the redpoll were seen at Edgewood Hall. I had two sightings of redpoll at my feeder, the last one on February 13.

On March 5, Keith Archibald sighted a SAYS PHEBEE that he said looked like a fly-catching robin. He saw the phebe two miles west of Logan on the Valley View Highway. Also on March 5, Mae Coover reported seeing a LAZULI BUNTING in her back yard. This is about six weeks earlier than the usual earliest spring sighting.

On March 12, Steve Vander Wall saw a flight of five SNOW GEESE. Three of them were blue phase.

"Early Bird" Notes is to be a monthly column for you to see what unusual or early birds have been sighted. Give me a call so others can learn of your birding successes. 752-2133.

— Alice Stewart

## BALD EAGLE FIELD TRIP REPORT

Fourteen frozen Cache Valley residents descended to warmer climes on March 16 to see a community of bald eagles and the first, tiny flowers of spring at the mouth of Willard Canyon near Brigham City. Balmy temperatures allowed us to leave our parkas in the cars before climbing up for a closer look at the bald eagles. On our way, we saw mule deer, rock squirrels, bluebirds, ravens, a rough-legged hawk, several golden eagles and more than 20 red-tailed hawks. All seemed to be out enjoying the warmth, despite frozen Willard Bay's grim reminder that winter may not be done with us, yet.

On the trip were Scott Tento, Carol Greely, Ruthe Poethmann, Reinhard Jockel, Larry and Mary Piette, Barry and Doug Gilbert, Bryan and Carolyn Welch, Damian, Brooke and Peter McShane, and leader Allen Stokes. Allen theorized that the red-tailed hawks were using warm updrafts at the canyon's mouth as "booster rockets" to gain altitude before continuing their migration north. He said the routine of local golden and bald eagles is to hunt in the marshes along the edges of the nearby Salt Lake in the morning hours, and then to return to the canyon around noon, when the powerful "thermal" updrafts allow them to cruise more or less effortlessly around the foothills, looking for an afternoon meal.

The Rocky Mountain bluebirds perched in the tops of low bushes watched for insects venturing outside of the sparse ground cover. Groups as large as 20 or 30 birds seemed to be hunting together. They made a colorful garnish to the drab spring landscape and gave some members of our group a new standard by which to judge the color blue.

When we first arrived, there was some discussion of whether we were seeing golden eagles or immature bald eagles through our binoculars, because to the untrained eye the immature golden eagle looks very much like the bald eagle, while the immature bald eagles look more like mature goldens. In addition, some of the immature eagles were spectacularly mottled. However, when the first mature bald eagle was spotted, with his brilliant white tail and head, there was no doubt what we were seeing, and no one questioned the bird's worthiness to appear on the dollar bill.

— Bryan Welch

## AN UNUSUAL SIGHT

John Carlisle called in March to report a rather unusual sighting. It seems the most frequent visitor to his bird feeder is a large doe, who very carefully nuzzles the feeder, knocks the sunflower seeds to the ground, and proceeds to eat the tasty morsels. He'd like to know if anyone else has noticed a similar event.

## JOB OPENING

JOB: Executive Coordinator of Denver Audubon Society. Responsibilities: Coordinates all functions of the organization; provides guidance and administrative support for Board and volunteer committees; supervises two staff members; oversees daily administrative and financial operations; oversees Urban Education Program; fundraises; acts as public spokesperson for organization.

Qualifications: B.A. degree; minimum 4 years practical experience preferably in volunteer coordination, office and financial administration, fundraising, and interacting with public; proven organizational and communication skills.

Familiarity with environmental issues and interest in education. Salary range: \$23,000 - \$25,000 plus health benefits. Send resumes to: Denver Audubon Society, 1720 Race Street, Denver, CO 80206 - closing date, April 15. Call 303-399-3219 for further information.

## THE SEARCH CONTINUES . . .

Allen Stokes has met four times with the Search Committee to select a successor to Audubon President Russ Peterson. The field has been reduced to a few finalists, all with excellent qualifications. Look for an announcement following the Audubon Board meeting the end of April.

## EXOTIC PLANTS A SERIOUS THREAT TO NATIVE PLANTS

While at the meetings of the National Audubon Society's board in Naples, Florida I became keenly aware of how serious inroads two exotics have made there. The Australian Pine (*Casuarina* sp. and not a true pine) was first planted as landscape tree. It now outcompetes the red mangrove along the

coast but does not have the strong root system to serve as control of erosion from hurricanes and other ocean storms. The Brazilian pepper-tree is equally aggressive in upland habitats. Because it is difficult to control it threatens to replace much of the native vegetation in Everglades National Park and in Audubon's famous Corkscrew Sanctuary.

Here in Utah we see the inroads of Dyer's Wold, the sturdy plant with bright yellow flowers, into Cache Valley the last few years. It is now on top of Mount Logan. Efforts to control it by pulling the plant out seem futile.

— Al Stokes

## AUDUBON'S BIRTHDAY

This April 26 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of John James Audubon. The date will not go by unnoticed, as the National Audubon Society has a number of activities and publications planned to commemorate the occasion.

Although the name "Audubon" is now synonymous with the protection and preservation of the natural world, Audubon himself was not what we would call a conservationist. He harvested hundreds of birds in his travels from New England to Mississippi and beyond, to use as models for his life-sized paintings. Many biographers have dealt with the man John James Audubon, seeking to reconcile the seemingly paradoxical character of a man who loved birds and yet slaughtered so many to meet his artistic needs. He was regarded as a sportsman in a day when most people were not aware of the diversity and beauty of the birdlife around them.

Audubon brought the birds down out of the trees where people could see them through his various drawings, paintings and publications, such as *The Birds of America*. His artistry pleased and excited people in both Europe and America. One of his fans was the nature writer John Burroughs, who was so excited upon viewing Audubon's work that he took up birding on his New England farm. Audubon helped him get started by providing study skins and giving Burroughs tips on field identification. A birder was born in John Burroughs and was later reflected in his first book, *Wake-Robin* (1871) which opened with a chapter devoted to birds.

Audubon's paintings opened up a whole new world to many people during his day and influenced the development of a conservation movement in this country by calling attention to our birdlife. Celebrate the birthday of this birdlover, from whom our society takes its name, by doing something he probably would have done on an April day—take somebody birding—and by doing something he probably wouldn't have done—leave your shotgun at home!

— Nancy Warner

## STILL LOOKING

We're still looking for people interested in working on publicity, membership, and conservation issues. If you have an inclination toward any of these, or any of our other committees, contact Chuck Warner (752-7345). We think you will be surprised how much more a committee can get done than individuals can.