

file



THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol. 13, No. 9

May, 1985

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MAY

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	31	

○ = BAS
 △ = Sierra Club

LOCAL MEETINGS, PROGRAMS and FIELD TRIPS

✓ **Fri. May 3: Sierra Club Extravaganza** – 7 pm to 9:30 pm at the Newman Center, 795 North 800 East, in Logan. The Cache Group of the Sierra Club invites everyone to a multi-sensory extravaganza in celebration of Cache Valley's four seasons and their ability to inspire and renew the spirit. The bill of fare includes picturesque slides, musical entertainment, and a superb potluck dinner inspired by the gods and you. Bring a delectable concoction to share . . . soft drinks, beer, and wine will be available. Join the Sierra Club for food, fun and frolic.

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

ALSO

✓ **Sierra Club Ski trip or spring hike** in the Wellsvilles depending snow conditions. Enjoy the sun and spring air. Meet at the USU student parking lot at 9 am. For details contact trip leader Vince Stack, 752-2654.

✓ **Thurs. May 9: BAS Monthly Meeting** – 7:30 pm in Room 202, Food and Nutrition Building on USU Campus. The speaker, Mac Brandon, will discuss ways to minimize the impact of camping trips. See "It's the Little Things that Count," inside.

✓ **Sat. May 10: BAS Annual Banquet** – 6:00 pm for social hour, 7:00 pm for dinner. At the China House Restaurant. See article "Annual Banquet" inside this issue.

✓ **Sat./Sun. May 11/12: Bear River Canoe Trip** – 8:00 am at the corner of 7th North and Main Street in Logan. Return by 2 pm. This is a 15-mile trip starting at Trenton and ending up near Amalga Cheese Factory. A very scenic stretch of river with no houses in sight and excellent birding. Drift beneath nests of great-horned owls with young in them, and stop at a large nesting colony of great blue herons. Chances of seeing deer, beaver, and skunk! No rapids. Charge of \$4 per person for those without canoes. Bring lunch, sunshade, and water to drink. **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS NEEDED.** Call Al Stokes at 752-2702.

Recorded

✓ Mon. May 13: Film Series — 7:00 pm at the Logan Library, free of charge and open to the public. "The Bald Eagle" will be shown, a film which takes an interesting look at Bald Eagles on their last two major nesting grounds in Alaska and Florida. The emphasis is on research into their preservation.

✓ Fri./Sat. May 17/18: Sierra Club trip — Overnight bike trip up Blacksmith Canyon. Leave Friday evening, spend Saturday morning fishing, bird-watching, and exploring. Contact trip leaders Craig Caupp and Karen Krough 753-6774 for meeting place and details.

✓ Sat. May 18: Geology of Cache Valley — 8:00 am, meet at the Food and Nutrition Building at 7th North and 12th East for an introductory slide show of the geology of Cache Valley before setting out for Green Canyon. Return by 1 pm. Don't miss this fascinating trip under the leadership of geologist and teacher par excellence, David Liddell. Stand with him on the very shore of the Pacific Ocean as it was 400 million years ago, and pick up fossils including the scales of freshwater fish washed down into the ocean shore to become fossilized. Stand at the Rest Area at the mouth of Logan Canyon and experience what ancient Lake Bonneville looked like. Then more fossil hunting just south of Dry Lake. Bringing a lunch or snack is advised. The walking is short and easy. No advance reservations are needed.

✓ Sat./Sun./Mon. May 25/26/27: Sierra Club Campout — Backpacking up Birch Creek. Camp in the open meadows of Double top for a great view of the Mt. Naomi high country. Call trip leader Russ Goodwin for details and meeting place.

✓ Mon. May 27: Film Series — 7:00 pm at the Logan Library, free of charge and open to the public. "A Second Chance" will be shown, a film which 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.

EDUCATION MEETING

The time and date for the Education Meeting have not been set. If you want information, please call Nancy Warner at 752-7345.

EDITOR'S NOTES

I hope you are all enjoying the return of spring as much as I am. At the first hint of warmth, this old body of mine experiences a surge of energy it never knows during the cold, dark winter months. How I love renewing my acquaintance with the dirt, the weeds, the bees, the bugs, and even the slugs in the garden just outside my back door. I hope the young robin who sang accompaniment while I planted last year (in spite of the watchful eyes of my four cats), will return this year for a repeat performance.

I have a favor to ask this month. I've received a request from the Colorado State University Library (to whom we send a copy of *The Stilt*) for some back issues. They would

like copies of Volume 13, numbers 1 through 4, to be exact. I have only one copy of each of those, and I would like to keep them in *The Stilt* files. If any of you have copies of those issues and would be willing to part with them, please send them to me at 274 East 100 South in Logan, or call me at 750-2733 (days) or 753-8072 (evenings) and I'll pick them up. While you're at it, I'd appreciate any back issues of *The Stilt* which you have lying around, no matter how old and beat up. The previous editor(s) did not keep copies, and I think it is important to maintain a complete file of back issues for reference. Thanks!

Now . . . I want all of you to turn to the back page of *The Stilt*. On the left-hand side, notice the list of officers. See the blank spaces? See how many of last year's officers are still serving because no one volunteered to take their places? See the people who are doing double duty because you think you're too busy to help? Don't you feel the least bit guilty? I know it's spring; we'd all like to spend as much time as possible outdoors. How about pitching in and helping, so those who are working overtime can join in the fun? Volunteer for a BAS position, or just call Chuck Warner when you have a spare hour or two—he's sure to find something for you to do.

The quote I promised in last month's newsletter is from *Audubon: A Biography*, by John Chancellor. Thanks to Nancy Warner, who obviously recognizes the "mixed blessing" of having to write something, for sharing this quote: "For my part I would rather go without a shirt or any inexpressibles through the whole of the Florida swamps in misquito time, than labor as I have hitherto done with the pen." (John James Audubon)

— Charlotte Wright

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

Most members of the Audubon Society support the idea of low impact camping in words and deeds. Yet there is always room for improvement, and with the increasing number of visitors to primitive areas, it is ever more important to minimize the impact of our stay. I could reduce the impact associated with my camping trips if I would quit playing hacky-sack. It seems like an innocuous (some might say mindless) game that is good for loosening up sore legs before a hike. Nonetheless, a few hacky-sack sessions can leave an area trampled, an impact akin to that made by tethered horses. Mac Brandon will speak on low impact camping at our May monthly meeting, and he has a wealth of ideas on how to minimize the impacts of your next trip—probably some you would never even dream of.

— Bruce Pendery

ANNUAL BANQUET

Plan to join us this year for our fourth annual banquet on the 10th of May. We will start the evening's festivities with a social hour at 6 pm. A buffet dinner will be served at 7 pm followed by a presentation by our guest speaker, Mr. Dick Carter. Dick is the Director of the Utah Wilderness Association, and will speak to us on a number of public land issues in Utah, including the passage of the Utah Wilderness Act. We will also use this occasion to present the 1985 Bridgerland Conservation Award. The banquet will again be held at the China House Restaurant, 1079 North Main, in Logan. Tickets for the banquet are \$8.50 per person, and advance reservations should be made by Tuesday, May 7, by calling 752-7345. Hope to see you there.

LOGAN CANYON HIGHWAY

In the next few years, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) proposes to replace a number of narrow or (in a few cases) deteriorating bridges and culverts in the upper portion of Logan Canyon. A major straightening of the road, including substantial cutting and filling to add a passing lane is planned for the Twin Bridges/"Government Dugway" area. Work on an EIS will start soon. We have a number of concerns, particularly with realignment in the Twin Bridges area. This project could also pave the way for more ambitious highway modifications similar to those proposed during the 70's. For details on what you can do, call Eric Zurcher (753-5077) or Steve Flint (evenings only, 752-9102).

UTAH AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING

The spring Utah Audubon Council Meeting was hosted by the Wasatch Audubon Society on Saturday, April 13. The council meetings always provide an excellent opportunity for chapters in Utah to share ideas and become better acquainted. This year the Wasatch Audubon Society did a terrific job of arranging for a fun, interesting and enjoyable day for all of us.

The day began with an introduction and tour of the Ogdan Nature Center, where we were shown the master development plan for the area, and then went on to a quick tour of some local flooding problems—the Weber River—at Fort Buenaventura. After lunch, we were fascinated by a presentation by Dr. Paul Sturm on recent changes in the level of the Great Salt Lake, and the consequences of continued flooding. Afterwards, we discussed chapter business with Gene Knoder from the Regional Office in Boulder, Colorado, heard a short presentation by Jim Catlin of the Sierra Club on upcoming wilderness issues, and finally adjourned to dinner at a local restaurant. A long, full day to be sure, but well worth the time and effort.

— Chuck Warner

NEW AUDUBON PRESIDENT TO BE NAMED

The naming of the new president of the National Audubon Society has probably already been announced. Participating in the search has been an education for those involved. Several candidates said how Audubon had been looked upon as a "sleeping giant." Under Russ Peterson's leadership, the giant has awakened to become the most influential voice in Washington among conservation organizations. When Audubon speaks out on an issue, Washington now listens with respect. The eight finalists interviewed all expressed the highest regard for National Audubon, while at the same time expressing several new directions for Audubon. Most agreed that Audubon should narrow and clarify its mission so that it stands out clearly in the minds of the public and its membership. Some felt that in the future, the gains in the environmental movement will be at the state level, with increased help from local chapters. One person felt that Audubon's scientists could play a vital role as synthesizers of information already known to forge new solutions to such issues as Clean Air and Clean Water.

The Search Committee was gratified that so many highly-qualified persons were interested in the position of president, and feels that the new president will take Audubon to new prominence in the conservation field and win strong support from our members.

— Allen Stokes

A LONG WAY FROM HOME

The Newscience section of the May 1985 issue of *Science Digest* reports the recent appearance of two seemingly out-of-place birds. One, a Eurasian bean goose, was first sighted over Blair, Nebraska—a long way from Siberia, where it summers, and Japan and China, where it winters. It appears to have followed some Canadian geese headed for Texas. When last heard of, it was recuperating at a wildlife refuge near Omaha. The other is a small group of renegade whooping cranes who have, for several summers now, eschewed an established migration route from New Mexico to Idaho, and set up camp in Wyoming's Green River basin. They are expected to make that area their regular home, which would buoy chances of increasing the crane population.

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

At mid-April, most of the shorebirds and waterfowl seem to be back or migrating through the valley. Terry Barnes reported that the Richmond sewage lagoons have been a good birding area.

One nice thing about these lagoons is that you don't need a key and they can be seen from the road. To get there turn west at the traffic light in Richmond. After seeing the lagoons, it is not far to travel on west to Newton dam for more birds.

Terry also reports that Smithfield cemetery continues to be good for birding. Her last sighting of a Red Crossbill was April 6.

Harriette and Ron Lanner had a great bird to add to their yard list in North Logan. On March 31, they sighted between 15 and 20 Tundra swan flying overhead.

Rebecca Stewart had three Common redpoll at her feeders on the island for four days from March 21 to 24, really late for this uncommon species to be sighted in this valley.

Keith Dixon said many species seem to be about four or five days late this year. He put up one hummingbird feeder on April 15. He said not to be disappointed if hummingbirds do not show up for a while, but he had a Calliope hummingbird come to a feeder on April 21, 1982. He said the nectar in the feeder had frozen the night before.

Dr. Dixon advised feeding seed into late spring or summer. It is enjoyable to watch the spring migrants, and we may be able to sustain some of the birds such as Black-headed grosbeak, Northern oriole and Lazuli bunting through our May snowstroms.

Don't forget to provide water near feeding areas. A leaky garden hose and a shallow earthenware bowl is adequate.

This past month I had a lesson in positive identification. On April 27 about 5 pm, in east River Heights I spotted a seemingly all gray bird about 12 to 15 feet west of me. It was about the length of a Robin, more slender and with a slender bill. My mind raced—what bird that size is all gray? Catbird! I looked more carefully. It was perched horizontally on a fence. I didn't have my binoculars, but at that distance I couldn't make a mistake even if I couldn't see the chestnut undertail coverts. When I came home I was ready to record it. Yet—it was really about two months early to see a Gray catbird in this area and no chestnut undertail coverts.

I went back to the location. In just a few minutes I found the bird. It was still perched horizontally, but this time I was not looking into the sun. I had my binoculars. And it was a Townsend's solitaire.

To finish this column which is two days late, I looked up last year's date of the first arrival to my yard of a Lazuli bunting. It was April 17, 1984. I just glanced out of the window above my desk and there sitting in the "Bramblin" corner was a male Lazuli bunting feeding with 12 female and 8 male Cassin's finches. Today is April 17, 1985.

— Alice Stewart

GROUSE FIELD TRIP

Emerging from sleeping bags and tents with sunrise still only a promise, about 35 spring campers skipped breakfast and additional slumber in order to see sharp-tailed grouse put on an eye-opening show. A short drive from Twin Springs campground where the group camped Friday night, is one of 16 known leks of "strutting grounds" in Curlew National Grassland, home of Idaho's largest population of sharp-tailed grouse.

Still yawning yet enthusiastic, we made our way to the lek as our eyes adjusted to the early morning darkness. We watched from our vehicles as male sharp-tails slowly began to appear. First one, then two, then three, until about a dozen sharp-tails came into view—seemingly oblivious to the curious eyes that were upon them. For 25 minutes we watched male sharp-tails eagerly defend their territory and put on a display aimed at attracting a mate.

The highly ritualized courtship and mating behavior is truly one of nature's special means of accomplishing a most essential task—that of mating and reproduction. With his characteristic tail held erect and wings outstretched, the male sharp-tail grouse tries to look his best to nearby females while at the same time trying to intimidate rival males. One pair of males nearest the van I was in maintained a confrontation-like embrace for the duration of our visit to the grassy strutting ground.

Although the sharp-tails continued to keep everyone's attention, we made our way over the bumpy sagebrush-covered hills to another known lek hoping to see the sharp-tail's bigger cousin, the sage grouse, perform a similar courtship spectacle. Unfortunately, we arrived too late, for no sage grouse were found except the remains of one unfortunate grouse who had apparently been the morning meal of a local predator. Allen Stokes reasoned that other sage grouse abandoned the lek for the morning following the kill.

Stomachs began to growl as we made our way back to camp. For most of the group, breakfast was prepared hastily and eaten fervently—there was still more to see after tents and camping gear were packed away.

After leaving Twin Springs campground, the group made several stops to observe roadside packrat nests and hear Allen Stokes offer eloquently interesting notes and observations on the curious rodents. Later, the group searched a sagebrush field for burrowing owls, but like that for the sage grouse, the search was unfruitful.

Despite not seeing sage grouse or burrowing owls, the field trip was pleasant, and provided the opportunity for many of us to camp-out in the midst of good company and the spring outdoors. Additional highlights of the trip included Forest Service biologist Ken Timothy, who talked about the history of Curlew National Grassland and the biology of the grouse in the area. Around the campfire Friday night under a beautiful clear spring sky, Timothy tempted us with expectations for the morning while Allen Stokes tempted us with gingerbread baked in a reflector oven.

It seemed that all the right elements combined to make this field trip a success.

— John J. Wise

KEEP AN EYE ON WORLD OF AUDUBON TWO NEW PROGRAMS COMING THIS SUMMER

- Florida Wildlife
- California Condors
- Roger Tory Peterson
- Chesapeake Bay
- Peregrine Falcons
- Texas' African Wildlife
- Audubon's Wardens
- Idaho's Wilderness

Hosted By Cliff Robertson
Produced by the National Audubon Society
and Super Station WTBS

June 24 at 8:05 PM Eastern

June 30 at 3:00 PM Eastern

July 7 at 1:05 PM Eastern

July 9 at 9:05 PM Pacific

August 29 at 8:05 PM Eastern

September 7 at 7:05 PM Eastern

September 10 at 9:30 PM Pacific

September 15 at 1:05 PM Eastern

Check cable listings for channel

LEAD SHOT POISONING IN IDAHO WATERFOWL

Conservative estimates place the annual mortality of North American waterfowl, due to lead poisoning, at 2-3 million birds. At least 10 Bald Eagles were killed by secondary lead poisoning in 1983. Each year, more than 6,000 tons of lead shot are deposited into the water systems of our nation by hunters. Ingestion of a single lead shot pellet is often lethal for a bird. Lead pellets which are ingested remain in the bird's gizzard for about 3 weeks. During this time, they are ground down by the muscular action of the gizzard, and the lead dissolves into the bloodstream of the bird. The most common cause of death is a heart attack. In most lead shot studies, diving ducks exhibit ingestion levels about twice that of the dabbling ducks, due primarily to their feeding habits.

During the 1983-84 hunting season, I was able to obtain 600 gizzard samples, collected from 7 species of diving ducks, at 4 locations in Idaho. During this past hunting season (1984-85), nearly 4,000 gizzards were collected from all duck species, at 11 Idaho locations. The gizzard samples are dissected, and their contents emptied into Petri dishes. The samples are then X-rayed to detect the presence of lead shot. Any sample indicating a presence of lead shot is then examined to determine if the lead was ingested or shot into the bird during the killing process.

The 639 samples collected in 1983-84 showed an incidence of 3.9% of diving ducks who had ingested lead shot. At Mud Lake WMA alone it was 8.2%. Preliminary findings for 668 1984-85 samples show an incidence of 3.6% of ducks with

ingested lead shot. The American Falls Reservoir/Fort Hall bottoms area so far has shown 4.9% of ducks with ingested lead shot. From this location, 12 of 183 Mallards (6.6%) and 3 of 19 Goldeneyes (15.8%) had ingested lead shot. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has established 5.0% as the maximum allowable level for ducks in any location. The results of this study should indicate the presence or absence of a lead shot poisoning problem in Idaho.

(Copied from Portneuf Valley Audubon Society's March 1985 newsletter.)
—John Shipley, Jr.

LEAVE YOUNG ANIMALS ALONE!

Most wild animals give birth in the spring, and if you happen to come upon a baby animal, don't pick it up! That is the advice of Vince Yannone, Assistant Administrator of the Conservation Education Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The mother often is nowhere in sight and it is human nature to want to "help" the forlorn creature by picking it up and taking it home. According to Yannone, in most cases the animal has not really been abandoned. The mother, alerted to your presence, has only left temporarily and will return as soon as you leave. Newborn animals have excellent camouflage and a body that gives off very little scent to prevent them from being discovered by predators. By leaving, the mother is trusting in this natural protection to safeguard her offspring.

Each year, many animals end up at Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks offices. Some of these animals do not survive because they have already been weakened by improper diet. Even if they survive, animals like bears and mountain lions cannot be released back into the wild—the best they can hope for is to live out their lives in a zoo.

So, if you encounter a young animal that appears to be abandoned, think again. Unless you are certain the animal is an orphan, the best rule of thumb is to leave it alone and check on it again the next day (remember it is against the law to pick up a game animal).

If you are sure the animal needs help—for example, if the mother has been killed—contact the nearest Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks employee. He or she will be able to put you in touch with someone who can help.

—Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
(Copied from *Yellowstone Valley Flyer*, March 1985)

The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in Room 202 in the USU Food and Nutrition Building at 7th North and 12th East.

President	Chuck Warner, 752-7345
Vice-President	Bruce Pendery, 753-1628
Secretary	
Treasurer	Betty Boeker, 752-8092
Conservation	Steve Flint
Education	Nancy Warner, 752-7345
Membership	Allen Stokes, 752-2702
Field Trips	Allen Stokes, 752-2702
Newsletter	Charlotte Wright, 753-8072
Circulation	Liz Keller, 753-3294
Publicity	
Hospitality	Alice Stewart
Board of Directors	Wendell Anderson, 752-1827
	Terry Barnes, 563-3910
	Jim Gessaman, 753-1195
	Peter Landres, 752-7692
	John Barnes, 563-3910

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

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

Bridgerland Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3501
Logan, Utah 84321

Dated Material — Please Deliver Promptly

M. P. Coover
440 E. 1200 N.
Logan, UT 84321

National Audubon Society

CHAPTER
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

How Do I Join?

(We thought you would never ask.) Just complete the following application and enclose a check for the amount for the appropriate type of membership. Send it to:

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 3501
Logan, Utah 84321

Check membership category desired.

- Individual / \$30 (H)
 Family / \$38 (J)
 Student / \$18 (K)
 Senior Citizen Individual / \$21 (N)
 Senior Citizen Family / \$23 (P)
 Please bill me Check enclosed

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Nonprofit Organization
BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 104
Logan, Utah