

THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 24, No. 10

June 1996

Great Horned Owls Take the Day

The water was high and the birds were abundant as twelve land dwelling creatures (11 human and one canine) gave up their "land legs" and floated down the Bear River on Mother's Day. We boarded our canoes at the Trenton put-in, where Jim tested the water for us after losing a small battle with his canoe and landing in the water. Despite Jim's example, the rest of us boarded our canoes unceremoniously and set off down the river with Alice Lindahl as our guide.

White pelicans, yellow-headed blackbirds, Canada geese, a cinnamon teal, a snowy egret, and a great blue heron were spotted at a marsh near the put-in, setting the pace for a great day of birdwatching under overcast skies. Franklin's gulls, swainson's hawks, a forster's tern, and a red-tailed hawk soared overhead, while our ears picked up the forster's tern, and a red-tailed hawk soared overhead, while our ears picked up the squak of unseen ring-necked pheasants, the song of yellow warblers, and the tail feather thump/whir of a snipe in its mating dance. Bright American goldfinches accompanied us throughout the day, as did always-vocal red-winged blackbirds and western meadowlarks. Barn, bank, cliff, and tree swallows were spotted in their various domains all along the river. Several nesting Swainson's hawks peered at us over their nest's rim; one may have been a dark-morph!

We pulled in for lunch at a green pasture equipped with marsh, large trees, and inquisitive cattle. Gypsy, canoe

dog extraordinaire, saved the day with her bark-then-hide bovine-scaring technique, and the herd of young cows left as abruptly as they came, leaving mosquitoes in their wake. To escape the voracious blood-suckers, we walked around the end to where a great horned owl had been seen in a tree. Not only did we find two adult owls, but we were treated to a fantastic view of three young owls in a nest! They were almost at "branching" age. were very large and fluffy, and looked down at us curiously with incredible orange eyes. A yellow-rumped warbler, downy woodpecker, and a house wren were also seen during the stop for lunch.

Song sparrows, northern orioles, spotted sandpipers, and killdeer flitted through the cottonwood and willow trees and along the banks as we continued. About two miles down river from the lunch stop, the heron rockery

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Calendar

Meetings

Thursday, June 13 General Meeting. Wayne Martinson and Ella Sorenson will present slides and a program on Audubon's Gillmor Sanctuary, the large wetlands refuge on the Great Salt Lake which was donated to Audubon recently. They will also discuss the relationship to other Utah wetlands and talk about Audubon's future in Utah. Meeting will begin at 7:30 P.M. in the Logan City Building, 255 North Main. All are invited and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Robert Schmidt, 755-9262 (evenings).

Wednesday, June 19. BAS Planning Meeting. Chair and Board members join to discuss projects and funding. As a member, your input is always welcome. Robert Schmidt will host this month's meeting at 1665 East 1350 North. For more information, contact Robert, 755-9262 (evenings).

Field Trips

BAS field trips are open to everyone. Unless stated otherwise, reservations are not needed, trips are open to all ages, and carpooling is available. If there is a trip you would like to lead or one you'd like to see offered, please call Bryan Dixon at 752-6830.

Saturday, June 15. Coldwater Lake Hike. Join us for a short hike to a small pond perched on the east side of the Wellsville Mountain Wilderness Area. This is a fabulous time for wildflowers, warblers, and butterflies. Great for families and children. The adventurous can continue on the trail to reach Stewart's Pass on the crest of the Wellsvilles for a spectacular view of the Great Basin. Main trip leaves 8:00 A.M. from the U.S. Forest Service office, 1500 East Hwy 89, and back by early afternoon. For more information, call Jack, 563-6816, or Louise, 755-3620.

Saturday, June 29. High Creek Waterfalls. A 3-4 mile round trip hike up the bottom of High Creek Canyon to find some beautiful waterfalls, cool and refreshing on a hot summer day. Leaders will help you identify forest plants and animals. The adventurous can continue on to the Beaver Ponds, two miles further up the canyon. This is the northern end of the Naomi Peak Wilderness Area, a jewel in the Bear River Range. Main trip leaves 8:00 A.M. from the U.S. Forest Service office, 1500 East Hwy 89, and back by early afternoon. For more information, call Jack Greene, 563-6816, or Louise Murch, 755-3620.

Saturday, August 3. Tony Grove Wildflowers Hike. A family hike in the Tony Grove area to study wildflowers and mountain birds. This spot was chosen

by the American Birding Association for one of their annual convention field trips, so it's got to be rich! The basins around Tony Grove harbor quiet groves of trees, limestone sinkholes, and rich meadows. The adventurous can continue on to the Naomi Peak summit, and if the thunderstorms are quiet, enjoy a panoramic view of northern Utah, stretching from Cache Valley to the Unita Mountains. Main trip leaves 8:00 A.M. from the U.S. Forest Service office, 1500 East Hwy 89, and back by early afternoon. For more information, call Jack Greene, 563-6816, or Louise Murch, 755-3620.

Edible-Medicinal Plants Field Trip

First of all, my mother dropped me off at Kayo Robertson's house where he was reading the paper under a lilac bush in his backyard. We waited for everyone to arrive.

When about 10 people were there, he gave us a short history of edible/medicinal plants in Cache Valley and how the Native Americans of the region used and prepared them.

We then walked around the yard learning the more basic and common edible plants, some of which are considered obnoxious weeds.

Then we carpoled to the mouth of Dry Creek Canyon to forage for other plants. We took plastic bags for collecting and gathered these plants: waterleaf, miner's lettuce, thistle, and a few others I can't remember. Kayo had already gathered cattail, cow parsnip, and stinging nettle. We had salad with salad dressing, pot herbs, and a strange kind of souffle with eggs, soy sauce, and wild greens. It was delicious.

— Dan Baird

Heron

Spreading its wing,
Magically across the marsh,
Where cattails wave,
From the magic of the wind god.
Long bill catches many fish.
Cattail fluff floats by its
Magical, black, depthful eyes.
Yellow beak holds many fish.
It carries them in its beak.

Floating magically down into the
Cattail leaf heron feather,
Blue as the dark night.
Heron

Four times heron circles the marsh,
Alighting with hardly a splash
On the blue-green water,
Landing with a soft flap of its
Dark wings
On a grey branch.

Heron

— Zac Bentley, age 6

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Great Horned Owls Take The Day

came into view. Over 20 nests, with between 15 and 20 great blue herons standing as sentinels were seen in young cottonwoods slightly off the river. A solitary red-tailed hawk nest (with sitting hawk) was seen in a nearby tree.

The take-out appeared around a bend in the river too quickly, but not before a northern flicker, American kestrel, yellow warbler, black-headed grosbeak, and beautiful adult male harrier showed themselves. A black-necked stilt flew over upon debarkment, rounding out our day with 45 species! Our trip ended with one other minor dunking. The day, however, was very relaxing, as the current carried us through a great birding area on the Bear River.

— Jenny Kincaid

Trip to Antelope Island

This year's trip to Antelope Island occurred on a beautiful weekend (May 4-5) for birding and naturalizing, with sunny skies, warm temperatures, and a gorgeous moonlit Saturday night for camping at the Garr Ranch with the Friends of the Great Salt Lake. Thanks especially to the keen eyes of Bryan Dixon and Jean Lown, we saw many birds of note, including black-bellied and semipalmated plovers along the causeway, and kinglets, horned larks, and a harrier in dizzying courtship display on the island.

The young naturalists along for the trip (the 10 and under set) took enthusiastically to sharpening their skills with binoculars. They also greatly enjoyed fishing for aquatic invertebrates with Theresa and Carl Zmola; their efforts yielded backswimmers (bugs) and mating brine shrimp along the causeway, and a remarkable dragonfly nymph at McIntyre Springs. Wet feet caked with mud were of course also part of the fun.

USU grad students Jennifer Bohannen and Billy Gunnells joined us at the ranch to share their knowledge of bison and pronghorn antelope. With Billy leading the way on Sunday morning, we observed most of the island's bison, and many of the island's antelope. Billy also produced an obliging burrowing owl in the sand dunes behind Bridger Bay.

Other highlights included a potluck feast with the Friends of GSL followed by an evening's hike to Mushroom Springs, and a Sunday walk to an old mulberry grove where kestrels tended their nest above us as we lingered in the sun to ponder the bones and fate of a bison (a little forensic entomology helped us to narrow the time of the animal's demise).

We ended our trip with Sunday lunch at Bridger Bay and a stroll on the sandy beach. It had been a great weekend of making new friends and joining them in exploring the island.

If you missed the trip this year, the 30 or so in attendance almost guarantee we'll run it again next year, so stay tuned!

— Ted Evans

Birding at Bill & Hillary's

It is nothing unusual to meet early in the morning to go observe birds. But the meeting place is not the typical southwest corner of the Fred Meyer parking lot . . . it's the lobby of the Marriott Hotel. And we are not venturing into the canyons or barrens, but into our nation's capital.

As Jack Greene and I "hike" through the canyons of concrete, we reach a haven of green, and also one of the best birding spots in Washington, D.C., the White House.

Being in the midst of such an urban area, I was unaware of the incredible birds still to be seen, but never doubt the observation of a naturalist! Birds that Jack saw and heard, and helped me to discover, include: mallards, ring-billed gulls, crows, flickers, common grackles, white throated sparrows, cardinals (they are RED!), blue jays, robins, house finches, mockingbirds, rock doves, mourning doves, house sparrows and starlings.

However, while enjoying the early morning magic, an inspiration entered into our thoughts! The White House guards, perched atop the White House, have the greatest vantage point possible. They surely should be converted to birding! Not only would they gain greater personal satisfaction and a higher quality of life, but their contributions to the government would also sky rocket. The security guards would love coming to work, would be happier, more observant, and could learn to relax a little.

Training the guards in bird identification would benefit not only the political world, but the scientific community as well. Why not have them participate in Project FeederWatch? They could "watch two birds with one stone . . ." by compiling scientific data and keeping our government officials safe!

— Merrilyne Lundahl

New Members

April

Alicia Backlund
Kent R Baker
Ross & Krislyn Ellio
G Hunter & D Bronson
Mike Jablonski
James Jacobsen
Joshua Lawler
Michah Nielsen
Larry Seymour
Alex Solla
Judith T Straquadine
Michael Timmons
Tim Watkins
Dwane A Young

May

Jamey Anderson
Mr Jerry Burn
Joanna Endter-Wada
Fran W Fejer
Kristi L Green
Marilyn Hammond
Mrs Julie A Hukee
James Judd
Ms Sandra A Lee
Ms Annette Pedersen
Kerri Taracena
Kennilee Thatcher
Kort Utley
Richard C Wacha

Renewing Members

April

Ted Alsop
Leon C Astle
Mr & Mrs John Barnes
Diane Baum
Mrs Marie L Borg
Dr. Edmund D Brodie, Jr.
C D Cheney
Michael Fish
Peggy Linn
Suzanne Marychild & David Bigelow
Mrs. Meredith Matlack
Austin McHugh
Paul Megerdichian
Jill Morgan
Jeanette Norton & George Wooton
Carmen Reich
Mr Rex E Robinson
Maryl A Sedivy
Mr Michael J Stones
Mr John K Wood

May

Howard M Deer
Mr Keith L Dixon
John Ellsworth
Ron Hellstern
Dr E H Berry Laughlin
Ivan G Palmblad
Alex Solla
Alan Stevenson & Catherine Sharpsteen
Gar W Workman
Theresa Zmo

NATIONAL NEWS

All You Ever Wanted To Know About Renewals

Occasionally we receive letters from members who question the appropriateness of an environmental organization mailing a series of renewal reminders to its members.

Sending our more than one renewal reminder prior to membership expiration is essential if we are to maintain our membership base. It would be great if we could send just one reminder to everyone and still retain them as members. But human nature being the way it is, some members renew after receiving their first notice, and others require more encouragement than that, over a period of months.

Renewal promotion programs are a result of extensive testing and analysis of timing, quantity and letter content. In 1993, in response to the feedback from chapter officers reflecting the concerns of our members,

we reduced the number of renewal reminders. While it did serve to lower our paper usage and postage costs, it also significantly lowered the renewal rate of our members. As a result, we lost thousands of members, leaving us no choice but to reinstate the previous, more successful renewal schedule.

Periodically a member's payment will cross in the mail with their next renewal reminder. This happens because we send our reminders third class mail (to avoid diverting valuable funds from our programs), which can take up to three weeks. Before mailing the reminders, we must do "lettershop," the term given to imaging the names onto the renewal notice, stuffing letters into the envelopes, and shipping them to the post office, which can take up to two weeks. Because renewals and payments sometimes cross in the mail, we include a line on our renewals asking members to disregard the renewal reminder if it is received after they have sent in their payment. Of course we are always happy to respond to inquiries regarding membership status. To check your membership, you may call toll free 800-274-4201.

While the processing of a renewal payment is immediate, it can take several weeks for delivery of *Audubon* magazine to resume if your membership has expired. Every two months we must let the printer of *Audubon* magazine know how many copies of the magazine we will need. Because many members renew the month before their membership is scheduled to expire, we make an educated guess as to the number of copies we will need. Sometimes we don't have enough of the current issue for those who have renewed at membership expiration, which means they will skip an issue. For this reason, the earlier you renew, the more likely it is that delivery of the magazine will continue without interruption. Advance renewal doesn't shorten your membership term; the additional time on your membership begins the month after your membership is scheduled to expire.

As a conservation organization, we are aware of the need to cut down on paper waste whenever possible. All of our membership promotional materials are printed on recycled paper. Moreover, all components of mailings are recyclable. Local recyclability depends on what services are available in your community. Letters on white paper with black ink can be recycled with white paper; those with colored ink, with mixed paper. Some mixed paper recyclers accept envelopes and some do not.

We are investigating alternatives to sending repeated renewal notices. Recently we tested a three-year membership offer. In addition, we are considering offering automatic renewals to our members whereby they would give prior authorization to have membership dues appear on their credit card statement once a year.

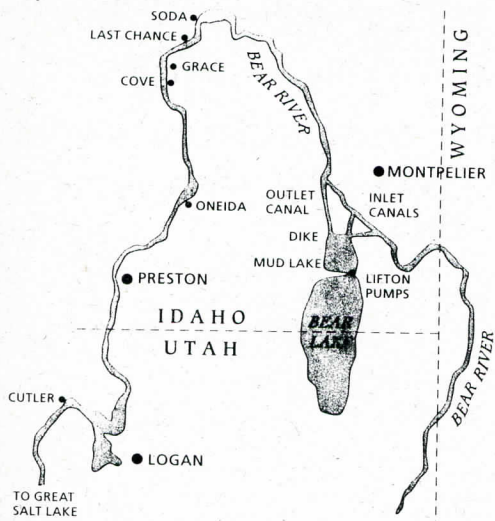
REGIONAL NEWS

Pacificorp of Portland, Oregon (the new owner of Utah Power and Light) is now beginning the relicensing process for three power projects on the Bear River in Idaho. These are the Soda project (W of Soda Spring, Id.), the Grace/Cove project (W of Grace, Id) and the Oneida project (NE of Preston, Id). Three hearings have been held and the public now has until 15 July to submit written comments.

This is the first (and most important) opportunity we have to tell Pacificorp how we want the Bear River to improve before they get another 50 year license. For some of us this is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity.

As we all know, the Bear River needs help. During the recent relicensing of the Cutler project, it got some. Thanks in large part to BAS representation, Cutler Reservoir marshes and riparian areas are seeing dramatic improvements, as is paddler access. Similar changes can be asked for in Idaho.

But to achieve these improvements, Pacificorp must hear from us in writing. I will outline some of the issues that you may want to write about.



Riparian

The most irresponsible degradation of riparian area has occurred in the Oneida Narrows as a result of awful road grading practice. For at least 15 years they have been cutting into the hillside and casting the dirt and debris over the bank and into the river or reservoir. The result is continuous landsliding along the hillside, smothered vegetation and loose spoil over the bank. Beside this loss of valuable streamside habitat, there is sediment increase, access limitation and aesthetic loss. I hope you will join me in insisting that Pacificorp restore these areas on both sides of the road from the top of the landslides to the water line.

Other riparian issues include fencing livestock and crops off of the water margins on Pacificorp and public land and revegetation of those damaged areas. A further goal should be to reduce reservoir fluctuation and huge peaking power flow variations which are eroding reservoir and river banks.

Boating

If you canoe, kayak or float the Bear River in Idaho (or would like to), you can ask for modest improvements to access on boatable reaches (see *Boating the Bear* by Jim Boone, published by BAS). All boating and camping facilities along the Bear in Idaho are grass and gravel and I think most boaters like them that way. But the take out at Last Chance Dam above Grace is particularly dangerous.

Some advanced kayakers would like to see water in Black Canyon, below Grace. There may be some conflict with the existing fishery in this stretch, but an experimental release should be considered. Certainly regular weekend recreational releases should take place below Oneida Dam. And an 800 number for flow information below all these dams should be instituted.

Other Issues

Idaho Department of Fish and Game is asking for minimum flows below all dams to enhance fish survival. Experimental minimum flow below Soda Dam resulted in increased growth rates and survival. Their dedication to improving the Bear River fishery through improving river health deserves our special support.

Water quality, especially sediment movement, will be extensively studied by Pacificorp and they are to be commended for that effort. They will have to be pressed to reduce ramping rates and peaking flows, no doubt, but their interest in water quality is encouraging. Point and non-point pollution sources may be identified by their studies, but not corrected.

A local rancher at one of these hearings suggested that Pacificorp establish a conservation fund from which grants can be made to private landowners for riparian improvements including fencing cattle off of banks. I suggested a youth conservation corps for similar purposes.

We have the next month and a half to express some ideas, questions, or interests we would like to see worked on before the next meeting, so get off the internet tonight and write your letter to Pacificorp.

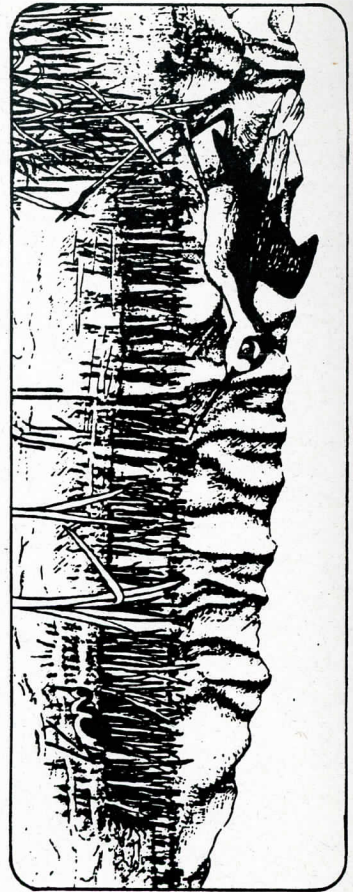
Write to: Michael Burke
Pacificorp
920 SW Sixth Avenue 610 PSB
Portland, Oregon 97204

— Currie Lockett
753--2622

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BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 3501
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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.

President	Robert Schmidt, 755-9262
Vice President	
Secretary	
Treasurer	Susan Drown, 752-3797
Conservation	Nick Strickland, 750-5035
Education	Jack Greene, 563-6816
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Field Trips	Al Stokes, 752-2702
Newsletter	Lois Olson, 752-9085
Circulation	Susan Durham, 752-5637
Hospitality	Tim & Jackie Henney, 755-6888
Hotline	Nancy Williams, 753-6268

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1993-96	Rebecca Echols, 752-2367
	Richard Mueller, 752-5637
1994-97	Bryan Dixon, 752-6830; Glen Gantz, 258-2748;
	Ted Evans, 753-2259; 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:
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 Chapter Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, CO 80322-1001

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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.