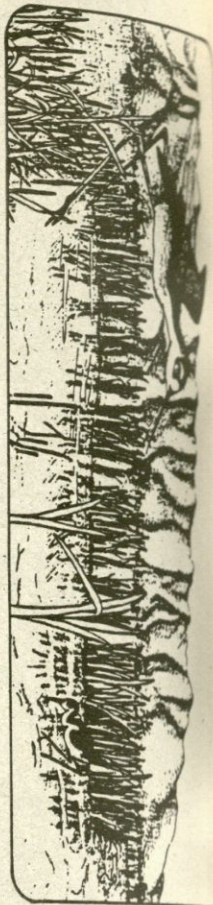


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# THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 3501  
Logan, Utah 84323



# THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 24, No. 3

November 1995

The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in the Meeting Room of the new Logan City Building, 255 N. Main. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. Locations may change monthly. Check calendar page. Everyone is welcome to attend.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| President               | Brigit Burt, 753-2794  |
| Vice President          | Robert Schmidt, 755-9262   |
| Secretary               | Joanna Garrard, 753-2429   |
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| Field Trips             | Al Stokes, 752-2702  |
| Newsletter              | Lois Olson, 752-9085   |
| Circulation             | Susan Durham, 752-5637   |
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| 1994-97                 | Bryan Dixon, 752-6830; Glen Gantz, 258-2748; Ted Evans, 753-2258; Jan Anderson, 752-2946 |

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as the *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions of any kind, due on the 15th of each month. Send to 280 N. 300 E., Logan, UT 84321.

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## National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the national Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society

Send this application and your check to:  
National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, CO 80322-1001



LOCAL CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

Bridgerland Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3501  
Logan, UT 84323-3501

W-52  
Local Chapter Code  
7XCHA

Subscriptions to *The Stilt* are available to non-members for \$5.00 per year. Call Susan Durham, 752-5637. Also, call Susan for new subscriptions or address changes.

## Fall Migration Along The Gulf Of Mexico

A year ago while reading my HawkWatch International newsletter my eye caught a story about the incredible number of raptors that migrate along the Gulf of Mexico past Vera Cruz. So when Steve Hoffman, president of HawkWatch, announced a trip down there this fall Alice and I signed up at once. There were 16 of us who met in Vera Cruz for the short drive north to Cardel, a town of 75,000 people some six miles off of the actual coast. Our Mexican guide was Ernesto Ruelas, a graduate of the University of Xalapa and director of the Pro Nature office in the state of Vera Cruz. Ernesto and his colleague Jorge Montejo have been making systematic counts fall and spring of the raptors that pass over Cardel.

Unlike our rigorous Wellsville hawk watch, at Cardel we merely walked up four flights of stairs to the flat-top roof where we had an unimpeded view in all directions. By the time we had finished a leisurely breakfast the flight had already started. Looking out to the north I spotted a kettle of hawks circling and circling as the thousand or so hawks gradually rose to the top of the thermal they were riding. Then the hawks began streaming southward with never a wing beat. While I was just locating this kettle I heard Ernesto and raptor experts Steve Hoffman and Bill Clark call out "Dark morph immature Swainson's, broad-wings, harrier, etc." At the same time there were three more kettles rising in nearby thermals. Many of these hawks passed right overhead, with 18 human heads testing the flexibility of our necks. Suddenly somebody called out, "Hook-billed kite going over" then in the course of the next hour there was an almost steady stream of raptors, but not only raptors, for Ernesto pointed out seven wood storks, a formation of 20 white-faced ibis, who knows maybe they came right from Cutler marsh, and

many scissor-tailed flycatchers. By 11 o'clock the flight had subsided some. Ernesto said that as the morning wears on the thermals tend to move inland. For this reason he and Jorge had erected a tower about five miles further inland where a second team of trained counters were at work.

To me the most spectacular thing was seeing those thousands of Swainsons pass over and realizing that virtually every Swainson's hawk in North America was funneling past this narrow constriction between mountains and the Gulf. Who knows, maybe the individual that Ron Hellstern and his 9th graders in Hyrum had equipped with a transmitter was among those we saw that first morning.

By our fourth day we were becoming far more skilled at distinguishing one raptor from another. By then the broad-wings had largely passed through, Swainsons were at their peak, and turkey vultures almost so. But Ernesto and Steve were tireless. There was always a trip to the coast or nearby

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# Calendar

**Thursday, November 9. BAS General Meeting. 7:30 pm. Logan City Building.** Zach Frankel, Director of the Utah Rivers Conservation Council, will present a slide show entitled "Wild Rivers of Utah." Utah is home to some of the most rare and priceless streams in the United States. The riparian zones associated with them are critical habitats for many species of wildlife. Please come and listen to Zach describe the challenges and opportunities involving the protection and management of Utah's free-flowing river ecosystems! This is a joint meeting with the USU Canoe & Kayak Club.

**Wednesday, November 15. BAS Planning Meeting. 7 pm.** Chair and board members join to discuss projects and funding. As a member, your input is always welcome. Brigit Burt will host this month's meeting at 1000 North 320 West #4 in Logan.

## Field Trips

**Saturday, November 4. Fall Birding Trip.** Meet at Fred Meyers at 8 am (or at Angie's for breakfast at 7:15 am). We'll visit a variety of birding spots in Cache Valley looking for Harris' and white-throated sparrows, rough-legged and ferruginous hawks, prairie falcon: and maybe even a gray partridge. Bring binoculars. Beginners welcome. Dress warmly and bring water or snacks. Back by lunch. Contact Keith Archibald 752-7258 or Bryan Dixon 752-6830.

**Saturday, November 11. Red Squirrel Ecology.** Red squirrels have lived and bred on the property of Al Stokes for over 15 years. This will be a chance to observe red squirrels at close range, see their food caches, and what they eat and how they communicate to each other through a variety of calls. Afterwards we will go to First Dam to see what waterfowl have already arrived for winter. Bring binocs. Meet at 9 am at the parking lot of the Forest Service Information Center on Highway 89 across the highway from the Logan Golf Course (1500 East). Return by 11 am.

**Saturday, November 18. Attracting Birds in Winter.** A trip to several homes to see what these people have done to attract birds through plantings and putting out bird seed in a variety of bird feeders. Also a chance to see some of the common birds that visit these feeders. Leave at 9 am from the Forest Service parking lot at 1500 East and Highway 89. Return by noon.

## Annual Christmas Bird Count

Join us for a day of bird watching as we participate in a nationwide scientific survey of wintering avifauna. Bird watchers of any level of expertise are invited for all or part of the day. In the evening we will meet for a potluck dinner and tally results. Call Keith Archibald, 752-8258, or one of the area leaders if you wish to participate.

## Common North American Birds And The Seeds They Love

**Blue Jays:** Cracked Corn Mix, Black Oil Sunflower  
**Bunting:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed  
**Cardinals:** Wild Bird Mix, Cracked Corn Mix, Black Oil Sunflower

**Chickadees:** Black Oil Sunflower  
**Crossbills:** Black Oil Sunflower  
**Ducks:** Wild Bird Mix, Cracked Corn Mix  
**Finches:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed, Black Oil Sunflower

**Grosbeaks:** Black Oil Sunflower  
**Juncos:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle, Cracked Corn Mix, Black Oil Sunflower  
**Morning Doves:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed, Cracked Corn Mix

**Nuthatches:** Black Oil Sunflower  
**Pine Siskins:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed, Black Oil Sunflower

**Redpolls:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed, Black Oil Sunflower

**Sparrows:** Wild Bird Mix, Niger Thistle Seed, Cracked Corn Mix

**Titmice:** Cracked Corn Mix, Black Oil Sunflower  
**Towhees:** Wild Bird Mix, Black Oil Sunflower  
**Warblers:** Black Oil Sunflower

**Black Oil Sunflower Seed:** The favorite of birds from finches to wild turkeys. Good fuel for migrating birds.

**Niger Thistle Seed:** Perfect for small songbirds. Fits inside small-port feeders to foil large, aggressive eaters.

**Cracked Corn Mix:** Spread on a platform feeder, will attract blue jays, grackles, crows and other large birds and provide more recreational opportunities for the public.

### Now Available

Black oil sunflower seed  
\$16.00 / 50 lb. bag  
Available at Sunrise Cyclery  
or home of Al Stokes

(continued from page 1)

## Fall Migration Along The Gulf Of Mexico

before breakfast and afternoon trips farther afield. Steve was determined to see an Aplomado falcon. He came back one afternoon beaming. No, he hadn't seen the falcon, but had seen something far more exciting—a Double-striped Thick Knee! So the next time we drove out to the beach near Cardel and eventually we had superb views of up to four of these birds.

Hurricane Roxann was heading right toward us and this may have caused the drop in birds our last three days. But Ernesto said that at the two count sites over a million, yes a million, birds had gone over. So save up your money and sign up quickly next January. Steve Hoffman has agreed to give a talk for us this year. Between his enthusiasm, superb knowledge and great slides we will be in for a treat.

— Al Stokes

## Highlights Of Bridgerland Audubon Society Activities

January 1, 1994 to April 1, 1995

Our chapter has continued to strengthen its reputation as one of the most youthful and energetic chapters in the National Audubon organization. While started as a university chapter, it now has about 300 members from all over Cache County and southern Idaho. Our chapter is recognized as a leading conservation organization in the community, working to promote a better appreciation of the environment through education and working with government officials. Here are highlights of our activities over the past year. These were possible only through the hard work of the officers and committee chairs and of many other volunteers who deserve thanks.

**Programs:** Monthly meetings were held October through June. Don McIvor arranged the programs and refreshments were provided by Marjorie Lewis. Programs included wild horses and burros, wildlife of Antarctica, Snake River management, biology of bats, and the Uinta Mountains Wilderness among others.

**Field Trips:** For many persons our field trips are the main drawing card to Audubon and a major source of new members. There were some 20 field trips held throughout the year including the ever popular two night camping trip in the Tetons in October to listen to the elk bugle, the canoe trips down the Bear River, the Antelope Island camping trip and the grouse courtship trip.

**Christmas Bird Count:** This annual event continues to attract a large number of participants with some 68 people braving winter weather under the leadership of Keith Archibald. This year's mild winter weather was fine for the birders as well as the birds, with low snow cover allowing for easy access to much of the count area. The total count was about 15,000 birds of 95 different species.

**Conservation:** Nick Strickland headed this committee that continues to do excellent work in the community. Highlights include Bear River clean-up and revegetation work, trail building and native vegetation planting at Stewart Nature Park, fund raising for a Wildlife Habitat Area at the South Cache Freshman Center, purchase of a small nature sanctuary in Summit Creek and a Sandhill Crane Festival.

**Publications:** The small guidebooks, *Cache Trails* and *Boating the Bear* were reprinted and marketed locally. Also, the comprehensive Cache County Checklist was updated and reprinted.

**Annual Banquet and Awards:** Our thirteenth annual banquet drew a convivial group of Audubon members and friends for fellowship, good food and Dr. Jack Schmidt's talk on "Rivers and Canyons of the Colorado Plateau." The annual conservation award was presented to the organization, Citizens for the Protection of Logan Canyon, for their untiring work to preserve the integrity of the canyon in the midst of road construction. The education award was presented to Dr. Sharon Ohlhorst for her dedication to environmental education in the teaching community. Special thanks to Bryan Dixon for organizing the banquet.

**Goodwill:** A chapter's key to success lies in its service to the community. Our chapter has worked to these ends in numerous ways. Our booth at the Holly Faire Christmas bazaar continues to provide entertainment to countless children as they decorate Christmas tree ornaments or assemble their own bird feeders. Jan Young poured the ornaments and Al Stokes involved dozens of our members to work at the booth. Feeding of birds continues to be a growing hobby in the county with our selling of several tons of sunflower seeds.

**Publicity:** Our nine issues of *The Stilt* go out to 300 people to keep them informed of chapter activities. Lois Olson has done an excellent job as editor and Susan Durham as circulation manager and keeper of membership records. In addition, Chris Sands and Beth Walden handled the publicity through press and radio releases and posters.

— Dawn Holzer  
Past President



## Summary of BAS Program Expenditures

There's a lot to our local Audubon organization. In addition to the trips, monthly meetings, and annual banquet, individual members are active in any number of projects, such as the Stewart Nature Park, hiking and boating guides, education, etc. To support these projects, BAS sells aluminum cans, bird seed and Smith's coupons, and we seek donations and grants from individuals and organizations.

I recently reviewed the last three years expenditures to get some idea of where our money goes, and was amazed at the good deeds we do. There's always a lot more to do, of course, but we should be proud of the members who use these funds to better our world. The chart below lists the major projects we've funded over the last three years. The funding allocations are made at the monthly Planning Meeting, which all members are invited to attend. Join us and help decide where we'll be active in the future.

— Bryan Dixon

### Bridgerland Audubon Society Environmental Program Expenditures 1993-1995

Publication	6/30/93	6/30/94	6/30/95	Total
Boating the Bear	3,558		776	4,334
Cache Trails	509	487	741	1,737
Cache Valley Checklist		170		170
Logan Canyon Guide			200	200
USFS Hiking Brochures	70			70
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4,137</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>1,717</b>	<b>6,511</b>
<b>Donations to Other Environmental Organizations</b>				
Cache Hikers	29			29
Crane Days		25	255	280
HawkWatch International	150			150
Options for Independence		500		500
Planned Parenthood Pop Conference		500	500	1,000
Utah Wilderness Association		50		50
Willow Park Zoo	50		50	100
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>2,109</b>
<b>Youth Environmental Education</b>				
Audubon Adventures	600	570		1,170
Education Fund	1,025			1,025
Holly Faire		33		33
North Cache Ecology Center		500	500	1,000
South Cache Ecology Center			500	500
Youth Environmental Conference	564			564
Youth National Resource Conservation Conference			100	100
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,189</b>	<b>1,103</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>4,392</b>
<b>Special Conservation Projects</b>				
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge	2,000			2,000
Bear River Water Quality Conference	120			120
CPLC/Logan Canyon	875	2,709		3,584
Great Salt Lake Wetlands (via NAS)			3,050	3,050
Stewart Nature Park	268	710	96	1,074
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,263</b>	<b>3,419</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>9,828</b>
<b>Political Action</b>				
Lobbying	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>10,818</b>	<b>7,254</b>	<b>7,768</b>	<b>25,840</b>

## LOCAL NEWS

### Cutler Resource Management Plan—Status and Concerns

At the October general meeting, Jim Burruss, biologist with Utah Power & Light, gave an overview of the Cutler Resource Management Plan. The RMP was recently submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in support of UP&L's application for another 30-year permit to operate the Cutler hydropower project.

FERC now requires applicants to place a greater emphasis on the environmental and recreational aspects of such projects. In response, UP&L solicited input from a variety of local organizations and proposed changes in management practices as well as new capital improvements around the reservoir to benefit wildlife.

UP&L controls approximately 10,000 acres of land, water and wetlands which constitute the Cutler Reservoir. Much of the land along the perimeter of the reservoir is leased for cropping and cattle grazing.

Changes in farming practices include moving from fixed price leases to share-cropper arrangements. UP&L is also reserving some fields for their own use, to plant crops to attract geese and cranes away from adjacent lands. Where these populations damage lessees' yields, UP&L will compensate the farmers by taking a smaller share of the fall harvest.

Changes in ranching practices are designed to prevent soil erosion and provide for wildlife forage and cover. Cattle are being fenced away from riparian areas to allow rejuvenation of the streamside shrubs and trees, and numerous new electric fences have been installed to take advantage of intensive grazing practices, and to leave other areas for wildlife. In some places, grazing will be restricted at particular times of the year to provide cover for nesting birds.

UP&L has always allowed the public free access to their lands. To better accommodate these users, UP&L plans to build new boat launching facilities, nature trails and walk offs. A new boat ramp and parking area will be built at the bridge north of Cache Junction. A small "waters' access" will be constructed where Sam Fellow Road crosses Clay Slough. The Benson Marina will see refurbishment and paving. The parking area at the Benson Bridge will also be paved, and the boat ramp improved to accommodate small motor boats. Small boat launching facilities (without ramps) will be built

along the Logan River west of the Hunter Education Center and also along the Mendon Road where it crosses the Little Bear River and Spring Creek. Some canoe "trails" will be posted in the marsh to guide new users through the labyrinth of islands. A loop nature trail is also planned which begins at Benson Marina and crosses the reservoir at the railroad trestles to the south.

The problem is with the remaining development—Valley View Marina. Both north and south of the Valley View Highway are superb marshlands, and some of the largest rookeries in the valley. To the south is the historic Spring Creek Heron Rookery, first documented in the 1930's. Just north of the highway are large rookeries of White-faced Ibis and Franklin's Gulls.

UP&L is proposing a paved parking area for 40 vehicles southeast of the Valley View Bridge, with permanent toilet facilities and a paved boat ramp. With the increases in water skiing and Jet Skis at Benson, and even the occasional Jet Ski launching at Valley View, the fear is that these loud motor craft will severely disrupt the breeding habitats of birds, and one of the few remaining quiet waters in the area. Every other local body of water is already open to motor boats—including Mantua, Hyrum and Newton Reservoirs, as well as Oneida Reservoir in Idaho and Bear Lake to the east. The feeling of many is that the marshlands north and south of Valley View Highway should be protected from noisy motor boats and even more restricted during the spring nesting season.

BAS members have invested hundreds, if not thousands of hours reading proposals and studies, attending meetings, writing comments, etc. At a recent BAS Board Meeting the decision was made to continue a dialog with UP&L to try to protect the areas of concern in the south end of Cutler Reservoir. In particular, BAS is proposing:

1. Construction of the Cache Junction launch facility before the Valley View site to draw motor boat use further north towards the deeper waters above the dam.
2. Immediate construction of the footbridge across the railroad trestles south of Benson Marina low enough to restrict large motor boats and water ski boats from accessing the Valley View marsh areas.
3. Management practices, such as horsepower limits and closing the boat ramps at the Valley View facility outside of hunting seasons, and signage alerting users to the sensitivity of the marshes during nesting seasons.

If you'd like to become more involved in these discussions, contact Alice Lindahl, Nick Strickland, or Bryan Dixon.

— Bryan Dixon