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THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol. 15, No. 1

October 1986

FALL FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Friday/Saturday, September 13-14. Whooping Cranes at Gray's Lake Refuge, Idaho.

This is a spectacular marsh where several thousand sandhill cranes nest and where eggs of the rare whooping cranes are hatched by foster-parent sandhill cranes. Many other birds as well. Camp at nearby Forest Service Campground. Watch cranes from the Headquarters lookout with crane biologist Rod Drewien as guide, then circle the marsh to observe the great variety of water birds. Return to refuge headquarters to see a splendid film on whooping cranes and lunch before returning to Logan. Call 752-2702 for carpooling and specifics on camping.

Saturday, September 27. Hawk Migration on the Wellsvilles.

With favorable weather we may see 200 hawks and eagles flying south along the ridge of the Wellsville Mountains. This is a 4-mile, 4,000-foot climb to reach the observation point. The good trail goes through stands of large aspen, then up into fir before reaching the ridge. Count on about three hours for the average person. The view from on top into both Cache and Salt Lake valleys is spectacular and worth the trip alone. Leave at 7:30 a.m. from Old Logan Library at 1st East and 1st North. Return by 5 p.m. Bring water, lunch and windbreak. Carpooling available.

Friday-Sunday, October 3-5. Elk Bugling in Teton National Park.

This trip will feature elk bugling and large bulls contending for access to a harem of cows. Pronghorn, bison, and moose should be seen at close range. We can also expect to see coyote,

pika, red squirrel, trumpeter swan, Barrow's goldeneye, and many other kinds of wildlife. Tourism will be at a minimum and trip leader Al Stokes will take the group to unbeaten paths including the ranch of Mardy Murie and a hike into Taggart Lake to see how plants and wildlife have responded to the year-old wildfire there.

The group will leave at 1:30 p.m. from the University Radio Tower for those who can get off that early. Carpooling arrangements will be made for those unable to leave until later. Camp at the Gris Ventere Campground 10 miles north of Jackson and 4½ hours drive from Logan. Each party will be responsible for bringing its own food and camping gear. Indian summer is typical for that time of fall—frost in the morning and pleasantly warm in the day. But it might snow or rain. **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** Call Al Stokes at 752-2702 as soon as possible. Limited space available in van.

Saturday, October 11. Birding for Beginners.

This will be especially for persons who want to get started in observing birds. It will cover use and selection of binoculars and field guides; tips on what field marks to look for to identify birds in the field; and slides showing the most common fall birds of Cache Valley. This will be followed by a field trip to several nearby places for experience in identifying birds. Bring \$1.50 for copies of *Birding For Beginners* and *Checklist of Birds of Cache County*. Each participant must have a good pair of binoculars and the Golden Book *Birds of North America* available at all bookstores. Bring lunch, warm clothes and cap. Return by early afternoon. Meet at 8 a.m. at Logan City Auditorium. Carpooling. All welcome, rain or shine.

Saturday, October 18. Fall Migration.

Many birds are still migrating through Cache Valley and early winter residents will have arrived. Leave at 8 a.m. from southwest corner of Fred Mayer parking lot. Return by noon. Carpooling available.

Wednesday, November 5. Star and Planet Watch led by expert Bill Lowry. (Tentative)

Look for details in October *Stilt*.

Saturday, November 22. Winter Birds.

Details in November *Stilt*.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

A general membership meeting for the Bridgerland Audubon Society has not been scheduled for September. Regular meetings will resume in October and be held on the second Thursday of each month at the Logan Library.

Wednesday, September 24 — Planning meeting 7 p.m. in the Logan Library. This first meeting of the year is an important one, please plan to attend. There are a number of items that need to be discussed, and as always, new ideas and interested individuals are invited.

Thursday, September 18 — The Conservation Committee will meet in Room 112B in the Natural Resources/Biology building at USU. Contact Bruce Pendery for more information.

Saturday, October 4 — Audubon workshop on land use planning. The Bridgerland Audubon Society and the League of Women Voters of Cache County are sponsoring a public workshop on current issues about land use planning in Cache County. The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, October 4, in the public meeting room at the Logan City Library. In conjunction with the workshop, which will include a presentation on why communities develop master plans and a public forum on local planning issues, the workshop will feature an opportunity to meet the candidates who are running for the new form of county government, Cache County Council. The candidates will be invited to present their concerns about land use planning in Cache County.

For more information, call Bruce Pendery at 753-1628.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Alice and I represented Bridgerland Audubon Society at the Ninth Biennial Rocky Mt. Regional Conference held at Sierra West in southeast Arizona. This was a sentimental journey for us because just eight years before we had attended a previous conference held at Sierra Vista. We had such a fine time with its good balance between exciting field trips and actual conference meetings that we returned to Logan determined to have Bridgerland Audubon host the next conference.

The Huachuca Audubon Society arranged superb field trips into the close-by Huachuca Mountains where we saw such rarities as the copper-tailed trogon, buff-breasted flycatcher,

and two very rare spotted owls that perched in a tree day after day for all of us to see at close range. On a day trip to the world-famous Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary we saw the gray and zone-tailed hawks, beardless flycatcher, thick-billed kingbird and tropical kingbird as well as a scaled quail perched on top of a tall yucca. Some relatively new birders managed to add over 70 species to their life-time list.

Undoubtedly the most spectacular sight was at the Mile-Hi Sanctuary run by the Nature Conservancy in nearby Ramsey Canyon. There we watched dozens and dozens of hummingbirds of nine different species come to the 20 or so feeders, with never fewer than 25 hummers in view at a single time. It was there that I learned that the easy way to distinguish the broad-tailed from black-chinned hummer is the habit of the latter to flip its tail rapidly up and down as it feeds. We learned too that it is ok to feed hummers well into cold weather. Hummers will leave when insects, their source of protein, drop off in abundance, usually well before cold weather comes.

By far the most enthusiastic and dedicated persons were those who had come from Billings, Montana. This chapter is 35 years old. Its former president, Helen Carlson, has not missed a single regional conference. She and 16 others attended, most driving down and back the 1500 mile trip and having fun identifying birds en route. By the end of the conference they had already seen 156 species.

The theme of the 2½-day conference sessions was "Saving Riparian Habitats." In dry Arizona, riparian habitat includes the vegetation that borders both running and seasonal water courses. On one field trip we looked down on a vast stand of juniper-oak forest that had recently been thinned by those having fuel-wood permits. I was perplexed by the long thicker stands of trees running in straight lines downslope until told by our Forest Service guide that these were dry watercourses where cutting had been excluded, thus maintaining travel lanes for wildlife as well as breeding and feeding areas.

Much of the Huachuca Mountains are included in the large Fort Huachuca Military Preservation. This is under careful management for deer, recreation and watershed preservation. Its riparian habitat with sycamore, walnut, hackberry, juniper and several species of oak are home for the rare elegant trogon, red-faced warbler and many owls among others. In recent years these canyons have been open to the public to enjoy.

Marshal Case, vice-president for education, gave a glowing report on the phenomenal growth in Audubon Adventures, now reaching over 100,000 children in classrooms. He encouraged chapters to supplement this endeavor by providing field trips and special talks to these children. In addition he encouraged us to provide scholarships to the teachers to attend the Audubon Camp in the West.

The Turner TV programs have received a tremendous boost by the decision of Peter Stroh, president of Stroh Brewery and member of the board of National Audubon Society, to give \$1 million over the next three years to this program.

In contrast to the past several years chapter members were definitely feeling very good toward National Audubon Society. Gone was the feeling of "we and they." Four board members attended the conference, had many opportunities to visit with

chapter members on field trips, at meals and at a special session at which board members could interact with chapter members. Everybody is enthusiastic about the direction that President Peter Berle is giving the Society.

We returned from the conference proud of our chapter and its accomplishment. In addition we got many ideas on new activities that we could become involved in—youth education, political action, our state Audubon Council, and winning new members.

Al and Alice Stokes

ARM-CHAIR BIRDING

At the Regional Audubon Conference in Arizona I learned of a new kind of birding activity. John and Betty Epler of Sierra Vista Audubon chapter have been keeping a list of all the birds they have seen and identified while watching television programs. They record these programs, then play them back and "freeze" shots of birds that stump them. They have a large library of bird guides that cover the world. To date they have identified 1,236 species. That belongs in the Guinness Book of Records. And what a fine hobby for avid birders who find themselves because of ill health no longer able to get out into the field.

Al Stokes

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Diane Browning, C.A. Milner, Mrs. Rosalie Mueggler, Susan Nordstrom, W. Pitkin, Kathy Vanslyke, Rebekah F. Alpisa, Betty Chase, Richard K. Demoss, Linda Eisele, Diane Gooch, A.R. Keeley, A.M. Larsen, James T. Malouf, Kevin Mohr, Edwin Olsen, Jerry E. Sempek, Phyllis Smith, Mrs. Raymond Sanders, Charles E. Baldwin, Mrs. V.D. Bankhead, John A. Bissonnette, C.T. Brown, Michael and Julia Harris, Richard F. Head, William and Marjorie Lewis, H. Phelps, Jeff Smith, Joan Walker, Homer and Elizabeth Walker.

NOTE: If any new or renewing BAS members were omitted from this list, please contact the *Stilt* editor to have a correction made.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Stilt once again resumes publication for 1986-87, this year with a new editor. Former *Stilt* editor Charlotte Wright has decided that after two years of editing copy and putting together this monthly newsletter, it is time to give someone else the much-coveted opportunity. Charlotte did a splendid job as editor and nearly 20 impeccable editions of the *Stilt* published over the past two years stand as solid testimony of her craft. It is in her footsteps that this new editor hopes to tread.

I look forward to my newly-accepted challenge as editor and wish to extend an invitation to all BAS members to get in touch with me about any concerns or interests you might have relative to *The Stilt* or to Bridgerland Audubon. As in the past deadlines for submissions for publication in *The Stilt* will exist. The deadline will likely be the same as it was previously—the 15th of each month for publication the following month. If there are any meetings or news items any member wants published in *The Stilt*, please let me know. I can be reached at home: 245-4127, or at work, 752-2121.

Again, thanks for this special opportunity.

Sincerely,

John J. Wise

AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING -- October 11

Once again it is Bridgerland Audubon's turn to host the Utah Audubon Council Meeting. In the past the UAC meeting has provided an excellent opportunity for exchanging information, sharing ideas and identifying common causes and goals. This year there are many new officers in all chapters who will benefit by meeting their counterparts in the state. The meeting is, of course, open for all members but it is especially important that officers and committee chairpersons attend. Please plan to join us on Saturday, October 11 at the Hyrum Community Park building and also encourage others to attend.

Mr. Paul Summers, Assistant Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources has agreed to provide an update on plans for damming the Bear River. Although the projects under study are all located in northern Utah, the water would primarily be used by an expanding population along the Wasatch Front. These projects, therefore, directly concern all of us and may represent an issue which the UAC can address as a unit.

A tentative schedule for the day's events follows:

- 9:00 — Social period while we wait for everyone to arrive. We will supply coffee, juice and carbohydrates.
- 9:30 — Introduction and information sharing
- 11:00 — Presentation by Paul Summers
- 11:45 — Question and discussion period
- 1:00 — Lunch break and display period. We will provide lunch.
- 2:00 — Field trip to site of proposed Mill Creek Dam. Casual hiking shoes and binoculars suggested.
- 5:30 — No host dinner at The Cottage Restaurant in Logan.
RSVP to Chuck Warner by Oct. 8 at 752-7345 or 750-1346.

National Audubon Society
C H A P T E R
M E M B E R S H I P A P P L I C A T I O N

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 _____

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2-87
 Mac Cooper
 275 W. 1050 N.
 Logan UT 84321

The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in the Council Room of the new Logan City Building, 255 North Main. Meetings start at 7:30 pm.

President
 Vice-President
 Secretary
 Treasurer
 Conservation
 Education
 Membership
 Field Trips
 Newsletter
 Circulation
 Publicity
 Hospitality
 Board of Directors

- Ron Ryei, 753-6077 (home)
- 752-2580 (office)
- Tom Gordon, 752-6561
- Jillyn Smith, 750-1359
- Betty Boeker, 752-8092
- Bruce Pendery, 753-1628
- Tom Cronkite, 752-0518
- Al Stokes, 752-2702
- Charlotte Wright, 753-8072
- Liz Keller, 753-3294
- John Wise, 245-4127
- Wendell Anderson, 752-1827
- Terry Barnes, 563-3910
- John Barnes, 563-3910
- Peter Landress, 752-7692
- Jon Wrath, 752-0743

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Still*, as well as to *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Still* invites submissions of any kind, due on the 18th of each month. Send to Box 3501 / Logan, UT 84321.

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

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly

Project History/Current Status

The Goshute Project was founded by Steve Hoffman, a long-time student of raptor migration currently employed as an endangered species biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Hoffman discovered this unique concentration of migrating raptors in 1979. He and several colleagues initiated a trapping and banding program in 1980. In the past six years, over 4,400 raptors have been captured, banded and released. Results of this effort include 30 band recoveries scattered from southwestern Canada to southern Mexico. These data indicate most Goshute migrants spend the winter in western Mexico. Breeding areas of the Goshute birds are not well documented, but most likely include portions of western Montana, Idaho, eastern Oregon and Washington, British Columbia and Alberta. Additional data are needed to clarify the raptors' breeding and wintering localities.

Standardized counts of the Goshute raptor migration began in 1983. Funded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, these counts have continued through 1985. Between 7,000 and 9,500 raptors comprising 16 species have been recorded each fall. Additional counts are needed before population trends can be determined.

Phases 3, 4 and 5 of the project have not yet been initiated.

Significance of the Goshute Project

Migration counts such as the one on the Goshutes are the most cost-effective way to monitor raptor populations over large geographic areas. Similar ongoing counts at Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania documented major declines in several raptor species in the 1950's and 1960's. The Hawk Mountain data helped document the severity of DDT contamination, which led to the nationwide ban on DDT use in 1972. The value of these counts for both management and conservation cannot be overstated.

The Goshute Project is unique -- no other long term raptor migration studies are being conducted anywhere in the Intermountain West. Trend and movement information for most western raptor populations is virtually nonexistent.

Past Support/Future Needs

Thus far the Goshute Project has depended solely on the efforts of dedicated volunteers. Financial assistance from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bridgerland Audubon Society, Utah State University, EARTHWATCH, and private individuals has been crucial to the project's

success. The Bureau of Land Management, Elko District, has provided critically needed logistic support for the remote-location project. The project is currently affiliated with Bridgerland Audubon Society and the Department of Biology, Utah State University, both of Logan, Utah.

Through effective use of volunteer help, the Goshute Project has operated on a shoe-string budget. Nonetheless, the future of the project is now being jeopardized due to lack of funds. At this time, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is unable to support the 1986 Goshute count. Funds are needed to support the project at a minimum level -- monies to purchase equipment and supplies, and provide food for volunteers are urgently needed.

For More Information

For additional information about the Goshute Raptor Migration Project, please contact:

Steve Hoffman
P. O. Box 1382
Albuquerque, NM 87103
(505) 291-9224



GOSHUTE RAPTOR MIGRATION PROJECT

Declines in Predatory Bird Populations

Many populations of predatory birds (raptors) in western North America are declining due to human-caused alterations of natural environments. Urbanization, agricultural development, logging, acid rain, pesticide and heavy metal contamination, and shooting are significant threats to raptor populations and their habitats in the West and in Mexico. Research and management efforts are needed to assess the impact of these activities on raptor populations, and to reverse declines.

Project Goal/Objectives

Since raptors feed at the top of the "food chain," they are especially valuable indicators of environmental quality and ecosystem health. Major declines in raptor populations signal environmental damage of considerable magnitude, which, if left unchecked, could not only threaten the survival of many raptor species, but our own quality of life as well.

Goal:

The goal of the Goshute Project is the conservation of raptor populations and their habitats in western North America.

Objectives:

- * Monitor raptor population trends in western North America.

- * Determine movement patterns and essential habitats of western raptor populations; define breeding areas, associated wintering localities, and migration corridors.

- * Investigate and reverse the causes of raptor population declines in western North America.

The Five Phases of the Goshute Project

- 1) Each autumn a standardized count of raptors migrating through the Goshute Mountains (northeastern Nevada) is conducted to provide information on raptor population trends.

- 2) Volunteers capture, measure, band and release unharmed as many Goshute migrants as possible to obtain biological and movement data.

- 3) Contaminant loads (especially DDT and lead) will be monitored periodically by analyzing blood samples taken from a small number of Goshute birds. These data will help to assess overall contaminant trends and pesticide use in western North America and Mexico.

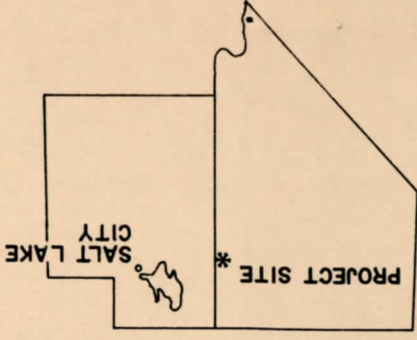
- 4) Radio tracking several Goshute migrants will identify migration corridors and important foraging and roosting habitats.



- 5) Studies of nesting raptors north of the Goshute Mountains will help to pinpoint the breeding localities of the Goshute migrants, and will also provide information on reproductive success.

Project Location

The observation/trapping site is situated in northeastern Nevada atop the Goshute Mountains, on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Elko District. Volunteers live in tents among the pine and fir trees. The observation post affords panoramic views of the Bonneville Salt Flats to the east, the Ruby Mountains to the west, and the Deep Creek Range to the south. A steep two-mile hike from the end of a jeep road is required to reach the site.



Contributions

We are in the process of setting up a nonprofit organization to support the Goshute Project. At this time, tax-deductible contributions for the project are being accepted by Bridgerland Audubon Society, of Logan, Utah. Please give generously -- the future of the project depends on your support.

A Contribution of:

\$15 will provide a mist net to snare the Goshute migrants for banding and study.

\$25 will feed a hungry Goshute volunteer for a week.

\$50 will buy needed hardware to repair trapping blinds.

\$100 will purchase a transmitter for tracking a Goshute bird to help delineate migration corridors.

Memberships

Persons or groups donating \$15 or more per year will receive our annual newsletter, issued in early spring.

Regular \$15

Sustaining

Family \$25

Founding

Supporting \$50

Lifetime

Other \$

Name

Address

Please make checks payable to:

Bridgerland Audubon Society

P. O. Box 3501

Logan, UT 84321

(Please be sure to indicate on your check that the contribution is for the Goshute Project.)

I would like to volunteer on the project. Please tell me more. My telephone number is _____

A movie (16 mm and video) on the Goshute Project is available for rent for \$30. Contact Steve Hoffman, address below.