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.

President – Chuck Warner, 762-7345
Vice-President – Nancy Warner, 762-7345
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Field Trips – Allen Stokes, 762-2702
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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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THE STILT
BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol. 15, No. 6
February 1985

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
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△ 4  △ 6  △ 13  △ 14  △ 16  △ 16
10  11  12  13  △ 14  16  16
17  18  19  △ 20  △ 21  22  △
1  2

△ BAS event
△ Sierra Club event

LOCAL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

Tue., Feb. 5: Annual Planning Meeting – 6:30 p.m. at the home of Chuck and Nancy Warner, 2046 North 800 East in North Logan. Evening will begin with a potluck dinner at 6:30, with the actual meeting starting at 7:30. Please feel free to join us for either or both of these events.

Thurs., Feb. 7: Cache Group Sierra Club Meeting – 7:00 p.m. on third floor of Taggart Student Center on USU Campus.

Fri., Feb. 8: Canyonlands Nuclear Repository Workshop – 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Eccles Conference Center on the USU Campus. Please plan to attend this free workshop. Reservations are not necessary. For agenda, see “Canyonlands: National Park or Nuclear Dump?” article in newsletter.

Thurs., Feb. 14: BAS Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. in NEW LOCATION, Room 202 of the Food and Nutrition Building on the USU Campus. The speaker will be Jim Gessaman, who will present information on the Goshute Mountains Hawk Migration Study. Everyone is welcome.

Wed., Feb. 20: Education Meeting – 7:30 p.m. in 112B in the Natural Resources Building on the USU Campus. Tom Cronkite, an Instructional developer in the USU Agricultural Engineering Department, will lead a mini-workshop on the preparation of slides, tape programs and specialty slides. If you’ve got an idea and/or some slides for a program to add to the BAS Natural History Slide Show Series (see article in this issue), come and get some tips on how to put it together. Call Nancy Warner (762-7345) for more information.

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Sat., Feb. 2: Animal Tracks and Tracking – 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Meet at Logan Library. Carpooling available. Allen Stokes will lead this field trip along the sloughs of the Bear River and wooded areas to look for tracks of our common mammals: meadow and deer mice, weasel, skunk, muskrat, raccoon, cat and dog, as well as a variety of birds. In addition to identifying the animals making the tracks, the group will attempt to determine
what the animal was doing at the time by tracking it for a
distance. WEAR WARM CLOTHING AND BOOTS SUITABLE
FOR WALKING THROUGH SNOW. A good family outing.

Sun, Feb. 3: Ski Tour in Logan Canyon — 9 a.m. meet at USU
Student Center Parking lot. A chance to explore some snow
shelters. For more details contact Vance Stuck, 752-2646.

Tues, Feb. 5: Full Moon Evening Ski Tour — 7:00 p.m. meet
at the Smithfield Golf Course tracks. Or, call Jean Lown
(752-6380) to arrange a ride to Smithfield. Hot chocolate after
skiing, at Jean’s house.

Sat, Feb. 9: Sherwood Hills Ski Tour — 9:00 a.m. meet at
USU Student Center Parking Lot. Beginner and intermediate
skiing. For details contact Rosemary White, 752-7383.

Sat, Feb. 23: Waterfowl Trip — 1:00 p.m. meet at Logan
Library. Short slide show at library to let you know what
different species of waterfowl are often seen in Cache Valley
and tips on what characteristics of the ducks you can use to
identify them. Next, a visit to Willow Park Zoo to actually
see the ducks, followed by a tour of the Sewage Lagoons to
see the same waterfowl on the water and in flight. Bring bin-
oculars, a field guide to birds, and wear warm clothing. Return
by 4:30 p.m.

Sat, Feb. 23: Ski and Photography Tour — 9:00 a.m. meet
at the Student Center Parking Lot. Ever been disappointed
by washed-out ski pictures? Come learn how to take good
pictures in the snow. Bring your camera along on this ski and
photography tour. For details contact Scott Smith, 753-3446.

Sat, Mar. 2: Bald Eagles at Willard Canyon (Field Trip) —
This is a strenuous 2-hour climb by skis or snowshoes to
a lookout above Willard Canyon 10 miles south of Brigham City.
See more bald eagles as they fly in to roost in the canyon
and go through their spectacular aerial courtship displays.
Leave at 10 a.m. from the University Radio Tower at 12th
East and 7th North, and at 10:10 from Logan Library. Car-
pooling available. Share gas. Bring warm clothing, lunch,
and binoculars. A trip full of adventure and surprises. Shirley
Badame, who has studied these eagles for several years, will
be trip leader. Return by supper.

Sun, Mar. 3: Strawberry Canyon Ski Tour — 8:00 a.m. meet
at Smith’s parking lot on 4th North. All day intermediate ski
tour in Idaho. Bring lunch and day tour gear. For details,
contact Mari Snow (752-2654).

Sat, Mar. 9: Slide Show and Potluck — 6:00 p.m. at Chuck
and Nancy Warren’s, 2045 N, 800 E. Bring 10-12 slides from
a summer trip, plus your favorite backpacking dinner or des-
cert to share. Some sort of punch will be available. Call
Chuck or Nancy (752-7345) for more information.

Following is the workshop agenda.

8 Feb. 1985 — Ecolos Conference Center Auditorium, USU
Campus
11:00 a.m. Welcome and introduction to the workshop
1:15 "This Unspoiled Land"—a slide presentation
1:35 Keynote speaker—former Congressman Wayne
Owens
1:50 Slide talk on DOE activities and plans — Terri
Martin
2:15 Questions from the audience
2:35 Break
2:55 Panel — Repository Safety Issues [20 minutes each]
1. Nuclear waste radiological hazards
2. Transportation safety
3. Salt as a geologic medium
4. Military nuclear waste
Film — "The Sculptured Earth"
Workshop ends
6:30 This portion of the program is not yet wholly confirmed.
A last minute substitution might have to be made.

REPORT FROM ADOPT-A-REFUGE COMMITTEE

At the previous meeting on February 21, 1984, the com-
mittee was advised by Ronald Perry about the proposed actions
to be taken upon the adoption of the refuge because of
rapidly rising water in the Great Salt Lake. By the next meet-
ning on September 8, 1984, the refuge had been officially
closed because of flooding. Peter Smith, Acting Manager of
the refuge, reviewed the current situation at the refuge, including
what actions have been taken and what decisions must be made in
the future.

The current situation at the refuge is a dramatic change
from previous years. Vegetation is almost gone, although some
total came up in 70 inches of water. More burr thans cat-
tail remains, as it will stand greater densities of salinity than
cattail. Duck nesting in 1984 was nil. Duck counts are greatly
reduced—25,000 in 1984 compared to normal levels of 200,
000-300,000. Counts of geese numbered 125, with a normal
average of about 3,500. About 50% of the duck population
on the refuge is now redheaded ducks, and the numbers of coots
have greatly reduced.

Actions already taken to keep the damage minimal in-
clude the removal of the refuge headquarters to the Bell Tele-
phone building in Brigham City, the storage of display mate-
rials from the refuge, and the reduction of refuge personnel.
The water system at the refuge is currently non-functional,
as is the culinary water system. Although buildings have been
diked and pumping is done once a week, two of the buildings
are standing in water and the roads are mostly covered. The
Bear River Club Company has spent $100,000 for the dikes
and other protective measures. The breaching of the Southern
Pacific Railroad, accomplished in July, aided the refuge by
lowering the water level of the lake. This is probably only
temporary, however, as winter and spring runoff of 1985 will
undoubtedly increase the current water level, which was at
4208.13 feet above sea level in September. Also, this is only
the third year in a wet cycle which might continue for several
more years.

The decisions to be made include whether or not to
further dig and pump the headquarters area, where to come
up with money for repairing the refuge, and how to recon-
struct the refuge when the lake recedes. Until now, the refuge
has been considered a primary nesting and production area, but
with the large numbers of botulism-killed ducks, management
might now profitably be turned to preventing botulism losses.
Production is known to be considerably lower than botulism.
Additional management opportunities now present
themselves upon reconstruction of the refuge when the lake
recedes. These will be given in special recommendations of
the committee to the local refuge and regional refuge personnel.

J. B. Lewis, Chairman
ADOPT-A-REFUGE COMMITTEE

Bald Eagle Float Trip

A full day float trip on a calm stretch of the Colorado
River is being offered by the Canyonlands Field Institute on
March 2, 1985. The trip, beginning that Saturday at 8:30 a.m.
near Grand Junction, Colorado, will provide opportunities to
view wintering Bald Eagles, Lake Fish Hawk, and other birds
in Hot Springs and Ruby Canyons. This early season
trip will allow a special view of the red walled canyons
as they awaken to spring. The air may be chilly, but there’s
also a good chance for bright sunshine. Participants should
dress warmly and plan to stay dry in the boots, as the trip is
on flat water. Hot drinks, lunch, and snacks will be provided,
along with words of wisdom from the guest naturalist, Dr.
Mike Perry of the Museum of Western Colorado. Group size
is limited. The cost of $28 per person includes river transport,
lunch, and refreshments. For information and registration,
please contact Canyonlands Field Institute, Professor
Ranch, P.O. Box 68, Moab, UT 84532, or phone 801-259-5750
or 259-6503.

Good and bad news for the Whoopers in 1984

The first whooping cranes to reach the Arizona
National Wildlife Refuge in Texas to spend the 1984-85 winter
was a pair believed to have arrived on October 31. Others contin-
ued to arrive in small groups, and by January there were 83 birds
on the refuge and nearby islands. Fourteen are young of the
year, which is a new record for total number of young. A
1982 hatched female was found dead on the refuge prior to
this high count. There was no sign of disease, and the cause of
death was attributed to a neck wound inflicted by a predator.
Another whooper on its way from Canada to Texas did not
make it on its own. It was found injured near Linton, North
BAN ON LEAD SHOT MAKING SLOW GAIN

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission made conservation history last year by unanimously voting to require non-lead steel shot statewide for waterfowl hunting. This ban, using steel instead of lead shot will begin next fall, according to a 1982 commission resolution supporting the change. Curtailing the use of lead shot will help cure the threat of poisoning for the thousands of cranes stopping in Nebraska on its way during migration, as well as reduce losses to waterfowl.

Nebraska may have become the first state to pass a lead-shot ban by a wide margin. Iowa is now considering a similar steel shot ban in 1985. Wyoming, Florida and New York are expected to implement similar regulations banning lead shot in the near future. Pressure for banning lead shot has grown, as it has become known that eagles and other birds of prey that die from consuming steel shot may be caught and killed. National Audubon Society is exerting influence on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to require use of steel shot on its refuges when hunting occurs. Resistance to this change has come from waterfowl hunters who believe steel shot damages the banks of their hunting guns, has less killing power, and costs more than lead, but it is time for Bridgeport Audubon to get involved in this issue.

ENIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS AVAILABLE

If you wish to order a copy of the environmental assessments on Davis and Lavendar Canyon sites, call toll free (800)-BIRD-1980. The Department of Energy will ship you a copy.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT POLICY REVIEW

Two years ago the BAS planning board decided to hold the Christmas Bird Count on Mondays instead of its usual Saturdays. Because of recent complaints about this decision, the officers have decided to hold a special first meeting immediately after the regular monthly meeting on Fred. Beginning at 8:35, BAS members will be asked to give their opinion on the date of the Christmas Bird Count. At this meeting, everyone in attendance will have the right to speak on the issue. Those who feel strongly about the day of Christmas Bird Count, please come and cast your vote. A simple majority vote will rule.

A DISTANCE REMINDER

Please remember that the Bridgerdale Audubon Society ALWAYS needs your help. Positions are available for all of every shape and size, every age and skill. Please help keep the BAS an active, vital organization. Call the Audubon volunteer today, ask him, "How can I help?" and then listen to the praises to your name while we answer you!

1984 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 14th annual Christmas Bird Count for the Bridgerdale Audubon Society was held on Monday, December 17. There was no snow this year than last year, it was much colder than 1983's outing. The day started with a temperature of 0\(^\circ\)F, but fortunately there was little wind, and ground fog was a problem only to the hardy souls who paddled down the Laramie River. The 27 participants, divided into four groups, started as early as 4:00 a.m. to observe screech and saw-whet owls, with the help of playback of their calls. As always with the Christmas Bird Count, there were beautiful views and spectacular wildlife and birdlife. A hermit thrush in Smithfield was a first for our Christmas counts. Other rarities were pine grosbeaks (seem to be the most popular), white-eared, white-throated and red crossbills, and common redpoll. Missing entirely were gulls and Cooper's hawks, as well as last year's very rare white pelican, white-faced ibis, blue, and white-fronted geese. The group as a whole saw 89 species and 13,500 individuals—down from the record-breaking 99 species and 20,500 individuals of last year. Participants were: Doug Allington, John, Terry and 1-month-old Jessie Barnes, Leroy Beasley, Keith Dixon, Dave Fisher, Kit Farny, Karen Gonzalez, Reinhart Jockel, Dave and Kurt Kort- er, Tom Lyon, Linda Lindahl, Jim Mindays, Ron Ryel, Alice Stewart, Al and Alice Stokes, Rich Valdez, Rick Vetter, Kent Webb, Kirk Williams, Rod Wilhelm, Eric Zurich, and Keith Ashfield and Mike Tove co-organizers. Thanks to the last two for their work in organizing both the bird count and the fine dinner at the Chinese House which was held afterwards.

ANOUNCEMENTS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Audubon Education Committee met on January 16 to review the educational materials that have been developed by the group and to discuss how these materials and programs might be distributed through the Cache Valley School systems. The meeting was attended by representatives from Audubon volunteers and teachers from some local elementary schools, providing a forum for a welcome interchange of ideas.

Currently, there are seven slide programs available. Four programs deal with animals: Monarch Butterflies, Red-tailed Hawks, Mule Deer, and Glia Monsters. The other three programs are: Pollination Ecology, Local Wildflowers, and Plant Life by Early Inhabitants of Cache Valley. The programs, each consisting of 22 slides, a glossary and references, are being rented out by BAS for $5 per slide. PLEASE PASS THE WORD ON TO ANY TEACHERS YOU KNOW WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THESE SHOWS.

We hope to expand our list of topics by recruiting more volunteers to develop slide shows on any of the unlimited number of topics related to nature in Cache Valley. If you would be interested in the form of a slide show, please contact the Audubon Education Committee at (801) 795-1128, Tom Cronkrite, an instructional designer at USU.

will show some techniques that can be used to produce specialty slides such as split scenes and title slides. Following this pre- sentation, Tom will be available to work with individuals who are currently developing slide shows. If you've got an idea for a program and/or some slides, come and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

We also have now a video available on Winter Bird Feeding. This 9-minute video, featuring Audubon's own Allen Stokes, was produced by a group of USU students, including Clay Eakle, Linda Chappell, John Miller and Nancy Warner. We are hoping to distribute copies of this video to interested schools or groups at cost. For more information on this or other education committee activities, please call Nancy Warner (762-7345) or attend the next Education Committee meeting on Feb. 20.

LAST CHANGE

Comments on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan are due February 8! Contact Steve Flint or Chuck Warner.

BUILD A BIRD FEEDER FOR A BUCK—Continued

Last month's newsletter contained plans for a sunflower seed feeder which you could make for about a dollar. This month, plans for a $1 thistle seed feeder are included. This feeder, designed by Fish and Wildlife biologist Alex Knight and Willard M. Spaulding Jr., can be built in about an hour. Once you've built the feeder, don't fill it with bird seed from the grocery store. Send $2.75 to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for a copy of the report, "Relative Attractiveness of Different Foods at Wild Bird Feeders" (Stock Number 024-010-00697-4).

Thistle Seed Feeder

Materials needed: 1-liter plastic soft-drink bottle; three or four 3/16-inch wide, 5-inch long wooden dowels (straight, hardwood sticks will do); a single-edged razor blade or "X-acto" knife; 8 inches of wire or monofilament fishing line, a metal eye screw, a hand drill and small bit.

Soak the seeds in warm, soapy water to clean inside and remove label. Pull off the colored plastic base and discard.

Step 1: Make small parallel cuts in each side of the bottle with the razor blade, "X-acto" knife or hand drill. Insert the dowels as perches. Alternate the radial alignment of each perch so that all sides of the bottle can be used.

Step 2: At points about 1-inch below each dowel, make small 1/4-inch long, 1/8-inch diameter holes through the bottle for feeding holes. Don't make the cuts too large—the correct size will allow birds to pick out individual seeds.
SURVEY RESULTS

Nearly one-third (76%) of the members of the Audubon Society in this area attended survey were conducted by phone for their responses to the questionnaires that appeared in the December issue of The Stilt. Thanks to all of those who took the time to answer questions for Audubon Wyoming, Dr. Peter Landres, Jack Kirkley, Betsy Newly, Chuck Nunn, Nancy Warner, Steve Zurcher and Nancy Warner.

Since many of the members said they joined the Audubon Society to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the natural world (20%), to receive Audubon magazine (28%) or for other reasons (13%), most people (41%) said they joined to support and be a member of a group active in protecting the environment. Nearly all of the members contacted (90%) that they receive and read (96%) The Stilt.

About 40% of the respondents have participated in field trips in the past 12 months. Virtually everyone who has been on a field trip enjoyed the experience and learned much about our local environment, from plants in Logan Canyon to birds on the marsh. A number of people would like to see more physically active or "aerobic" field trips, such as canoeing or skiing or hiking. Some people would like more emphasis on topics such as the Teton trip.

Thirty-six percent of the respondents have been on at least one monthly meeting in the last 12 months. The people who attended these meetings generally thought the time and location were convenient. Many people, however, expressed concern that the quality of the meetings was "low," running from good to poor.

Only 23% of the respondents have attended the Logan Library Film Series in the last 12 months. Virtually everyone agreed that the films were excellent. However, many of the films were over what is available on television.

A large majority (71%) of the respondents indicated that they would like to see BAS become more involved in political and environmental issues. However, some members would like to see our organization maintain a moderate position on environmental issues in order to avoid alienating local citizens. Concern for wilderness designation and preservation and wildlife habitat were the issues most frequently mentioned by people especially interested in members. Other issues that very few, with the exception of decreasing interest, in order of decreasing importance, were the ship's dumping, the nuclear waste dump, Logan Canyon development, land planning and zoning in Cache County, Forest Service management plan, and other problems including pollution in the Red River and the Central Utah Project.

When the respondents were asked if they would be willing to increase their participation by attending monthly meetings, only 46% said yes while 46% said they would like to attend more trips. Many people (22%) said they would like to increase participation by attending the BAS Logan Library Film Series and a smaller number (25%) were interested in becoming volunteers.

Responses to our request for comments or suggestions included:
* Increase our coordination with other environmental groups such as the Sierra Club.

AUDUBON WILDERNESS RESEARCH BICKFORD PROGRAM

"Wilding it," as Governor Ed Herschler says, "what a lot of work we." It's a land of wide open spaces, magnificent country, abundant wildlife, blue skies, and clean air. Part of this city, Wyoming is one of the last frontiers with few people and over 3.05 million acres of designated wilderness. More acres in beautiful multiple use areas. The Anaconda in Wyoming is relaxed, friendly, open, and where people love the land.

If we are to continue to protect this wonderful natural heritage, we must strive to better understand it. However, ecological data are not available for many areas of Wyoming, particularly in the northwestern quarter of the state. Now, we face the problem of new problems for Wyoming's environment mining of coal, oil, gas, and even thermal energy potentially threaten even the remotest areas with acid rain, and the tailings of natural gypsum mining. In order to document the ecological makeup of these wilderness ecosystems, Audubon will be conducting a new Wilderness Research Backpack Program.

Beginning in summer 1985, Audubon will sponsor a series of 4-day backpack trips designed primarily for basic ecological data collection in the Bridger-Fitzpatrick Wilderness in the Red River Mountains and in other wilderness areas in surrounding mountain ranges which make up the immense Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. It will take years for the proper collection of data in all areas, so we must start started in 1985.

Each research trip will be based out of Trail Lake or the base camps nearby, meaning two days of orientation and two days of backpacking and data collection. Each trip will take place. The next 10 days of wilderness research backpacking. The trip will be coordinated with the regular Audubon Camp 30 program so that the students will be given a chance to participate in this Audubon program since total ecosystem studies will be stressed. That means we'll look at and compile data from vegetation in the field and from data collection. Both aquatic and terrestrial environments will be studied.

Here's your chance to help with original research and thus have a say in the protection and management of our natural heritage. Trips will be moderate in difficulty, so even conditioned beginners can participate. Five to seven miles will be covered each day with some excursions out of remote base camps. Over the two week period, you may see rises in elevation from about 7,500 to over 12,000 feet (it won't be all on one). You'll have to carry your own pack with personal equipment and some group equipment: packs will average 30-40 pounds.

Staff will be members of the internationally known Bagdon's Flying Circus, a University of Wyoming research group, noted for long term ecological studies. All will be trained in first aid, wilderness survival, and ecological baseline research. Plus all have wonderful personalities.

Help us protect our magnificent natural heritage by helping us define our wilderness ecosystems. Have a say in original research which will be used to formulate management decisions for all of us. Have the experience of a lifetime observing, recording, and photographing wildlife and knowing you are helping to make a difference in the protection of these wilderness ecosystems.

BP1 June 7 - 21
BP2 June 21 - July 5
BP3 July 5 - 19
BP4 July 19 - August 2
BP5 August 2 - 16
BP6 August 16 - 30

Cost: $375.00