



# THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

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MAY 1999

## Sounds of the Boreal Owl

We were on a winter camp with our school. We cross country skied on the Franklin Basin Road and had lunch at the mouth of Hell's Kitchen. Later, we skied up through Hell's Kitchen to find the yurt by Steam Mill Peak.

After dinner, we played a few games, read a couple stories, and then got ready to had out to sleep. Some of us were debating on taking a moonlight ski through the trees but instead we decided to take a walk just outside of the small aspen grove where the yurt was located. Stu, Bill, Anne (the adults on the trip) and myself were in a circle in a snow covered meadow above the yurt. We were checking out stars and clouds, and then we heard a strange call coming from Hell's Kitchen. The call was fairly strong so we knew it had to be close. Bill and Stu were discussing if it could be a snipe, because the call did sound the winnow of a snipe. But the snipe doesn't live in this habitat. We listened for several more minutes hearing the call and narrowing down the possibility to an owl. Then we heard another owl but there was no doubt in our mind that it was a Great H orned Owl. Bill, who said the snipe like call was probably an owl, said, "I'll listen to a tape of owl calls when we get back home." As we walked to our beds, we tried to memorize the call

we heard. Later, while Bill and I tired in our tent, we could still hear the owl's mysterious call.

Monday at school, Bill announced, "Great news, the call was a Boreal Owl which usually lives north of the U.S. border." He played a recording of the Boreal Owl and it was the same call that we heard that night. Bill showed me from a birding book where the Boreal Owl lives, and we could not find a Boreal Owl that lives in northern Utah.

Now that we have confirmed its identity, I think it is really cool that I was one of the first people in Utah to hear the sounds of the Boreal Owl.

*Shane R. Peterson*  
(8th grade, Cache Valley Learning Center)

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# May Calendar

## Meetings

**Tuesday, May 4, 7:00-8:00 a.m. Forest Breakfast** at JB's Restaurant. Meeting with local USFS District Ranger, Brian Ferebee, to discuss concerns and issues on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Anyone is welcome; breakfast on your own.

**Thursday, May 13, 7:00 p.m. General Meeting, Bees in the Bear River Biota (and elsewhere)** This month's speaker will be Dr. Jim Cane, a Research Entomologist at USU, who will be sharing insights of the natural history of bees, including their distribution, nesting biologies, sociality, reproduction, floral relations and pollination. Refreshments will be served afterward.

**Tuesday, May 20, 7:30 p.m. Conservation Committee.** Meet in Room 2 of the Logan Library, 255 North Main. We'll continue our planning for wetlands monitoring, discuss the recently filed appeal on the Bear Hodges decision and discuss other issues. For more information, contact Bruce Penderly, 792-4150.

## Field Trips

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

**Friday-Sunday, May 7-9. Great Salt Lake Bird Festival.** (This is not officially a BAS field trip, but it sounded like fun, so we put it on our list!) The first ever Great Salt Lake Bird Festival will include seminars, field trips, food, birding materials, birding equipment, music and other entertainment. Most activities for the festival will take place at our start from the Davis County FairPark at 151 South 1100 West, Farmington, Utah. Hosts for the festival include Great Salt Lake and Wasatch Audubon Societies. For a registration packet including activity schedule, fees, maps and lodging information contact Davis County Tourism, P.O. Box 618, Farmington, UT 84025. Phone number is 801-451-3286. e-mail is [tour@co.davis.ut.us](mailto:tour@co.davis.ut.us)

**Saturday, May 8. International Migratory Bird Day.** We'll celebrate IMBD by searching for Neotropical migrants in both the valley and Logan Canyon. Details are still being worked out, but it's a sure bet we'll see - and hear - some interesting birds. We'll cover a lot of habitats and help each other learn visual as well as auditory identification skills. For more information, contact Keith Archibald, 752-8258.

**Saturday-Sunday, May 15-16. Annual Bear River Canoe Trips.** They're back again! Two one-day trips down our own Bear River to explore the wildlife and riparian habitats. We're sure to see some good warblers and the occasional beaver and muskrat. One year we even had an elk swim the river just in front of us! Ponder the Great Blue Heron rookery which went from 100 nests in 1986 to ZERO in 1997 and now back to

over 40! There may even be owls on nests. Reservations required and numbers limited; rental canoes at USU Outdoor Recreation or Trailhead Sports. Call Jean Lown, 752-6830, to register for Saturday, or Don McIvor, 563-6189, to register for Sunday.

**Saturday, May 22. Logan Canyon Ecology.** Learn how plants and animals interweave their lives to form the ecology of Logan Canyon and why we work so hard to preserve this environment. Jack Greene, naturalist, teacher and wilderness ranger, will lead us in a trip of exploration. No long hikes but we'll do some walking. Bring water, lunch, and meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East, Logan). Return by mid-afternoon. Carpooling will be available. Call Jack, 563-6816, for more information.

**Saturday Evening, June 5. Edible and Medicinal Plants.** Here's your chance to explore the variety of plants growing here in Cache Valley that have been found to have direct value as food or medicine for people. We'll leave in late afternoon, search out some edible plants and cook them up for a fashionably late dinner. Trip limited to 10 people, and registrations are required two weeks in advance. Materials fee \$5. For more information and to register for the trip, call Kayo Robertson, 563-8272.

**Saturday, June 12. Tony Grove Woodpeckers and Hummingbirds.** Tony Grove is the place to be to find Lincoln's Sparrows, Three-toed Woodpeckers, Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Golden-crowned Kinglets, those difficult Empidonax Flycatchers, and many other mountain birds. June is the time to be there, as the snow has just left, the trees are not fully leafed out, and the birds are still singing. Whether you want quiet solitude to appreciate the nuances of bird song, or a spirited walk along the various mountain trails, the opportunities are there. Bring water, lunch, and meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East, Logan). Return by early afternoon or stay for a longer walk. Carpooling will be available. Call Bob Atwood, 752-9284, for more information.

### Coming Outings - Watch for details:

**June 16** - Spring Creek Rookery Canoe Trip

**July 10** - Herbs to know and love.

**July 17** - Bear River Bottoms Canoe Trip.

**July 31** - How does a forest work? A field trip to explore forest ecology, Fred Baker.

**August** - Wildflowers in the Bear River Range, Jack Greene

**August** - Birds and mushrooms near Naomi Peak

**August** - Back to the Barrens

E-mail service provided by XMission. Use the following addresses to contact your BAS leadership:

[stilt@xmission.com](mailto:stilt@xmission.com) - for newsletter items

[audubon@xmission.com](mailto:audubon@xmission.com) - for anything else



# Sounds of the Boreal Owl

Continued from page 1.

## Epilogue

What a bonus! We had a great trip, owl or not. The thing our secretive little visitor from the north added, was the element of discovery. With friends and students, we had the opportunity to hear an unfamiliar sound, track down it's identity, and ended up learning about an unusual creature that shares the Bear River Range with us, at least for this year.

After listening to the owl's calls for several hours that night at the yurt, I was excited to check out my tapes at home. What happened next still gives me the goose bumps a little. I found my tapes, which hadn't been touched for a couple of years, figured out which side of the two tapes the calls would probably be on and plugged it into my stereo. The first sound that came out of my speakers was the beautiful, winnowy sound that I had heard just the night before! I hit the rewind on my tape and cued it to the deep-voiced man that announces the bird before each call and sure enough it was the Boreal Owl. That night at the yurt, Stu had mentioned a conversation with a UDWR biologist sighting Boreal Owls further north up Franklin Basin, near the border of Idaho. It was shortly after that when we heard the first calls of the unidentified owl.

I played the tape for my students, who concurred with me on the identity of the call, but after a few days of talking with other birders, playing other owl calls and reading, I was beginning to doubt myself a little. Boreal Owls had not been officially reported in Cache County. Maybe it was just a Western Screech Owl a little bit out of its element. The only thing to do was try to locate the bird again.

The next weekend, Stu Reynolds, Tim Slocum, and myself decided to head back up to the yurt, spend the night and try to allay any doubts. We got to the yurt at about 6:30 p.m. after a couple of hours of sweat, had a great supper and dried our clothes within the comfortable confines of the little wood and canvas shelter. We ventured out into the darkness at about 9:00 p.m. and soon heard the call again. It took us about an hour to locate the bird in a small grove of firs on a knoll. At first we tried to get an eye on the owl by scanning the trees with our head lamps. The little guy was pretty tolerant for about 15 minutes, then we heard it calling from a distance. Oops! At that point we pulled out the tape deck. After playing a few calls, all went silent. Twenty minutes passed before we heard it again—right next to us! On came the lights and there it was, perched on a dead limb in plain view about 20 feet away. It stayed there until Stu just got the camera aimed, then disappeared into the depths of the foliage. The next half an hour took on a 'three stooges go birding' atmosphere as we stumbled around the small grove of trees trying to coax the bird into camera range again. We managed to snap a couple of pictures, one of

which turned out pretty decent, then skied back to the yurt in the light of a beautiful gibbous moon.

That night, while basking in the feeling of discovery and comradery with my friends, we again will sleep to the sounds of the Boreal Owl.

## Welcome to New Trustees

Four trustees were elected by our general membership in April to serve three year terms until spring of 2002: Allen Christensen, Doug Tempel, Richard (Dick) Hurren, and Val Grant. The Trustees are responsible for the direction and organization of BAS, but they rely on the members to carry out our programs and activities. If you don't know one or more of these people, you should give them a call and talk about where you'd like to see BAS head in the coming year; their phone numbers are on the back of the *Stilt*. If you'd like to become more involved in BAS, let them know that, too.

## Audubon Banquet a Success

This year's banquet drew about 95 people to the Coppermill for fellowship, recognition of outstanding citizens, and to hear Dr. James MacMahon speak on Global Change. Bruce Pendery presented the Allen Stokes Conservation Award to Gordon and Nadene Steinhoff for their years of efforts to conserve important natural resources in the Cache Valley. In particular, he noted their work to prevent unnecessary road construction in Logan Canyon and their remarkable efforts to fight a Water Conservancy District. Jack Greene presented the Carl Johnson Education Award to Ron and Wendy Hellstern for their years of work with the youth of this valley. They have won numerous awards for a variety of environmental education efforts and instituted many innovative and fun programs for kids to learn about nature, including feederwatch programs, a backpack science program. They have both served on the BAS Board of Trustees and led numerous field trips to places as far away as the California coast. All four of these individuals have the appreciation of all BAS members; they serve as a model for what citizens can do to make a difference in our local environment.

Dr. Jim MacMahon then brought our attention to a global environmental phenomenon when he spoke about global change. Some aspects of global change are indisputable, such as increasing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, population growth, and warming. He described how these parameters are affecting some species, but the overall effects are still very insidious and difficult to predict. Almost certainly, however, different places will see different changes, and this climate change may occur faster than animal species or human cultures can adapt. We, as environmentalists, need to be aware of the ongoing research on global change. The talk was informative, relevant and not a little humorous. Thanks to Jim for sharing his understandings with us.



## Checklist Challenge Continues

How many species of birds can you identify before the year 2000? The BAS Board of Trustees wants to remind our members about our Checklist Challenge. Keep a list of the wild bird species you identify in Cache County beginning January 1, 1999 and receive recognition and awards at our next banquet. This is not a competition between individuals, but rather an opportunity to push yourself to observe the world around us. The complete rules were published in the April *Stilt*. Most importantly, have fun trying to identify the myriad species in our valley. And don't forget to *watch* them; just identifying is only half the fun. Try finding an individual bird and follow its movements from nest to feeding area and around its territory. Quiet observation can be very rewarding, not to mention relaxing.

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

*BAS is governed by a Board of Trustees that meets once a month (see Calendar). All BAS members are invited, of course.*

**Outings** – May and June are two of the most active months of the year, wildlife-wise. Year-rounders as well as migrants are trying to figure out (maybe again) how to raise another brood. They're talking to each other about who's the coolest, most radical dude in the marsh and strutting their stuff. Unfortunately, there is only one May and one June each year! So, get out there on your own or on one of our field trips to explore the world around us. And keep an eye on the Herald Journal for late breaking announcements about evening canoe trips. If you've got an outing you'd like to lead or want to see us lead, contact Keith Archibald, [archie@xmission.com](mailto:archie@xmission.com), or 752-8258.

**Environmental Education** – The Stokes Nature Center is administering the Environmental Education Grants program this year. If you're a public or private school teacher and need a few hundred bucks for a special environmental education project, contact the SNC to get the details on how to submit a proposal. You can reach them at 755-3239, or contact [jlevy@logannature.org](mailto:jlevy@logannature.org). The deadline for this year's proposals is June 1.

**Conservation** – Winter, wetlands, wildlife and woods (how's that for alliteration?), those are the kinds of conservation issues we're working on right now. The WCD was defeated, but the need for water planning remains. People for Wise Water Planning (PWWP) dropped their official 501(c) (3) non-profit status a few years ago, but in the flap of the WCD, has become active once again. Former members are trying to help the county design an accountable organization (such as new county department) that will address real local problems with practical and sensible solutions. For more information, contact Bruce Pendery, our own Conservation Chair, or Mae or Merv Coover.

It seems like wetlands issues will be with us until we have no more wetlands (so hopefully a long time!). We continue work on the Amalga Barrens Dam (did you hear that American Rivers has listed the Bear as one of the 10 most threatened rivers in the U.S.?). We've launched our Wetlands Maze education project and started a Wetlands Watcher program that lets individuals choose an area to monitor for construction projects that are draining or filling an obvious wetland. See Bruce Pendery's article elsewhere in this issue for details. This shouldn't put members in confrontation with landowners, but rather will let us serve as the eyes and ears for the Army Corps of Engineers.

Wildlife issues are a big part of BAS's environmental agenda, whether the management issue is wetlands or woods. I'm always amazed how little most of us know about wildlife, but how we all seem to have such strong opinions. Some of these are particularly dangerous, such as a recent effort by Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (the same group that brought you Proposition 5). They argued at a recent Northern Regional Advisory Commission meeting that, "there aren't enough deer and elk for us to kill, so we should kill more natural predators such as cougar and coyotes, so there will be more deer and elk to kill." (What a concept.) Ideas like this make it hard to remember that there are many responsible hunters out there. Unfortunately, however, non-consumptive wildlife users who attend the Regional Advisory Committee meetings are often made to feel pretty intimidated by some of the radical thinking individuals. If we don't attend, however, the DWR will only hear from a narrow interest group. We badly need more folks to involve their friends who are responsible hunters, and we need to get more involved with DWR policies and programs that also protect our non-game species. Look for upcoming announcements about new local vendors for the Heritage Conservation Stamp, which can be a source of income for the DWR to use for non-consumptive programs.

On the "woods" front, Bear Hodges continues to be an issue. Several groups, including Willow Creek Ecology, the High Uintas Preservation Council, Citizens for the Protection of Logan Canyon, and the Logan Canyon Coalition have filed a formal appeal of the USFS decision to pursue Alternative 3 in the Bear Hodges Analysis document. The appeal was authored by John Carter and is extremely well written, in stark contrast to the EA itself. It raises many issues with the EA, such as the confusion over whether the project is essentially research or forest health maintenance, and the lack of information presented to support either one. If even effectively challenges whether there really were adequate alternatives. BAS did not sign on to the appeal, but the Board will certainly be sympathetic with many of the arguments and questions raised in the appeal. We'll be following this issue, for this could be a federal action having a very significant impact on the environment.



The Wasatch-Cache National Forest has officially kicked off its new forest planning effort. See their web site, <http://www.fs.fed.us/wcnf/>, and go to the section on Forest Planning for a description. For their web site, "Our current forest plan is 14 years old and needs updating for several reasons. First, the plan needs to be updated with new scientific understanding of land use effects on watersheds and wildlife habitat. Second, it needs to respond to changes in the social situation, including large increases in demand for recreation, changing values, and needs of forest users. Third, it needs to be revised to meet the requirements of the law that require revision every 10-15 years. This means we need to complete a revision by the end of 2000—about 21 months." Comments to the "preliminary analysis of the management situation" (yep, that's what they call it) are due by June 1. Please send your comments by June 1, 1999 to: Bernie Weingardt, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Attn: Revision Team, 8236 Federal Building, 125 South State, Salt Lake City, UT 84138. or on-line at: [wcnf\\_revision/r4-w\\_c@fs.fed.us](mailto:wcnf_revision/r4-w_c@fs.fed.us).

Also in the worked is the Logan District's first serious review of a grazing allotment in almost 30 years. This first one will concern the Cache-Rich Allotment on the border between Cache and Rich Counties south of the Logan Canyon summit. The forest Breakfasts are a great way to meet some of the players and find out how you can affect this process.

In yet another example of how not all conservation work is confrontational, several BAS members spent a recent evening cleaning up the highway west of Richmond. This is BAS's designated section, and you could tell it's been a while since we've been there. Teri Peery organized the effort with Allen Christensen, and they had help from Jackie Henney, Chris Himmel, Merr Lundahl, and Dan Miller, who put in a good evening of work despite threatening skies and winds that tried to blow the litter right back out of the bags. Thanks to these folks for a great effort—that highway looks great—for awhile, anyway.

— Bryan Dixon, President

## Breeding Bird Survey Routes Available

Steve Hedges, the BBS coordinator for Utah, has put out a call for volunteers to help with Breeding Bird Survey routes. There are thirteen routes in Utah that need to be run this year, and he can't find anyone to do them. They are located throughout the state from Lake Powell to the Great Salt Lake. The general *modus operandi* is to follow the route, stopping at predetermined spots for predetermined lengths of time and count all the birds you can detect. The routes are run several times a year, and the data compiled to determine population trends and identify possible threats to birds. If you or anyone you know might be interested in taking on one of these routes, contact Steven Hedges at [utahbirds@usa.net](mailto:utahbirds@usa.net) or Todd Black at [tblack@gis.usu.edu](mailto:tblack@gis.usu.edu).

## Snowmobiles, Persons Afoot, Deer and Elk: Myth and Fact

You may have heard the claims that backcountry skiers disturb our deer and elk more than snowmobilers. I heard it first at one of our Forest Service breakfasts. With some help, I have found at least two of the journal articles upon which the claim is based, both from the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* (199986, vol. 14, p. 63-68; and 1992, vol. 20, p. 375-381). David Freddy in Colorado is the common researcher in both studies, which were publicly funded. Both studies confronted wild elk (or deer) with either an approaching snowmobiler or a person on foot using skis or snowshoes. Observers hidden in distant blinds remotely monitored the animals' responses in terms of degrees of alertness or flight. The mule deer were in Colorado where they are annually hunted; the elk were at Yellowstone. I was satisfied with the experimental designs, replication and statistical analyses.

Deer and elk ultimately fled in response to both sources of disturbance, flight costing them 2-5% or their daily caloric intake. Animals perked up to snowmobilers at a greater distance, but were more prone to flee an approaching person afoot, especially in areas with infrequent human contact. At Mammoth Hot Springs, where elk are more habituated to people, skiers had to approach to within 50' of the herd, which would then move off a mere 120'. Visible alertness always preceded flight. Groups of people were no worse than single individuals.

Interestingly, however, the experimental limitations necessitated that the snowmobiler approach the deer or elk at constant speeds of 8-15 MPH, without wavering, turning or stopping. Furthermore, the study was of necessity on a per-encounter basis; if snowmobilers traveling at 8-15 MPH encountered just three times as many herds in a day as skiers, then their damage would be the same. If snowmobilers travel faster than 8-15 MPH, or stop or accelerate, then no conclusion can be drawn from these studies. It would be reasonable to counter that snowmobilers don't putt along at 8-15 MPH, and that they cover much more ground than a skier does in a single day. If they do, they will disturb deer and elk more intensely and frequently than reported in these two studies. Furthermore, if they access more remote areas than skiers, the deer and elk that they encounter will be more sensitive to disturbance as well. These encounters will likely be of consequence during harsher winters with long-standing deep snow when access to food becomes critical.

Therefore, while the studies did find differences between snowmobiler and skier impacts on wildlife, the conclusions a reasonable person might draw about reasonable patterns of encounters don't necessarily follow those cited in the popular press.

— Jim Cane



Dear Birders,

My friends and I are on our way to Cache Valley to spend the summer. We are fond of the Valley. There are ever so many nice people who put out feeders for us, and they keep them clean and filled to the brim. We appreciate that kind of hospitality.

I am writing because my friends and I have two habits, one of which can get us into serious trouble. The first habit is that we are attracted by the color red because the red object might be a flower filled with sweet nectar. If a human is moving about the garden wearing a red patterned shirt we are inclined to hover near to see if the red is or is not a flower.

The first habit of being attracted to red leads to the more serious habit of getting caught in deadly situations and all because of that wonderful color red. For example, if any of us are attracted to a red object in a garage we often cannot get back out of the garage to the wide open spaces. By instinct we fly up to escape and we encounter the ceiling. Open garage doors or windows don't attract us to escape because they are too low down and our escape route is up. So, we fly back and forth across the ceiling until we are worn out and sink to the floor.

I know all of this by experience because it happened to me last summer. A kind person found me in time when I could no longer fly to escape his grasp. He was very gentle and helped me to a few sips from his feeder. That helped me recover my strength and I was free to return to my friends.

The person who rescued me fortunately recognized why I was almost dead on the floor of his garage. He knew he had to do something to help me and my friends in the future. He went back to his garage to eliminate all red items from view of the open door. Here's a list of some of the items he found and covered up or moved out of my sight:

- 2 – red Toro weed whips
- 4 – red fuel cans for lawn mowers, chain saws, camp stove, etc.
- 1 – 6" C clamp clamped to a 2" x 4" stud – its yoke was red
- 2 – red and white pull cords for manual release of garage door openers. He replaced these with white cords and covered the handles with duct tape.

The list could go on but I think your readers will get the idea.

We're looking forward to a great summer in Cache Valley and know your year around residents will help us make it hazard free. See you soon!

A. Hummingbird

## www.utahbirds.org

There's a new web site dedicated to birding in Utah. Check out [www.utahbirds.org](http://www.utahbirds.org). Sponsored by the Utah County Birders, this page offers a plethora of information about birding within our own state and links to other great virtual birding sites on the web. This is where you can find statewide bird reports and subscribe to the birdnet, a state hotline where you can post your sightings and receive bird related e-mail from around the state.

If you're interested in something more local, then try out birding by counties. Within this section you can find out information on birding organization, auto tours, popular birding sites, public access, literature, and more.

The Cache County page is already up and running and is currently the temporary home of the Bridgerland Audubon Society's home page. Look and you will find the Birds of Cache County Checklist and Bryan Dixon's "Handy Guide to Spring Migration." Other important information will be available soon for Cache County.

Please send comments or suggestions to [jared@utahbirds.org](mailto:jared@utahbirds.org). We need your support to make this a success.

— Jared Barnes

## Calling All Listers . . .

Have you started a list? Well, if you haven't then maybe you ought to. Here's why:

1. It's fun to keep track of what birds you've seen.
2. It's educational to learn where and when you saw these birds.
3. It helps you become a more accomplished birder as you add another bid to your life list.
4. Prizes in 2000 for 100, 150, and 200 birds species seen in the valley.
5. I need some numbers to post in the Birding Records section on the [utahbirds.org](http://utahbirds.org) web page.

Please send your records to [jared@utahbirds.org](mailto:jared@utahbirds.org) or call me at 797-6843. It will be fun to see other records in a hope to someday catch-up with them. I need life list numbers for world, North America, Utah, Cache County, or whatever you've got. I also need numbers for Big Year, Big Month, Big Day, etc.

How many lists can we come up with? With your permission I will post the names and records of those with the most in each category.

Thanks!

— Jared Barnes



## Call For Information

I am gathering information on historic and recent distributions on Grasshopper Sparrows and Bobolinks. If anyone has any information on areas where these two species occurred at one time and are no longer there or where they occur now, in the northern region of the state, please contact me.

Shelly Goodell  
e-mail: gregor@sisna.com  
phone: 435-755-9452

## The Eagle: A Fragment

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

On March 13 the Cache Hikers—including eleven people and one small dog named Phoebe—climbed Willard's Peak to get closer to some golden and bald eagles. It was the last outing of the winter season. Half of the group elected the stiff climb up the more precipitous chute, while the other half, who thought they were going the easier way, labored through deep snow drifts that at times reached their hips. Eagles and falcons circled above us as we climbed, enticing us higher and higher. One falcon soared beautifully over the crest of the mountain right in front of us and then dived down towards the valley.

From the top of the Peak, the view of the valley was wonderful. We ate our lunches and watched eagles and falcons through our binoculars for some time. The mature bald eagles were easy to pick out, even from a great distance, due to their white heads and tails. The golden eagles were less obvious, since they are so similar to immature bald eagles. The golden eagle has golden feathers interspersed among the brown feathers, and a collar of golden feathers circling the neck. One person saw a bald eagle land on a nest on a cliff face on the other side of a gully. It was difficult to distinguish the eagle from the cliff face, but one by one, with the help of a map sketching and much persistence, we each located it with an excited cry.

The way down the mountain, we all stayed together this time, electing to descend the chute. Phoebe, the dog, had the easiest time. She was placed in her owner's backpack, with just her head hanging out, and slept during much of the descent. The climb up had thoroughly tuckered her out. It was a vigorous climb and descent for all of us, but we all felt invigorated by the hike, the beautiful setting, and the experience of viewing such majestic birds. And yes, I was very sore for days. I don't climb a mountain every day.

— Shannon Young

## Be a Wetlands Watcher

Bridgerland Audubon has initiated a new program to protect local wetlands. People who participate are called Wetland Watchers. We hope that this program can be more fun than counting calories, as in Weight Watchers, but just as successful.

Here's the idea. Cache County is losing far too many wetlands to unchecked development. A subdivision goes in here, a parking pad there. But as many of you know, wetlands are protected under section 404 of the Clean Water Act—developments in wetlands need a "404 permit." But we believe that many of the activities we see in wetlands do not have a permit, or if they do they are not doing all they can to mitigate the harm to the wetland. That's where Wetlands Watchers come in.

Wetlands are regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers. But of course they have far too few people to keep up with all the developments that go on in wetlands. Nevertheless, the Corps is more than willing to enforce wetlands regulations, if it has the information. That's where we come in. A Wetlands Watcher can be the eyes and ears of the Corps in Cache County.

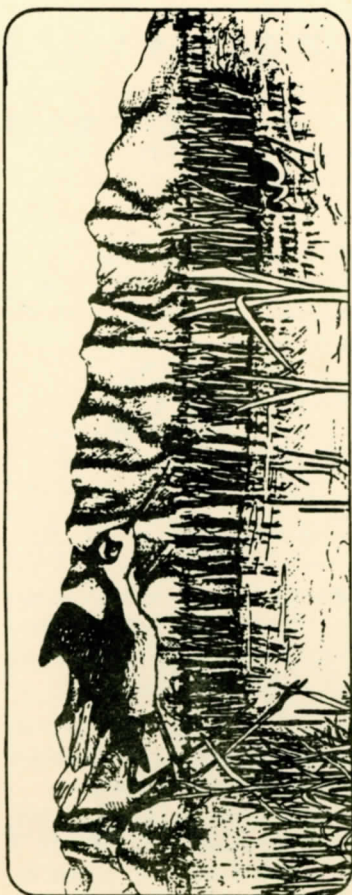
What Wetlands Watchers do is pick an area in Cache County that they will monitor. If they see a development going on that concerns them, they can report it to me and I will contact the Corps, or they can contact the Corps themselves. The Corps will then contact whoever is doing the development to make sure they have a permit. If they do not, the Corps will take action. In most instances, the Corps will probably issue a permit after the fact, but at least they will ensure the developer engages in needed mitigation. In more egregious cases they will issue a "cease and desist order" and shut the project down.

It is important to note a few things. First, basically, all you have to do is get the location of the development and ideally the name and phone number of the developer. With that minimal information, the Corps can contact the person and ensure they have a permit. You don't have to "testify" against the developer; the Corps will make the determination of whether there is a problem or not. All we are going to do is make the Corps aware of potential problems. It would also be helpful if you can point out any significant biological information to the Corps—there's a heron rookery in those cottonwoods; it's a sandhill crane foraging area, for example. Also, we hope that this can be fun for you. There's no reason not to make your wetland watching part of your bird watching, canoe trips, or your Sunday drive with the kids. Furthermore, there are actually lots and lots of technical rules about what a wetland is, when it is being "dredged" or "filled," etc. You don't have to worry about any of those technical details right now—that's the Corps job. If it looks like a wetland and it looks to you like some inappropriate development is occurring, that's good enough. Over time we will refine things, but for right now we want to make sure the Corps is aware of possible problems so they can be corrected while it's still possible.

If you want to become a Wetland Watcher, please call me (792-4150) and we can pick out an area that you want to watch and that needs watching. Call soon, areas are going fast!

— Bruce Pendery  
Conservation Chair





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

Nonprofit Organization  
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Logan, Utah

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 7:00 p.m. on the first 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.

President	Bryan Dixon, 752-6830
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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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My check for \$20 is enclosed.

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

W-52  
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