

### The Annual Fall Trip to Jackson

Three years ago the Kerkmann family was introduced to the annual Audubon trip to Jackson, to hear the elk bugle. It started out as just a mother-daughter trip. Daughter Jeanine (now 17) has made sure some family members have been represented ever since.

This year Jeanine was also involved with Jack Greene's environmental group LEAF at Logan High. The LEAF group had plans to use the Audubon fall trip as a group retreat. Thus Jeanine arranged for several of her friends to ride in Kerkmann's trusty old minivan. Jack canceled the official LEAF trip the night before the planned departure, because the weather report had become increasingly ominous, the closer it got to departure. Jack did not count on the hardy Kerkmann bunch. They refused to cancel the trip and only one of the original van passengers backed out. His slot was quickly taken by one of Jeanine's brothers, who had decided at the last moment, that skipping school was not such a bad deal. Thus, after being advised to bring thermal underwear, warm coats and rain gear, everybody proceeded as planned.

Thursday night was mayhem at the Kerkmann house, as participants dropped off their gear and Barbara (mother of now three participants, designated driver and generally considered to be certifiable) tried to fit everything into the van (some oversized packs finally ended up strapped to the roof rack), while at the same time helping one son finish up a term paper. Loading

proceeded until late that night, but the van rolled out of the driveway at 8:00 a.m. on Friday morning, as planned. Those going included Barbara Kerkmann, her daughter Jeanine, sons Joshua and Jonathan, and Jeanine's friends, Anna Marszal, Brooks Jones and Dave Roth.

Shortly after their arrival at the Gros Ventre Campground, true to the weather report, it started to pour. After a short visit at the Teton Science School and some time spent at the Moose Visitors Center to let the worst pass, the original seven and Terry Barnes and her daughter Jessie went on a brief hike along Jenny Lake. On their return to the campground they found that Alice Stokes' car had arrived with Alice, Reinhard Jockel, Marjorie Lewis and Helen. After dinner, Terry and Reinhard helped the new arrivals get set up, while Barbara took the teenagers to Jackson to check out the town.

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## November Calendar Meetings

Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 a.m., First Forest Breakfast Join other citizens in the first of a regular series of breakfast meetings to discuss concerns and issues on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Logan District Ranger will be there, as will representatives from other conservation groups. Anyone is welcome and any topic is fair game. The hope is to increase the exchange of ideas between the conservation community and the federal agency which manages some of the most beautiful land in Utah. This first meeting will be at JB's Restaurant, 461 North Main. Come early if you like; breakfast on your own.

Thursday, November 12, 5:30 p.m. <u>Board of Trustees</u> <u>Meeting</u>, at the Logan City Hall meeting room, 255 North Main. All BAS members are invited to join us as we review projects, priorities and issues.

Thursday, November 12, 7:00 p.m. General Meeting, at the Logan City Hall meeting room, 255 N. Main. Dr. Barre Toelken will speak on "American Indian Science: Discoveries in the Laboratory of Nature." There were many discoveries made by American Indians—about medicines, food, geography, etc.—which were not intuitive. How did their investigative process differ from today's "scientific method?" The public is invited and refreshments will follow the speaker's presentation.

Field Trips

All BAS trips are open to the public. For more information, call the trip leader listed at the end of each description.

Saturday, November 7, 9:00 a.m. The Ooze-to-Rocks Thing: A look at the geology of Cache Valley and the Bear River Range and how it was formed. A new field trip for us to explore what the rocks tell us about the land we live on. We'll visit the mouth of Logan Canyon to look at how it might have formed and see how the ancient Lake Bonneville contributed to the topography of the benches and "The Island" in Logan. Then it's on to Green Canyon to search the historic Temple quarry site, from which came the stone for the Logan Temple and Tabernacle. If you can imagine the ooze which created these rocks and what might have happened to it, you're on your way to becoming a certified geology enthusiast! If not, well, we'll help (geologists have wonderful imaginations). Bring warm clothes and meet at the USFS office at 1500 East Hwy. 89; we'll return by 12:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call Jim Evans or Suzanne Janecke, 752-3578.

Saturday, November 21. <u>Pre-winter Birding for</u> <u>Hawks and Things.</u> Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot north of Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East in Logan).

We'll head out in the valley searching for late migrating waterfowl on the reservoirs and hawks hunting the fields. We might find a short trail along the Bear River to search for those elusive "dickey birds." We should see Ferruginous as well as Rough-legged Hawks, and, who knows, we could see loons and an Old squaw or scoter is not impossible! Beginning birders welcome – a great way to start you Cache Valley Bird List. We'll return around lunchtime – unless we find Gyrfalcons that is. For more information call Bryan Dixon, 752-6830.

#### **Christmas Bird Count Alert!**

Mark your calendar for Saturday, December 19, for BAS's 22nd Annual Christmas Bird Count—the 99th year for the count in the United States. The CBC is conducted every year in the same 15 mile diameter count areas. Compilations are sent to a central database and an annual report is published to describe trends in bird populations. We put over a dozen teams in an area centered around Hyde Park, and manage almost every year to find 90+ species (though we've never broken 100). It's a wonderful and fun-filled way to spend a winter's day for birders of all levels of skill. After tromping around in the snowy fields all day, we meet that evening at someone's (heated) home for a potluck supper and reports from each team. If we're lucky, someone's seen something really unusual which we argue about, but then race out to see the next day. If you're interested in leading or participating on a team this year, contact Keith Archibald, 752-8258. Cost is \$5 per person to cover national compilation costs.

# Join the E-mail Alert for Information on Conservation, Outings

Got an e-mail address? Would you like to be informed of Audubon issues and outings? We don't share these addresses with any other organization; all notices are sent out by a local BAS representative. Send an e-mail to audubon@digitalpla,net with the words "conservation" or "outings" (or both) in the subject field.

#### **Bird Seed**

Bird seed is still available. Get it at Sunrise Cyclery, 138 North 100 East, Logan, where 50 pound bags sell for \$16. Too heavy to lift or don't have the means to pick it up? No problem. Call 563-6816 to make arrangements for free delivery!

#### **Annual Fall Trip to Jackson**

Continued from page 1

Saturday was the day for the main events. After breakfast the whole group returned to the Jenny Lake trail to hike in earnest - this time all the way to the Hidden Falls. Alice and Marjorie just came part of the way, then turned around. Reinhard, Terry and Barbara took their time getting to the destination, looking at a hairy woodpecker up close, watching some Brown Creepers and generally stopping frequently listening to birds or studying tracks in the muddy trail or plants along the wayside. Reinhard's encyclopedic knowledge of all three made this hike very enjoyable. The teenagers quickly became impatient with the slow progress and charged ahead. At the falls it was time to rest and eat lunch. While there we observed a Dipper as it scooted through the water and at times even seemed to be diving. Terry visited with two young women from New Hampshire and invited them to join the group at the campground. Some of the teenagers decided to forgo lunch and go on to a lookout point a ways up the trail. Reinhard and Barbara discussed ferns and old and new growth trees. On the way back there were some tame Stellar's Jays and Gray Jays that came close enough to eat some raisins Reinhard put on the ground for them. After returning to camp, group members had a quick dinner and welcomed the Elwood family who had just arrived, as well as the new friends from New Hampshire.

After dinner everybody piled into cars along with binoculars, blankets, coats, mittens and crazy creek type chairs. As the caravan approached the predetermined elk bugling spot, numerous cars were parked along the roadside and lots of people were standing and walking around. After some looking around, it was determined that a black bear was causing the commotion. Everybody piled out of the cars and joined the onlookers. The bear was slowly moving across a clearing, feeding on Hawthorn berries and seemingly oblivious of the throng of people watching it and taking it's picture. After watching the bear for some time, the group continued to their destination.

After a short hike from the parking area the group members settled down at the edge of the meadow to wait for the elk. Here, Alice Stokes was introduced to the comforts of a crazy creek type chair. As it started getting dark, a large male and female elk could be discerned with binoculars in the distance. The elk started their concert, but most of them remained unseen. Participants thought they heard five or six different elk in different locations, on both sides of the meadow. As it got dark, lots of stars could be seen in the temporarily clear sky, and Reinhard pointed out various stars, planets and constellations beyond the Great Dipper that everybody recognized. Some of the teenagers became bored sitting there and listening to the elk. Several curled up with their blankets, or in

their coats. Jon Kerkmann had to endure some teasing, as he snored and his friends delighted in pointing out to him afterwards that he had competed in volume with the elk's bugling.

Back at camp a campfire was started and Terry provided ingredients for smores. People stood around the campfire and got acquainted, reacquainted or better acquainted, and even the smoke, that shifted with the winds, could not drive them away for a long time.

Sunday morning the group broke up. Kerkmanns were packed and ready to leave first and so drove up to Jackson Lake for another brief hike and then the drive home, back to chores, homework and the daily routine. On the way the old minivan reached 190,000 miles, but arrived at home without problems despite advancing age and use.

Thank you, Terry, for organizing this trip for the last three years that we have attended. We appreciate your time and commitment. It was a great experience. Count us in for next year (who knows how many Kerkmanns will show up then)!

— Barbara C. Kerkmann

Here are some of the comments made by group members about the trip:

"I had a lot of fun. This is the third Teton trip I've been on. It was a blast. Hiking, bad weather and fun; nothing was unusual about it this time."

Jeanine Kerkmann, 17

"When it rained on Friday we went to the Moose Visitors' Center where they had lots of neat picture postcards. I found some excellent ones of the Tetons at sunrise and sunset. It was exciting to see the bear on the way to the elk bugling. It was the first bear I had seen in the wild."

Jon Kerkmann, 15

"It was a nice trip. We went on some nice hikes and animal watching excursions. We saw a black bear, some elk and some bison. It would have been funner if the weather had cooperated."

Josh Kerkmann, 15

"The trip to the Tetons was lots of fun. Although it was really cold and a little rainy, everything turned out great. We visited the Teton Science School and went on hikes. We had a campfire where we made smores. I really liked the animals we saw—deer, bison, moose, and a bear. I named the bear Susan."

Anna Marszal, 16

"Whoever was scared off by the weather missed a great trip. The rain was wet, but that's OK. We heard the elk bugle, but the best thing about that night was seeing a BEAR!"

David Lee Roth, II, 18

"Even though the weather wasn't exactly perfect at first, we went on a really fun hike to Jenny Lake and we saw a black bear. The last night though it was clear and the sky was filled to the brim with stars."

Brooks Jones, 16

**Board Stuff** (As opposed to bored stiff . . .)

BAS is governed by a Board of Trustees which meets once a month (see meetings listed in the Calendar). Good camaraderie as we fight the forces of evil and save the world. All BAS members are invited, of course.

Outings - "Who are those guys, anyway?" I love that quote from a scene in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," where the two heroes are being pursued endlessly by a posse over impossible ground. This, however, is the question of the season, but to be asked in reverse: "Who are those critters, anyway?" By now, most species have finished their reproductive work and are digging in for the long winter. On the surface, everything seems quiet and, well frankly, boring. Birds have stopped singing, the streams are way down, and even the plants are dropping their leaves. Ah, but there are still problems to work out for the naturalist. What IS that drab warbler? All ducks start to look alike. And the gulls, well, how many different immature plumages are there? If you look closely, you can even find cold weather insects, just when we all thought they all disappeared.

November and early December offer wonderful days after the hubbub of the beginning of academic year and before the snow fills the mountains for skiing. This is when we have to look carefully at all those critters and plants that we take for granted. Without breeding plumage or leaves, we resort to more obscure clues in identification, and in the process, we can discover the fresh woodpecker holes, the new burrows in the stream banks, and the textures and symmetries of the bark and branches on the trees. We have time to compare fine details of morphology and look for other clues, such as habitat, to help us identify things in our natural world.

Don't get caught indoors. There are still lots of things to do in the valleys and canyons. Grab those kids and a field guide and head out to look for little stuff. After a few hours of discovery, you can return for hot drinks. To help with all of this, we've got a few trips lined up and more in mind. You should also check out the Stokes Nature Center's Open House on Saturday, November 14, for children's stories at 10 a.m., a natural history hike at 1 p.m., and winter chemistry experiments from 2-4 p.m. There's no end of discoveries yet to make as we await the beauty of Cache Valley's winter season.

Conservation Updates – We're watching the developing interest in a Water Conservancy District in Cache Valley. We cannot be opposed to letting the public decide in a democratic election whether to create such a public entity as provided for in the new WCD enabling law which just took effect September 15. (This new law ended the process whereby a WCD could be created by just 5% of the property owners.) However, we remain concerned about the mission given it by elected officials and whether this mission is understood by the public. Months ago, the Cache County Water

Advisory board agreed to include objectives other than just building a "project" (i.e., a dam), such as studying groundwater resources in order to be prepared to counter Salt Lake City's demands for water rights in Cache Valley, evaluating pollution of surface and ground water, and developing ways to protect our resources as well as other far-sighted efforts which traditional local government has been unwilling to fund. However, we wonder whether these more noble objectives will be lost in the melee to get the district established and justify a tax levy? We'll see. But in the meantime, we pause when community "leaders" come up to us and ask, "Now, can you support the Barrens Dam?" No, I don't think so.

On other fronts we're working more closely with the Forest Service on various proposals (see our comments on the Bear Hodges clear-cut proposal elsewhere in this issue). We are losing some minor battles (for example, Representative Hansen's legislation to give away acreage of the Mt. Naomi Wilderness to a Hyde Park farmer has passed Congress), but we may be able to strengthen other parts of wilderness management having to do with limiting large group use.

On other fronts, several of our members are pursuing grants for wetlands conservation and there is more support than ever for a new Wild and Scenic inventory for Logan Canyon.

Membership – With two USU students now on our Board of Trustees (Doug Tempel and Merr Lundahl), we're once again going after USU students as new members. There is a refreshing increase in interest in the environment and conservation among "the younger generation" (did I just say that?), and we need to provide a mechanism for them to satisfy that interest. We are setting up membership tables again at Taggart Student Center to attract these students and our Board is making a new effort to contact new and renewing members to give us better direction on future programs. If you'd like to participate in contacting these folks, pressing the flesh and talking up our conservation agenda, let us know. It's fun to meet other people who share our convictions.

— Bryan Dixon, Prez.

#### Views on Bear Hodges Area Logging Project

## **USU Forestry Department Proposal** for Bear Hodges Analysis

The article in October's *Stilt* from the USU Forestry Department, proponents of the proposed clear-cut and selective logging project on the T.W. Daniels Forest and in the Bear Hodges area, encompassing some 2400 acres, is flawed in many respects. In particular it totally ignores the relationship of the proposal to watershed management. A watershed is not just the stream

flowing out, but the entire drainage up to the ridge tops, thus the term "watershed." It also ignores the numerous possibilities for research that exist throughout the Logan Ranger District, where numerous forest openings already exist from previous logging practices. As a scientific organization, Willow Creek Ecology and its President, Dr. John Carter, have been documenting watershed conditions throughout the Bear Hodges area for nearly a decade. The results of this work have shown that watershed conditions are severely degraded from overgrazing by livestock. Every forest opening is grazed and trampled to the point that topsoil has been lost, soil nitrogen has been reduced by half and large scale erosion is taking place. Soils are compacted with the result that water infiltration is reduced, runoff accelerated and soils remain dry throughout the summer season. To create more forest openings with the continued presence of livestock will result in the spread of these degraded conditions into more areas. The scientific literature has documented that the presence of livestock in forests result in removal of the herbaceous understory, drying of soils and increased stress on the trees making them more susceptible to disease or insect infestations. Contrary to the position taken in Fred Baker's article in the Stilt, watersheds will be impacted by this project.

For the past eight years we have documented these deteriorating soil conditions to the Forest Service with no action on their part to correct them. The Environmental Assessment prepared for the Bear Hodges project must consider the impacts of the proposed action, including the cumulative effects resulting from the proposed action in addition to other management practices and activities taking place in the project area. The Forest Service must consider the effects of grazing in this proposal. To allow this project to go ahead with a Finding of No Significant Impact would violate the NEPA process which should require an Environmental Impact Statement which would entail a much more thorough analysis of the consequences of the project. If you would like to know more, contact John Carter at 753-6062 or wce@sisna.com.

> — John Carter, PhD President, Willow Creek Ecology, Inc.

#### OK, Now Our View on Bear Hodges

This summer, the Logan District of the USFS published an EA on a proposed timber cut along the ridges and draws of the lands around the Daniels School Forest south of the "Bear Lake Summit." The Daniels Forest is a 2500 acre parcel, 640 acres of which are owned by the USU and the rest—1,920 acres—owned by you and me as part of the National Forest.

Various activists within Audubon, CPLC, and the High Uintas Preservation Council read the EA, several times, in an effort to figure out what was going on and why. On its face, the proposal was to clear cut almost a square mile of lodgepole pine forest in various patches and "treatments" and then watch what happens as it grows back. This summer, BAS sent a response to the EA questioning the scientific basis of the action and challenging the "purpose and need." Then, in a surprise move, several USU faculty published a letter in our *Stilt* attempting to justify the project on the basis of silvicultural (timber cutting) research.

Following that letter, we had a meeting with personnel at the Logan District office to discuss the proposal. As a result of that meeting we still think the proposed action is unnecessary and would result in irreparable harm to the forest on our public lands.

Frankly, it isn't clear what is really going on here. The language of the EA and the letter in the Stilt lead one to believe that the purpose of the project is research. In the Stilt article, the authors (Mssrs. Baker, Brunson and Long) argue that public forests have been cut so thoroughly that timber companies are being "forced" to seek timber on private lands. The Bear Hodges project would clear-cut lodgepole public forests and cut portions of the old-growth spruce-fir forest in a monitored experiment to determine the impacts of some new techniques in order to improve cutting practices on private lands. They pooh-pooh impacts on watersheds ("there are no streams in the spruce-fir portion"). Write off the problems with (almost certainly increased) grazing impacts as "a fact of life in most of Utah's forests," and downplay the loss of old-growth spruce-fir ("old growth forests do not lie forever"). It would seem that the proposal is to cut down our local public forests because timber companies have screwed up all the other public forests and we want them to know better when they move to private forests.

It will take decades for this area to regenerate, and in the meantime we have no firm plans to control grazing on any but a part of the study area or to limit irresponsible ORV use of the cleared lands which will lead to yet more ghost roads. Do you see a problem with that?

On talking to the Forest Service personnel, one hears different reasoning. They say this is *not* being driven by USU researchers, but rather is an effort to manage a corridor ecosystem. They believe that the large evenaged lodgepole pine forest is unnatural and a result of fire suppression. Like any homogeneous ecosystem, it may be susceptible to highly destructive insect infestations or catastrophic conflagration. The spruce-fir portion of the area is old growth, but also not natural as firewood harvesting and various other logging operations have already left scars that are unnatural. Further, since many trees in the spruce-fir sections are 200 years old or so, they are also susceptible to insect infestations.

Bear River Range as too small an ecosystem to support species which depend on old-growth forests, but valuable as a corridor between such rich forests to the north and south. It does, however, provide a corridor whereby populations which are expanding can take temporary respite while moving between larger forests to the north and south. While here, the odd set of parents may even raise a brood as they search for suitable ranges and territories. If we don't act now, the USFS argues, we could lose large portions of this forest to insect and fire, and as a consequence, these species will lose the valuable links between other old-growth areas.

The problem with this approach is that, although there are reasonable plans to work within the structure of these tree communities, the plan ignores "resultant" and "cumulative" impacts. It treats the logging in isolation, failing to address the extensive problems with overgrazing and the inability to control off-road vehicle abuse (which is regarded as an intractable problem even by the Forest Service). Further, we are not facing an emergency. There is no reason we have to do this "treatment" now. Although the Forest Service attempts to justify the timber cutting as a piece of an overall management plan, they are not adequately incorporating the mitigation of other impacts into this plan, insisting that grazing must be addressed in separate management plans for each allotment. ORV impacts must be addressed in the Travel Plan, and other concerns such as noxious weeds should be addressed in yet other plans.

Moreover, many of the assumptions about our historic patterns of forest species and the effects of various treatments are untested. The data is woefully inadequate and the scientific community needs time to test the assumptions and conclusions.

If there is no emergency, why not accept the Forest Service's work as a starting point—and a good one. Let's examine other assumptions about how the forest got the way it is, how this area relates to other nearby areas of forest communities, and maybe even wait for data from private forests to help us manage our public forest. It is past time to think of our forests as just sources of logs for contractors and cheap forage for ranchers. These lands and resources belong to all of us, and if we're going to cut down these old trees, and tear apart the ecosystems they create, we'd better be goldanged sure we understand how they really work and be prepared to control the impacts which follow and which could reek further damage.

There is tremendous value in articulating a proposal and letting it age awhile to mature and improve with further discussion. I am willing to sacrifice part of our forests for science — after all, no species, perhaps even our own, lasts forever. However, we need to do this intelligently, with care and thought for the future.

There is no rush. The EA itself admits there are many advantages to the "No Action" alternative. And the silvicultural scientists at USU can still learn a great deal about the larger aspects of the ecosystem there before we log it (again).

BAS will push for a hold on this project. If you are also concerned about this, come to the next Forest Breakfast or any of the Audubon meetings and make your voice heard

- Bryan Dixon

## What's New at the Nature Center

We're having an Open House on Saturday, November 14 from 9-5 to celebrate one year of nature center programs! The celebration will last throughout the day with both scheduled events and on-going activities. All programs are free to both nature center members and non-members!

#### **Activities**

- Apple Eating Contest
- Preview and Early Bidding on Nature Center Auction Items
  - (Auction event scheduled for November 21 at Zanavoo Lodge!)
- Hands-on Displays, Scavenger Hunts, Nature Trivia Contest
- Naturalists Available for Nature Walks from 11-2

#### Scheduled Programs

**10:00 – Story Hour** – *Owl Babies* and *Stellaluna* We'll read both stories and then decorate owl and bat cookies! An optional hike will be offered for older children.

**1:00 – Natural History Hike** with local naturalist Kayo Robertson - perfect for families.

2:00 - 4:00 - Nature in Winter Chemistry Experiments with local chemist Rick Hoff - should be a "blast!"

#### First Annual Fundraiser

Join us Saturday, November 21 for the Stokes Nature Center First Annual Fundraiser at Zanavoo Lodge located in Logan Canyon. Tickets are \$15 and are available at the nature center, Straw Ibis, Trailhead Sports, and Sunrise Cyclery.

Here's a sampling of the items donated for the Auction: Handmade Quilts

Beaver Mt. Lift Tickets

Several Naturalist Led Outings, including:

A birding trip (with our own Bryan Dixon)

A wildflower walk with Jack Greene

A day of sailing on Bear Lake with the Henneys A Bed and Breakfast Stay at Zanavoo Lodge Artwork from Local Artists including Jerry Fuhriman Logan Canyon Dipper Sipper Coffee from Straw Ibis

For more information on the Open House and the Dinner-Auction Fundraiser, please call the nature center at 755-3239.

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may your path lead you to the first annual allen and alice stokes

# nature center dinner/auction fundraiser

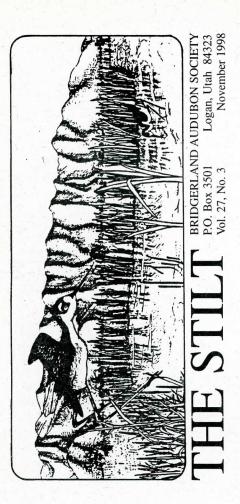
saturday, nov. 21
zanavoo restaurant
highway 89 in logan canyon

social hour/silent auction 5:30 to 7 buffet dinner and live auction 7

christmas gifts available \$15 tickets on sale at the nature center, the trailhead, sunrise cyclery & straw ibis







Nonprofit Organization
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The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, September through June, in the Meeting Room of the Logan City Building, 255 N. Main. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, September through June, The Conservation Committee will meet the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in Room 3 in Logan City Library. 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.

#### 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.

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Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.

Send this application and your check to:

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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.