

THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

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June 1995

Bear River "Banks" Get Protection

Bridgerland Audubon Society has become involved in a major, long-term project with a number of other environmental groups and government agencies to improve the vegetation and wildlife of the Bear River riparian zone. In the past few weeks, boating trips down the Bear River have been organized to review the areas which are in good condition and the areas which need attention. In many areas the banks have been fenced and the slopes are well vegetated. In other areas the banks are fenced but the slopes beneath the top clay layer are collapsing because of the instability caused by water seepage. In other areas the banks are not fenced and are poorly vegetated due to overgrazing or are totally denuded in feed lots or other permanent corrals. During May, a group of student volunteers planted willows for about a half mile along the banks of the Little Bear River on the south side of the Mendon road. This area has been fenced and is no longer overgrazed but the banks still need to be stabilized by tree roots. As soon as funding of specific projects are approved, plans to fence and revegetate some of the feed lots and grazed river bank regions can take place here in Cache Valley. The land owners agree that the riparian regions need to be protected and are very cooperative. They have also agreed to maintain the river banks in the future.

Other areas where visual and chemical pollution sources are located, need attention. This type of

pollution will be very difficult to clean up. One solution may be to persuade the landowners to discontinue dumping garbage to prevent further deterioration of the situation. Still another source of visual pollution (but not chemical) is the presence of old abandoned cars and machinery along the river bank slopes. After progress has been made on the other, more urgent pollution problems, an effort will be made to remove the garbage dumps and the old abandoned machinery. With the support of many concerned environmental groups and government agencies the future of the Bear River environment can look forward to a healthier riparian zone which in turn will support a variety of animal and bird life.

— Nick Strickland

(See calendar for upcoming work days along the Bear River.)

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Calendar

Saturday, June 17 and Saturday, July 8. Work Days Along Bear River. There will be two more work days to restore two feedlots along the Bear River. The work will involve putting up fences, seeding the bare ground and planting willow shoots. No special skill is necessary for these morning work days. Call Nick Strickland at 750-5035 for details.

Field Trips — June-August

During the summer months BAS has no scheduled trips. We encourage you to join the Cache Valley Hikers or USU Canoe and Kayak Club to participate in any of their scheduled events. For canoe and kayak trip information contact Bryan Dixon, 752-6830. For hiking information contact

USU Outdoor Recreation Center

Friday, June 9 - Thursday, June 15. Desolation Canyon Rafting Trip. Join us on this annual river trip. This five day trip down the Green River gets more exciting as each day begins. The rapids get bigger, the water wilder and the canyon narrower as the trip progresses. This is some of the best whitewater in the state. All participants must be able to swim. Estimated cost: USU, \$150; Non-USU, \$175. Mandatory pre-trip meeting, Friday, June 2, 5 pm, ORC. Reservation Deposit: \$50.

Saturday, June 17 - Saturday, June 24. Idaho and Oregon Rafting Trip. The plan for this trip is to float the lower section of the Owyhee River in southeastern Oregon. It is 67 miles long and is designated as "wild" in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. When finished there will be a possibility of spending at least a day in the Boise area to run day stretches of the Payette River. All participants must be able to swim. Estimated cost: USU, \$175; Non-USU, \$200. Mandatory pre-trip meeting, Monday, June 9, 5 pm, ORC. Reservation Deposit: \$50.

Please call 797-3264 for more information.

Common Ground Outdoor Adventures

Thursday, June 21. Common Ground Evening Canoe Trip. Meet at OPTIONS, 1095 N. Main, at 4:00 pm for a Bear River canoe outing. Call 753-5353 to reserve a space!

Aluminum Cans – Keep Them Coming

I just took 159 pounds of aluminum cans to Cache Valley Metals and received \$60 for them. That's 40¢ per pound. Champion contributors have been Reinhard Jockel and Ken Jenner who regularly go birding at Newton Reservoir. While there they cover the picnic grounds and shoreline which are an "aluminum mine." I suggest you keep a few plastic shopping bags in your car. Then whenever you are birding or walking pick-up cans. It's amazing how many are there for the taking. Drop them off at my house at 1722 Saddle Hill Drive.

— Al Stokes

Birdathon

The Audubon Birdathon has proven a huge success. By the time all pledges and donations are in, the campaign will have raised well over \$5,000. A complete report will appear in the September *Stilt*. Companies that have contributed to date include: Bio West, Bio Resources, Bio-Graphics, White Horse Associates, Pioneer Environmental Services, Frank Smith, Consulting Botanist, Ramona Rukavina-Consulting Technical Specialist, Bourns, Bullen's, Logan Optical, Travel Time, IPACO, Miller Auto Repair, Campbell Scientific, Pepperidge Farms, Architectural Design West, Caldwell Banker-Gold Key Realty, J. H., C. H. Architects, Fuhman's Art Gallery, and First Security Bank. There have been nearly 100 individual contributors as well.

Readers who still wish to make a gift may do so by writing a check to Bridgerland Audubon Society and mail to it Sue Robertson at 1780 East 1400 North in Logan.

Sunflower Seed Vanished!

Thanks to all those persons who answered my plea to get rid of the 60 bags of seed in my garage. I am now completely sold out. For any procrastinators there might still be a few bags at Sunrise Cyclery.

Rocky Mountain Regional Audubon Conference

Al and Alice Stokes attended the 10th biennial conference in Boise, May 18-20. Most of the time was spent addressing the strategic plan that has been in the making for over a year. There has been a growing feeling that Audubon has been spread too thin and has lost its clear mission. The plan recognizes these special strengths of Audubon:

1. A unique link to birds and a strong name recognition.
2. A strong grassroots organization with its 500-odd chapters, state councils and 10 regional offices.
3. Ability to address conservation issues at local, state, and national levels.

Included among the recommendations for strengthening and giving Audubon more focus are:

1. Use "campaigns" as the primary vehicle for focusing its resources on protecting critical bird and wildlife habitat. Bridgerland's current campaigns include: protection of Logan Canyon, creation of Stewart Nature Park, and now the clean-up of feedlots along the Bear River.
2. Strengthen the grassroots political network of members, chapters and staff.
3. Create more "Audubon Centers" as a means of getting the Audubon message to the public.
4. Develop a conservation ethic through increased appreciation and awareness of birds, wildlife and habitat. Just as fastening seat belts and not smoking in buildings have become accepted ethics, so too we must strive for a conservation ethic.

Because of Audubon's historic beginning as a preserver of birds the Audubon membership wants to make birds central to its mission.

This strategic plan will be adopted in June. It seems likely that work in energy and population issues may be left to other organizations to pursue.

Other days were dedicated to reports on various Audubon projects. Wayne Martinson gave a superb report on the potential Audubon sanctuary located west of the Salt Lake Airport. This started with the gift of 107 acres of rather desert ground to Audubon. From this Wayne sought assistance from National Audubon and Ella Sorenson, and John Kadlec's efforts have combined mitigation areas of Kennecott Copper, Salt Lake Airport and Central Utah Project along with cooperation from gun clubs and other private holdings,

to form a 12,000 acre area that hopefully will become an Audubon Sanctuary. Half of the money raised by our Birdathon will go toward this project.

Mealtime gave members an ideal chance to exchange ideas on how to make a chapter more successful. Field trips included trips to the Birds of Prey Propagation Center, a raft trip down the Snake River past perhaps the highest density of raptors in America, and Al Larson's famous bluebird trail where he has banded over 8,000 bluebirds at the many, many bluebird boxes that he has erected. Al Stokes led two of his traditional "100-yard" field trips.

It is at meetings like this that members gain an appreciation for the tremendous accomplishments that Audubon has made through its 600,000 members.

Contribution

Geo/Graphics, Inc. of Logan made a \$250 contribution to the Bridgerland Audubon Society to show their appreciation for the efforts of Bryan Dixon on their behalf. Since he had refused direct compensation for his assistance, they hope this may be a fitting symbol of their appreciation. Thanks again, Bryan!

— Keith J. Maas
Vice President

A Weird Squirrel Nest

This winter Alice Lindahl and Veda dePaepe were skiing at Guinavah when their eyes were caught by a strange brown mass five feet up in a river birch. On closer inspection they saw that this was a huge mass of burdock about 3 feet from top to bottom and 18 inches across. Puzzled, they made further inspection and found an opening in the side. Tracks beneath the nest in the snow confirmed this was a red squirrel nest. Anybody who has shaped burdocks into toy baskets knows how tightly these seeds stick together. Smart squirrel!

Galapagos Islands! Ecuadorian Amazon

A group of wildlife and nature enthusiasts is being organized by Dr. Jack Kirkley, ornithologist of Western Montana College, to visit the Galapagos Islands and key natural areas in Ecuador for viewing birds and other wildlife. For more information write him at Western Montana College, 710 S. Atlantic St., Dillon, MT 59725 or call (406) 683-7321.

REGIONAL NEWS

Wolf Recovery Update Yellowstone and Idaho

It has been a very busy month for wolf recovery, so I wanted to take a moment and get some of the latest news out to you. Wolf recovery is streaming ahead, but not without some setbacks and the distinct possibility that anti-conservationists in Congress will try to stop further reintroductions. Read on.

Yellowstone

All three packs (Rose Creek, Soda Butte, and Crystal Bench) have been roaming Yellowstone's Lamar Valley and up to 15 miles north and 40 miles northeast of the park. These seem to be mostly forays to check out and establish new territories, rather than return home to Alberta. We'll keep our fingers crossed.

Around April 25, the alpha pair from Rose Creek were outside the park near Red Lodge, Montana when the male was illegally shot. Two days later federal biologists located the alpha female with eight pups underneath some spruce trees. When the male didn't return, she apparently didn't have time to dig a den.

In an effort to aid in the capture of those responsible for killing the male, National Audubon as well as Defenders of Wildlife each pledged up to \$5,000 toward a reward fund that ultimately reached \$12-\$13,000. While Defenders had its money on hand in an existing fund, we will have to raise ours from scratch. The good news in all of this is that the reward fund has already worked and the culprit has been identified. It appears that the Justice Department plans a forceful prosecution.

Until last Friday, May 19, biologists were bringing the female road-killed elk and deer to get her through a tough time with no other wolves to assist. They became concerned with her exposed condition, however, and on the 19th trapped her and the pups and moved them back to the Rose Creek pen. They'll be kept there for 6-8 weeks when the female would normally move them to a rendezvous site. All eight pups (4 male, 4 female) are doing well and weigh 4.5-5.5 pounds each.

The Soda Butte Pack has been holding in one spot just north of the park for three weeks and it is probable that they have a den and pups as well. The Crystal Bench pack of six is ranging widely up and down the Lamar Valley and doesn't appear to have pups this year.

Idaho

After losing one member to an illegal kill in January, the remaining 14 wolves have been doing fine. Most of these wolves remain with 20-30 miles of their release sites although five have moved northeast into Montana's Bitterroot Valley. As of last Friday, wolf B-3 had moved out of normal telemetry range and B-4 was 40 miles southeast of Missoula and one mile south of Interstate 90.

It appears that two male-female pair bonds have formed but no dens have been found and pups aren't likely this year. Cross your fingers for '96.

Future Reintroductions

Senator Conrad Burns of Montana, a long time wolf opponent, has vowed to kill funding for all future reintroductions, saying that it is an attack on ranchers and that the \$6.7 million cost through 2002 isn't warranted. Conservationists have noted the minuscule threat to livestock and the broad public support for wolf recovery. In addition, the total cost is equivalent to one nickel per person. Please call and/or write your Senators today and tell them Senator Burns is howling up the wrong tree.

- Capitol Switchboard, 202-224-3121. A 50¢, one minute call before 8:00 am.
- Senator _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

More news later as the story continues to unfold.

— Brian Peck

National Breeding Bird Survey

As part of the National Biological Service, the Breeding Bird Survey conducts census routes throughout the United States. In 1994, 2,904 routes were completed. In Utah, 53 routes were completed and 52 in neighboring Idaho. Only one route was completed in Rhode Island and 136 in California. In Utah 78 geographically located routes have been designated.

Each route is 24.5 miles in length with 50 stops at half mile intervals. All birds seen or heard and identified during a 3-minute observation period are recorded. All stops are defined points along the route. No method of coaxing is allowed. Routes are run in early to mid June, begin before sunrise, and the route must be completed within 4.5 hours, before bird activity ends.

Census routes are conducted by state or federal employees, or volunteers. Two routes have been designated to begin in Cache County. The "Nibley" route, a more appropriate name would be Blacksmith Fork, begins at the mouth of the Blacksmith Fork Canyon, proceeds up the canyon to Hardware Ranch, north to Saddle Creek and finishes in Elk Valley. The "Cache NF" route begins at the old Anderson Ranch along the Blacksmith Fork River, follows the Ant Flat road south to highway 39, then west along 39. The two Cache County routes were first run in 1994, and slightly over 50 species were observed on each route.

Members of the Bridgerland Audubon Society may be interested in expanding the data set collected along these routes. (A 3-minute stop once a year is not a sensitive observation.) A species list, and frequency/numbers of observation tables for each point would yield a much better index for short and long-term trends. A listing of the route stops may be obtained by any Audubon member. Individual volunteers or groups would only observe as many stops as they wished with no time limitations at each stop.

For further information and/or a listing of route stops, please contact: Dennis D. Austin, Wildlife Biologist, at 245-5261.

Are you reading this newsletter but STILL not a member of the National Audubon Society?



When you join the National Audubon Society, you become an important part of the most effective environmental organization in the world. An organization for nature and wildlife that reflects your concerns and rewards you with an impressive range of benefits.

AUDUBON magazine. Enjoy a year, six bimonthly issues, of our award-winning publication. Experience the photography and articles that transport you to the natural wonders of the world.

Free membership in your local Audubon chapter. Audubon members across the country have formed more than 500 local chapters, through which they are a voice for conservation in their communities. Chapters offer the opportunity to get active at the local level through conservation

and wildlife programs, birding field trips, and other activities. **Become an Activist.** Pledge to call and write your elected officials, and receive the *Audubon Activist*.

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Offers on Audubon products. From calendars to bird feeders to collectibles. **A strong voice in Congress.** Audubon is your voice on environmental issues. **Plus a host of other benefits.**

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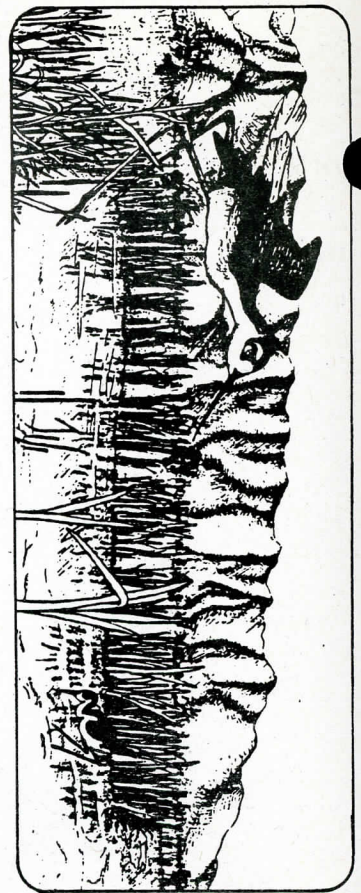
\$10 of dues is for AUDUBON magazine. Canadian and foreign members, please add \$10. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue of AUDUBON.



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THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
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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.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
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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
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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.