



# The Stilt

## Utah Audubon Council Spring Retreat: Amalga Barrens—A Place Misunderstood

**When:** April 29-30, 2000

**Where:** Smithfield Senior Citizens Center, ~375 Canyon Road, Smithfield, UT

**Information:** Bryan Dixon, 435-752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com

**T**he Utah Audubon Council will convene here in Cache Valley this spring, to collectively focus on the future of Amalga Barrens as talk of piping Bear River water to the Wasatch Front continues.

The UDWR continues to view the management of water resources in Utah primarily in the limited terms of storage and conveyance structures. They

have looked to the Bear River as one of the last substantial sources of fresh water that could be made available to the Wasatch Front for culinary purposes. In recent years, the DWR has promoted a dam near Honeyville and a large off-river diked structure at the Amalga Barrens. The Barrens structure would be an earthen dike approximately 12 miles long and up to 66 feet high that would accept water pumped from the Bear River. They propose to convey the water south by releasing it back to the Bear River via Clay Slough.

The Audubon Societies of Utah have gone on record

opposing the so-called Amalga Barrens Dam for several reasons.

It would destroy over 1500 acres of wetlands first documented in 1913. These playa wetlands are unique in Cache Valley and are critical habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl and other animals, including several threatened or endangered species. The dam would flood numerous agricultural operations and homes and create unnaturally high water tables in the surrounding communities. It would cost hundreds of millions - and perhaps billions -

*Continued p. 11*

### A Place to Protect

New members may not know what the fuss regarding the Barrens is all about. If you are in that

group, I hope that this series of articles in *The Stilt* will help you understand why Bridgerland Audubon has always been so defensive regarding the state's interest in building a water storage reservoir out there.

The Barrens is a shallow depression of land that lies in between Amalga and Newton. Because of its shallow topography, water drains out of the area very slowly, though Clay Slough to Cutler Reservoir.

The high evaporation and sluggish drainage has resulted in very saline soils and saline surface water.

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## Coming right up: The Bridgerland Audubon Society Annual Banquet

**C**ome unwind from a long week and relax with fellow Auduboners at the annual banquet on Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at Aspen Grove Reception Center, 890 N. 600 East, Logan. Festivities start at 6 p.m. with music and munchies, followed by a full buffet-style dinner.

Tickets are available at Straw Ibis and Chapter II Books for \$20 per person, or \$15 for students. Your trusty board members also have tickets to sell, so contact one of them if you like.

Our speaker will be Dr. Fred Wagner. His talk is

entitled "Yellowstone's Northern Range: What Role for the Audubon Society?" Dr. Wagner has worked with wildlife management, grazing animals, and desert ecology in both North America and North Africa. Additionally, he has been deeply involved in national resources policy, especially as it applies to wildlife, our national parks, and the role of science in policy-making. At Utah State University, he served in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for 39 years, retiring just before the turn of the second millennium. For much

of that time, he also directed the Ecology Center and worked as Associate Dean in the College of Natural Resources. He is a scientific expert on the Yellowstone ecosystem.

Education and conservation awards will be presented. Recognition will also be given to those Audubon members who have identified 100, 150, and 200 total bird species within Cache County (not just in 1999). As an extra bonus, you will be able to buy birdseed at \$10 a bag if you attend the banquet. What a deal!

*-Teri Peery*

### Inside:

- *Vote for new BAS officers—Year 2000 ballot in this newsletter*
- *A Bird's Eye View of the State Legislature from Audubon's Lobbyist*
- *Get outside: Spring field trips*
- *The Kids' Place by Krista McHugh & Becky Yeager*



# Calendar

## Meetings

### Board of Trustees:

This month's meeting is slated for **Thursday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.** at the home of Jim Cane, 1710 East 1140, Logan. All BAS members are invited to join us as we review ongoing projects, priorities and issues.

### The Annual Audubon Banquet: That's Friday, April 14, 6 p.m.

at the Aspen Grove Reception Center, 860 North 600 East. Dr. Fred Wagner is the featured guest, speaking on "Yellowstone's northern range: What role for Audubon Society?" Tickets are \$20 per person, \$15 for students. Get them early this year—space is limited.

### Before the banquet:

Qualify for birding bonuses. We've got three great prizes to give out at the banquet - for 100-bird listers, there's a bandana with a complete checklist of Cache County birds; for 150-bird listers, we've got an Audubon bird call for sparrows and warblers, and finally, for 200-bird listers, we've got a great little lens cleaning device. Mail your life list of Cache County bird species to Reinhard Jockel, 123 North Main #10, Logan, or send it to BAS, P.O. Box 3501, Logan, 84323 (email: [stiltnews@hotmail.com](mailto:stiltnews@hotmail.com)). Deadline is April 7th for recognition at this banquet.

### Audubon Council Retreat: The Amalga Barrens - A Place Misunderstood.

The spring retreat of the Audubon Council of Utah is set for **Saturday and Sunday, April 29 and 30**, at the Smithfield Senior Citizen Center, in Mack Park, Smithfield. Activities run from noon Saturday to noon Sunday. See page 1 for more details on the retreat.



**V**ote: April is election month for BAS officers and trustees. A ballot including board nominees is included in this month's *Stilt*. Cast your ballot at the annual banquet, or mail it to: BAS, P.O. Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501. Only members of BAS may vote, and each membership is entitled to one vote. All mail-in ballots must be received by **5 p.m. April 14**.

Looking for our new email address? It's:

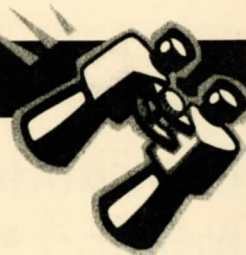
[stiltnews@hotmail.com](mailto:stiltnews@hotmail.com)

And don't forget the website:

<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ut/bridgerland>



## Field Trips



### Zion National Park and Snow Canyon: Join

Jack Green, BAS Education Chair, for a short but scenic trip down south to explore the natural history and ecology of the Colorado Plateau in one of the most profoundly beautiful pieces of our glorious planet. Depart **Friday, March 31** at about 3 p.m. from Logan High School and return **Sunday, April 2** at about 7 p.m., Cost: gas. Bring own food and camping fees for Zion National Park. Moderately difficult day hikes. Call Jack Greene at 563-6816 for more information.

### Grouse Courtship

**Camping Trip:** Visit the Curlew National Grassland in southern Idaho to observe Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse strutting their stuff **Friday night and Saturday, April 7-8**. For more details, see story on page 4. Carpools encouraged; reservations required. Call LeRoy Beasley at 753-7491.



**U**pcoming trips: Grab your datebook and pencil 'em in.

- **Saturday, May 6** - West Cache Valley Birding
- **Saturday-Sunday, May 6-14** - Great Salt Lake Birding Festival
- **Saturday, May 13** - Bear River Bird Festival
- **Saturday-Sunday, May 20-21**. Annual Bear River Canoe Trips
- **Saturday, June 3**. East Cache Valley and Lower Canyons Birding
- **Friday, June 16**. Full Moon Canoe Trip
- **Wednesday, June 21**. Summer Solstice Evening Canoe Trip
- **Saturday, June 24**. Tony Grove Wildlife.

Watch for details in later issues of *The Stilt*.

**All BAS field trips** are open to the public.



For more information call the trip leader listed at the end of each description.



# From the Board

*A round-up of official happenings by Bryan Dixon, BAS President*

## Familiar Faces in New Places

**A**t its last meeting, the Board created a new Wetlands Chair and appointed Alice Lindahl as the first chairperson. Alice received the Stokes Conservation Award in 1987 has been involved with many conservation campaigns in her years with BAS. As Wetlands Chair, she will be responsible for developing and coordinating our wetlands programs.

We're also very pleased to announce that Miriam Hugentobler will be taking over as editor of our Stilt newsletter. Miriam is a former newspaper reporter and is presently editor for Bio-Resources, Inc. She's already begun implementing some new ideas for our Stilt as you must have noticed! Many, many sincere thanks to Lois Olson, who served as the Stilt Editor for the last six years! Our newsletter not only serves our local members but other Audubon societies and even National Audubon also monitor it as a way to gauge our activity.

We're currently looking for a Membership Chair, which involves attracting new members as well as encouraging existing members to renew. Although all of our programs are open to the public, it's very important that individuals join as members. NAS has a variety of materials available to help with membership efforts, so it's really a matter of adding a little creativity and stirring! Contact any of the Board if this is something you can help with.

## Conservation

### DWR Taking a Closer Look at Watchable Wildlife

**T**he best piece of news in a long time came on the wildlife front. John Kimball, Director of the DWR, determined that hunting and fishing licenses aren't covering the DWR's expenses, and that non-consumptive users of wildlife need a stronger voice in the DWR, so he initiated a Watchable Wildlife Study Group. DWR is almost entirely funded by licenses and as the numbers of consumptive users shrinks, so does the revenue. While on the surface it appears that DWR is just responding to a financial crisis, many of the rank and file in DWR share the goal of a more comprehensive emphasis on wildlife than just the traditional consumptive uses. In truth, DWR has not

been managing the vast majority of wildlife species in Utah.

As you can imagine, this non-consumptive emphasis is meeting some resistance from some of the traditional hunter/fisher groups who think of the DWR as their private agency with a narrow purpose of providing more animals to take. However, other hunters and fishers are expressing broadminded openness because they appreciate wildlife as a public resource. These individuals support the new direction and we're grateful.

Meanwhile, however, we continue to take issue with the local Regional Advisory Committees (or RACs). For instance, did you know that Utah issues "pursuit" permits

so "sportsmen" can chase cougar and bear with dogs and ORVs as long as they don't shoot them (the wildlife, that is, oh, if they would only shoot the ORVs...)? What do bear cubs do when confronted with a pack of snarling hounds? What kinds of stresses are these animals put through just for a few cheap thrills? Is this really deserving of the name "sportsman"? The DWR justifies this as responding to public demand and a cheap way to get information - though of questionable value - on wildlife. We hope this new watchable wildlife effort results in a DWR funded by the general citizenry and with a new direction to care for ALL wildlife, and we'll try to focus on that!

## Write a Letter for Wilderness

### Wilderness is still at serious risk in Utah.

**W**ilderness is still at serious risk in Utah. Representatives (a term used somewhat loosely here) Chris Cannon and Jim Hansen are pushing their respective bills, HR 3065 "San Rafael Western Legacy District and National Conservation Act" and HR 3035 "Utah National Parks and Public Lands Wilderness Act." The former is more accurately described as the San Rafael "Not so Swell" Act, and the latter is worse than no wilderness legislation. Neither bill designates very much wilderness, preferring instead to let the ORV crowd have the run of most of the public lands.

These bills also allow far too much mining and other development. These are the very activities that have already desecrated much of the wilderness in Utah. Write these boys a letter and tell them you are a Utahn and you want wilderness - lots of wilderness. Use:

Honorable [Representative's full name]  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

And remember, a 15 minute letter makes a bigger difference than any email or phone call. Tell them you want wilderness in Utah, you don't want ORVs on public land. Then pray.

### Forest Service Rethinking Grazing?

BAS has submitted detailed comments in response to the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the revision of the North Rich Allotment Management Plan ("scoping"). Of the nearly 20 grazing allotments in the Logan District, the North Rich Allotment is the first one to be comprehensively reviewed in a long time and we hope will set a good precedent for review of the others. There are many changes needed to grazing programs on forest lands, and we're eager to see how the Forest Service responds. The DEIS is due this spring.



# From the Board

## Grouse Courtship Outing: April 7-8

**T**his trip is a visit to Curlew National Grassland in southern Idaho to observe Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse on their leks. Camp Friday night at the Curlew Campground north of Snowville at the south end of Stone Reservoir.

At 6 p.m. on Friday, LeRoy Beasley will begin a "Whatch'ya got Stew." He'll start with a few pounds of beef and some veggies and potatoes, enough to feed himself plus a few strays. You are invited to bring meat, veggies, potatoes, etc. to add to the communal pot (be sure to add it to the pot in time for it to cook or get hot as necessary). Dinner is served at 7 p.m. Participants are invited to bring bread and butter, salad, dessert, etc. to share.

Ken Timothy, Forest Service biologist, will join us around the campfire Friday night to familiarize us with the grouse mating rituals. Saturday, we arise before dawn to do a little voyeurism - of birds on their leks, that is.

Afterward, we'll reconvene at the campground for breakfast where we'll have on hand a couple of griddles for pancakes, etc. If you wish to contribute to the communal breakfast, bring pancake mixings, syrups, honeys, jams, jellies, milk, juice, breakfast meat, eggs, cheese - whatever. There will be a couple of stoves and some pots and pans, too.

Afterward, we'll bird some of the hidden spots at the Grasslands to look for returning waterfowl and songbirds. Return Saturday afternoon.

There are vault toilets at the campground, but bring your own drinking and cooking water. It could be cold at night, and it could even snow so dress warmly. Be sure to bring, in addition to the bird watching essentials, flashlights, eating utensils and a bowl or plate as well as your own beverages. Please also bring FM two-way radios, if you have them. AND HUMOR, don't forget the humor!!

### Directions to the Campground

From Logan, take Route 30 West (200 North in Logan) until it ends north of Tremonton. Pick up I-15 South for just a few miles until you can take the exit for I-84 West toward Snowville. Take the first Snowville exit and turn right (north) at the end of the ramp. Continue north through Snowville. After leaving the interstate, you will enter the Curlew National Grasslands at about mile 5.2, and at mile 6.7, the road bends to the right. Take this bend and almost immediately after this bend take a left (north) into the Curlew Campground at Stone Reservoir.

**Alternatively**, as of March 2000, the Outsider's Inn was still open in Snowville. It's the brown brick motel just north of the Flying J gas station. Rooms are \$25 for singles, \$35 for doubles. Call (800) 298-2147 or (435) 872-8514 for reservations. The office should be open between 5 and 11 p.m.

### Any Ideas for Sandhill Crane Funds?

The Sandhill Crane Festival organizers have returned the \$2,000 that was donated to the cause by Bridgerland Audubon (they couldn't support a festival as long as the state continues a hunt), and we are now considering what to do with the funds.

Two possibilities are a program to compensate farmers for lost crops in an effort to eliminate a crane hunt, and an environmental education program about cranes.

If you've got an idea how we should use these funds, get in touch with any member of the Board.

## Two Great Birding Festivals Coming Up in May

### Great Salt Lake Birding Festival - May 6-13

**T**he GSL Birding Festival provides a series of organized events, beginning Saturday, May 6, at 8:00 a.m. at the Davis County Fairgrounds with field trips, workshops, bird demonstrations, children's activities, displays, vendors, local artists, and live entertainment. Sunday, there are several "behind the gates" field trips to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge,

Gillmor Sanctuary, and Antelope Island. During the week there are daily birding trips to various locations. There's even a birdathon! Most events require a small fee, but are led by very qualified guides. Check out: <http://www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com> for a complete list of events, call 801-451-3286 or email [tour@co.davis.ut.us](mailto:tour@co.davis.ut.us) for more information.

### Bear River Bird Festival - Saturday, May 13

**T**his festival is a bit lower key, but free and centered around the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Activities begin with a breakfast at Pioneer Park in Brigham City on West Forest Street from 7-10:30 a.m. There will be birding tours and displays at the Refuge from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, contact Kristen Gilbert at (435) 723-5887 x18, or [kristen\\_gilbert@fws.gov](mailto:kristen_gilbert@fws.gov).

Don McIvor, from the Bridgerland Audubon Society is organizing display tables for BAS on both Saturday events. The Bear River Bird Festival on May 13 also needs experienced birders to volunteer their time and spotting scopes to help visitors find the birds at stations around the dike. If you can help out for a couple of hours at either event, contact Don at 563-6189 or [puma@cache.net](mailto:puma@cache.net).



# From the Board

## Election for BAS Officers and Trustees

**A**pril is election month for new BAS officers and trustees.

The Board has compiled its nominations on the attached ballot. Only members of BAS may vote and each membership is entitled to one vote. To cast your ballot, cut out the form below and mail to:

*BAS Elections*  
*P.O. Box 3501*  
*Logan, UT 84323-3501*

Alternatively, you may vote at the Annual Banquet, Friday, April 14. All mail-in ballots must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, April 14.

## Campaign for Cats Indoors

**W**ith all the issues of wetlands, agricultural pollution of our water, wilderness, grazing, wildlife harassment, etc. cats just don't seem like a significant issue. However, dogs and cats kill HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of birds and BILLIONS of small mammals in the United States every year. Outdoor cats - domestic and feral - have become a plague on wildlife. Audubon has joined with the American Bird Conservancy ([www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)), the American Birding Association ([www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org)), and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology ([birds.cornell.edu](http://birds.cornell.edu)) in a campaign to get Americans to keep their cats indoors and, when outdoors, to use a leash. There are educational guides available for families and teachers, guides to creating local ordinances on controlling roaming pets and even a poster contest. The bottom line is that being free to roam out of doors is not healthy either for pets or wildlife. Anyone out there willing to be the vanguard for a more reasonable pet control ordinance in Cache Valley?

birding.org), and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology ([birds.cornell.edu](http://birds.cornell.edu)) in a campaign to get Americans to keep their cats indoors and, when outdoors, to use a leash. There are educational guides available for families and teachers, guides to creating local ordinances on controlling roaming pets and even a poster contest. The bottom line is that being free to roam out of doors is not healthy either for pets or wildlife. Anyone out there willing to be the vanguard for a more reasonable pet control ordinance in Cache Valley?

## Do you know where your cat is right now?



Each year, thousands of cats die on the roads or are injured in fights outdoors, and hundreds of millions of birds and small mammals are killed by free-roaming cats. Cats live happier, healthier, longer lives indoors.

For more information:  
[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)



### 2000 BAS Ballot Officers (two-year term) and Board of Trustees (three-year term)

#### *President*

##### *Vote for one only:*

- ☐ Bruce Pendery (Board nominee)
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)

#### *Vice President*

##### *Vote for one only:*

- ☐ William Masslich (Board nominee)
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)

#### *Secretary*

##### *Vote for one only:*

- ☐ Suzanne Pratt (Board nominee)
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)

#### *Treasurer*

##### *Vote for one only:*

- ☐ Susan Drown (Board nominee)
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)

##### *Vote for four only:*

- ☐ Mae Coover
- ☐ Ron Goede
- ☐ Don McIvor
- ☐ Teri Peery
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (write-in)

#### *Clip and mail to:*

*BAS Elections, P.O. Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501.*  
*Must be received by 5 p.m., April 14, 2000.*

## BAS Sponsors Grant for Logan Schools

**T**he Board recently approved a one-time grant to the Stokes Nature Center to encourage Logan City classes to attend Nature Center programs. The SNC has been very popular with Cache County District schools and many Logan

teachers have expressed interest in attending programs. This grant helps with travel expenses and we hope will show Logan parents the value of experience-based environmental education so they demand a budget for SNC programs in the future.



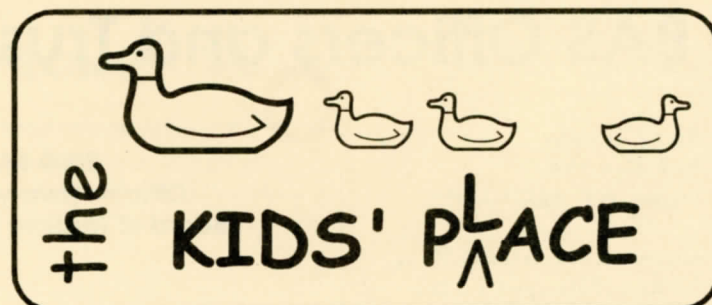
# Features

## Nesting Season

By Krista McHugh  
and Becky Yeager

**S**pring is surely here when American robins begin to nest. But what prompts robins and other birds to build nests and lay eggs? In our area, where the amount of daylight changes with the seasons, nest building is thought to be primarily activated by increasing day length. Longer days stimulate glands in the birds that in turn produce small chemical messengers (hormones). An increase in certain hormones and the presence of other factors (such as potential mates, food, suitable weather conditions, rivals, etc.) ultimately lead to the courtship, nest building, brooding, and parenting behavior we see. The nesting season begins after a mate is found. Perching birds can spend 5 days or more trying to find a site that is concealed and that will protect the eggs from weather. Sometimes birds will select a site and start to build a nest, but then abandon it if they find a better site. Males usually sing frequently and defend their territory from other males during the entire nesting season.

After a site is found, perching birds prepare the site, construct the nest, and line it with materials. Some birds will fly several miles to find special feathers, sticks, hair, or moss for the inside of their nests. It can take days or weeks to build a nest. Females are usually the nest builders. Males of some species will help by finding and bringing materials to the female. The first egg is usually laid a few days after the nest is



completed. Then the real work of chick-rearing begins!

During this busy nesting period, you or your child may accidentally encounter a bird. In the following paragraphs, local wildlife biologist, Becky Yeager, presents ways to handle situations that may arise at your home this spring.

### How Can I Prevent Birds from Flying into My Windows?

**A**t our house, we can usually tell spring is on its way when birds begin to fly into the windows. Although it can be somewhat alarming to hear a sudden thud, the birds are often found perched on a nearby fence post looking a little dazed. These birds usually are either nesting males or migrating males and females. During the nesting season, some male birds see their reflection in windows and aggressively attack it, thinking it is another male trying to invade its territory. This is especially common with American robins. In addition to males defending their territories, migrating birds may not always be able to see the clear glass of windows and will fly directly into them. Because many of our migrating bird species are dwindling in number, the loss of even a few is a concern.

To prevent birds from accidentally flying into (or purposefully attacking) your window, try making your window more visible by taping up pictures or paper. If you don't mind missing out on the view, you can try leaving your blinds or curtains closed for a while. Some people also hang wind socks or chimes on the outside of the window to discourage birds from approaching.

### What Do I Do If I Find a Baby Bird?

**B**aby birds can be ejected from their nests during windstorms or when larger animals brush against their nesting structure. Some may simply venture out on their own before they learn to fly. In any case, there is nothing more disheartening than seeing what seems to be an abandoned baby bird hopping around on the ground. One's first instinct is to scoop the baby bird up and care for it by offering it food and warmth. In some cases, this kind hand may not be what is best for the bird. If you find a baby bird on the ground, here's a few guidelines to go by. In all situations, do not feed the birds and handle them as little as possible to reduce the bird's stress.

- If the bird appears healthy and is hopping around, leave it alone. The parents are probably nearby.

- If the bird appears healthy but is in danger of being eaten by a lurking cat or dog, place it in a nearby bush or tree. Most birds cannot smell very well. Thus, handling it should not cause the parents to abandon it (contrary to popular belief).

- If the bird has little or no feathers and you know where the nest is located, return it to the nest. If the bird appears cold to the touch, warm it up before returning it. A warm towel or hot water bottle works well for this purpose. If warming the bird, keep it in a quiet place away from children and pets.

- If the nest has been destroyed and cannot be located, make the bird a new nest by using a small basket or container. Make sure the container has a hole in the bottom to allow for drainage. Line the make-shift nest with material from the old nest or with dry grass and leaves. Place it in the fork of a tree or wire it to a branch near the old nest if the location is known.

### What Can I Do to Help Nesting Birds?

**H**ere's a fun project you can do to help nesting birds find material to line their nests. Build a simple cylinder with chicken wire and fill it with cotton, shredded rags, or dog hair. Hang the structure in a nearby tree and watch your feathered neighbors collect the material. Follow the birds to discover where and how they build their nest.



# Features

## Eagles

By Kayo Robertson

**M**ost of what we know is hearsay; What

we have been told, read in books, learned in school, heard, or seen in various forms of media. Some of what we know is direct experience. Direct experience is immediate and memorable. It is the raw material of stories, dreams, memories, and myth. Direct experience may or may not lend itself to explanation, but it is always powerful. It can turn our heads and change our hearts. Direct experience is inversely powerful to that which buffers us from the experience: tools, thoughts, culture, preconceptions.

Of all creatures, the high predators remind us most that we humans are but one of many animal nations. They seem proud, aloof, fearless, and independent. The eagles are the thunderbirds of myth. It is not by accident that eagles adorn the national symbols of two out of three North American human nations. Despite the use of golden eagles by Mongolian horsemen to hunt wolves, it is obvious that there is little sense in trying to bend them to their will or purposes to our own. Their ways are not our ways, but somehow our separate places in nature often meet.

Eagles take several years to mature. Young golden eagles have striking white patterns surrounded by dark. Immature bald eagle wings sport white, cloud-like blotches. Although large hawks can sometimes, at a

distance, be confused with eagles, there is a power in eagle wings that once recognized is unmistakable.

To know about eagles, to experience them directly, simply go spend time where there are eagles. Above Clarkston Mountain, Gunsight Peak in May, two golden eagles plummet towards each other, wings folded. Talons are locked and the pair spirals madly. The plumed, spiraling vortex spins apart and the big birds scream, circle on high and repeat the dance.

Late autumn on Beirdneau ridge, a single eagle swoops down on a small herd of deer. It picks out a doe and strikes her back, pulling out tufts of hair. The deer, crazed with fright, bounds down the mountain, falls, and continues its mad escape. The eagle screams and wings hard above the ridge where it hovers a moment on massive wings, like a plank somehow suspended in the air. The eagle dives again. This time though it tears a dead branch from an aspen tree, carries it dangling in one talon high above the ridge, drops the branch, screams and flies out of sight. I climb to the ridge top and retrieve the branch. It is over ten feet long with a basal diameter of three inches.

In a deep gorge along the Green River a golden eagle wings furiously towards a dozen bald eagles roosting in Ponderosa snags. While the golden's mate soars high above, it pursues the bald eagles like a demon. Screams from the swarm of winging eagles echo from the cliffs. When the last bald eagle has been chased from the canyon the golden wings back to its mate and the pair circle out of sight.

**O**nce with my students I stalked close to a large flock of geese basking and going about their many orders of business in the Logan River along the Bud Phelps wildlife refuge. What followed happened so quickly that many of the students failed to see it, though the drama was less than twenty yards distant.

### Golden Eagle

Like liquid fire  
She falls from the heavens,

Huge dark-winged apparition,  
ferocity incarnate,

Yet invisible,  
Hidden, against the azure  
emptiness  
of springtime sky.

Until underneath the shadow  
of this angel of death,  
the screams of geese;  
the mad commotion,  
frantic, scattered, winging,  
water churning wildly beneath their fear,  
announce her taloned presence.

Sunlight blazes across mantled shoulders,  
piercing, amber eyes neither ask nor give,  
broad, strong wings rip the air,  
like canvas in a storm,  
as she brakes and pulls up,  
away from the river  
and her missed kill.

The eagle,  
still full of hunter's purpose,  
carves rising spirals  
towards distant clouds,  
then flies.

Straight  
Out of sight.



--Kayo Robertson



# From the Hill

## The Great Salt Lake - An Audubon Priority

*Bird's Eye View of the Last Legislative Session by Audubon Lobbyist Ann O'Connell*

**The Causeway.** The Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee found the funds necessary for deepening the breach in the railroad causeway in hopes of redressing the Great Salt Lake salt imbalance. There was no bill, just money juggling within the Natural Resources Appropriation Committee process. Some worthy programs suffered as a consequence, a recurring theme throughout the legislature this

year. (Some unworthy programs got little or no money as well which was fun to watch.) Of course we will have to wait and see how effective the breach will be. Thank you for your calls to the appropriations committee members; many thanks to Kathleen Clark, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and her staff, and I might add commendations to the Artemia Association (the brine-shrimpers).

**Brine Shrimp Aquaculture and Trespass Law.** We were alarmed by a brine shrimp aquaculture bill as was the Artemia Association. However,

it was transmogrified into a sovereign lands trespass bill. My legal team thinks the latter was harmless, but we need always to worry about public access vs. the very legitimate need to keep people out of some places (Bird nesting sites come to mind immediately). I would love to find an expert to do some research on this topic: trespass statutes and tradition in Utah and across the country. We also need someone to do a literature search on aquaculture in general and brine shrimp in particular. Once an idea has appeared, it never dies. Think of the resilient proposal to dike off a freshwater bay on the Great Salt Lake.

## Wildlife

**The State Endangered Species Fund.** A money source was found for the state's endangered species fund in a bill carried by Representative Tom Hatch, Republican from Panguitch who does not care much for the federal endangered species act but is a fine pragmatic problem solver as an effective legislators must be. I made sure that our friends in the legislature know that conservation groups did support this bill.

**Another Elk Bill.** At last an elk ranching bill was defeated - and in the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. The elk ranchers opposed it! To give them credit, they are concerned about their reputation both with the legislature and the public.

**Hunting and Fishing License Changes, Yet Again!** The hunters and fishers will have yet another change to the license system to contend with. This did not come from the interim process; it was not a DWR request; as far as I can tell it was an invention of Senator Blackham, Republican of Manti. It was interesting to watch the negotiations, but the Audubon Council decided it was not our concern as long as the Habitat Council's money stream was held harmless.

**Expanded Cougar Hunting.** An unfortunate bill from Representative Brad Johnson, Republican of Aurora added cougars to the Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit hunting list. This may well create pressure for more cougar permits.

## Recycling

**Tires.** Neal Henderson, Democrat of West Valley City successfully sponsored several tire bills intended to perpetuate the tire recycling subsidy which was up for sunset review this year. The industry is not economically viable without the support of a small assessment on tire sales.

**Recycling Zones.** Ben Ferry, Republican of Corinne sponsored a bill to re-authorize the tax breaks (incentives) for companies that get into the recycling business. The program was initiated by a Democrat so it looks like Recycling has become a nonpartisan effort.

## Water Contamination

### Radioactive Contamination of Ground Water.

A suspect regulatory bill sponsored by Representative Mel Brown, Republican of Salt Lake County, successfully passed the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Standing Committee but then remained buried in the House Rules Committee. That means it never really got into the process, did not make it to House floor and since it was a House bill the Senate never saw it either. Again thank you for your phone calls. The bill intended to put the radiation people in charge of wastewater contaminated by radioactivity rather than water experts, perhaps inherently a bad idea. However, I suspect the bill was held back more for two other reasons. One was that it was brought out very late in the session and had not been studied by a legislative committee over the interim months. The other was that it looked suspiciously like a bill tailored for a particular industry.

### Air Quality

**There was almost no action here except for one positive bill carried successfully by Representative Wayne Harper, Republican of West Valley City. It extended tax credits for propane-powered vehicles. Happily, I believe that the clean air people are feeling a resurgence of energy.**



# From the Hill

## RS2477 Rights-of-Way

**The bad news is** that the legislature continues to further involve the state in the RS2477 campaign against wilderness designation. I believe you all know that an old mining law about rights-of-way on public lands (RS2477 is the federal statute reference.) is being used by southern Utah counties in this fight. There were at least five bills that allocated more funds to supporting programs, and gave the State more legal standing in this legal battle. Unfortunately, urban legislators are not well informed and do not perceive these bills as anti-wilderness. Unfortunately, they often believe they are creating a solution. I think that wilderness advocates who have given up on the legislature should return to the fray. They have developed a constituency here in Utah well as in the rest of the nation and should use their power to change minds in the state legislature.

## Hateful Resolutions

**Each session has its share** of joint resolutions. Some are harmless, some aggravating, some silly. This year there were two that were disturbing to environment-alists; one that promoted sending the remaining CUP water to Juab County; another, the West Desert Resolution, that proposed a list of absurd restrictions on the new West Desert wilderness proposals. These resolutions are not law and serve only to create ill will as far as I can see.

## Open Space and Sprawl

**Open space did not fare well** this year.

The Leroy McAllister Fund retained its funding, but it is truly the proverbial drop in the bucket. The effort to create legislation for permitting a statewide referendum on an open space tax died in the early days of the session. Forces in favor of such a proposal did work to keep the egregious initiative bill (HB 220) in the limbo of the Senate Rules Committee. The bill, HB 220, sponsor Tammy Rowan, Republican of Orem, was hijacked by Representative Mel Brown. The new version raised the requirement for the number of counties in which signatures must be gathered from 20 to 29 (all of them) - from a formidable task to an impossible one. We all know that the veto power of "Rules" is not good public policy, but sometimes we do neglect to protest when it is working in our favor. It is too hard to always be principled. Watch for

more efforts to destroy the initiative and referendum processes.

### Tax Break for Small Farms.

Senator Pete Suazo, Democrat of Salt Lake City was successful with a bill to allow retention of a green belt tax exemption after an agricultural property becomes too small to qualify as a consequence of an eminent domain condemnation. Important for urban areas.

### Interchange at 56th West.

Sprawl did receive support, unfortunately. At first the House did defeat a Senate bill sponsored by Lane Beattie which permitted bonding for a highway interchange at 56<sup>th</sup> West and I-80 in Salt Lake County (City?). The issues here are support for the Legacy "Parkway" (this is a continuation thereof), promotion of urban sprawl in the west side of the Salt Lake Valley, and loss of business for the traditional commercial core of Salt Lake

City to the gigantic "regional mall" that is the real reason for the interchange. There is a fiscal policy question here also because the bonds are to be repaid with sales tax revenue. This is a departure from traditional fiscal management in Utah. Road bonds are now paid off with the fuel tax. However, the truly amazing legislative drama was played out when in spite of the bill's defeat in the House, the project was resurrected with a backroom deal. The original debate was a fascinating display of politics at its most bizarre or perhaps at its best depending on your point of view. The bill was defeated by a combination of Democrats protective of downtown Salt Lake business and conservative Republicans who did not like the concept of State revenues going to a Salt Lake economic development project. Neither group is a match for the real power brokers of the legislature even when they have the votes and work together.

## Some Musings...

**There was an off heard**

complaint in the 2000 legislature which said that there were too many requests for too little money. If this was to be the education session then other programs would be required to suffer as a consequence. It was painful for the appropriations subcommittees to struggle to find funds for worthy ongoing programs with little or sometimes no discretionary funds. But why do we find ourselves in the position?

We live in a time of unparalleled prosperity. Why can't we build the university buildings we need? Why are there waiting lists for social services? If we do not have enough money now to do what needs to be done, when will we? Legislators seem to be unable to raise taxes. Mine claims that high taxes are the foremost concern for his constituents. How can this be true? We live in an era of rampant consumer-ism. Doesn't this mean that most of us have discretionary funds? Surely we can forgo a few possessions to save the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, to purchase precious open space, or to educate our children.

If there is one lesson to be learned from the legislative session it is that many, if not most, of our legislators need to hear more from their constituents. They are failing to protect the environment, protect children from guns, or protect all of us from the far too powerful professional lobbying community. The legislature affects our lives in more ways than most of us realize. I am convinced that many of our representatives do not reflect the views of their constituents. We need a better dialogue up on the hill. Find out how your senator and representative voted. If you are not pleased, get somebody new.



# Loose Ends

## Barrens

*continued from p. 1*

Neither of these features was attractive to Cache Valley settlers as a home site. As a result the approximately 5,000 acres that makes up the Barrens has no homes on it. About a third of the area supports crops. Thus, wildlife that can't make it in close proximity to human habitation has thrived there.

Ground-nesting species such as American Avocets, Willetts, Sandhill Cranes, and Long-billed Curlews all nest in the Barrens. In addition, the shallow playa ponds dry up during the course of the spring and summer, exposing extensive mudflats that are attractive to migrating shorebirds. Even though all of The Barrens is private land, wildlife lovers from all over the valley delight in an afternoon excursion down 7000 North, the only public road through the area. It is not uncommon to see Short-eared Owls, Barn Owls, red fox, coyote, Sandhill Crane, American Pipit and Horned Larks at the Barrens. Repeated visits are rewarded by the less common sightings of Peregrine Falcon and Tundra Swans.

Figure 1 that accompanies this article shows you where The Barrens is, and how you can see it for yourself by driving west on 7000 North

out of Amalga. The map also shows that there are about 1500 acres of wetland that would be destroyed by the construction of the impoundment.

About 20 years ago, the Division of Water Resources (DWR) proposed the Barrens Reservoir as one option of about eight "dam" sites. I indicate "dam" in quotes, because the Barrens Reservoir would be an off-stream site. Water would be pumped or drained into an impoundment that would be surrounded on all four sides by 66-foot dikes. You can see from the diagram of the "footprint" (Figure 2) of the proposed reservoir that there are actually 12 sides to this funny-looking "dam."

We will try to keep you up to date in the *Stilt* regarding the latest news with this dam proposal. A longer treatment with pictures can be found on the BAS web site:

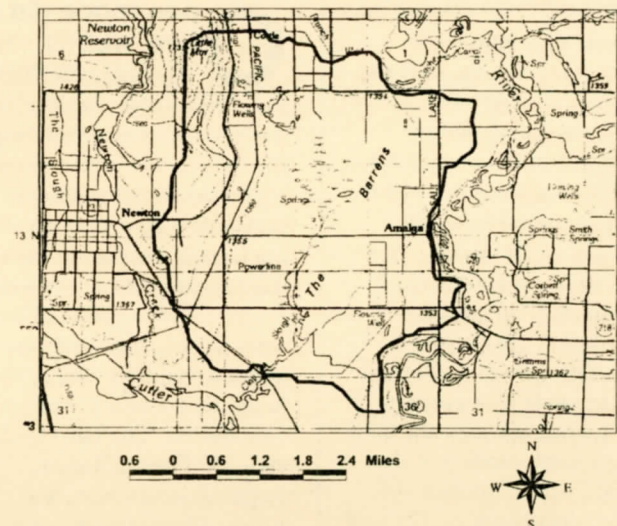
<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ut/bridgerland/>

We will keep the site up to date when new developments occur. If you would like to work on protecting the Barrens, we welcome your help. Please contact Alice Lindahl or Bruce Pendery (see list of BAS chairpersons at the end of *The Stilt*) if you'd like to be involved.

you know of a group who would like a speaker or would like to give the talk yourself, contact Alice or Bruce to arrange it.

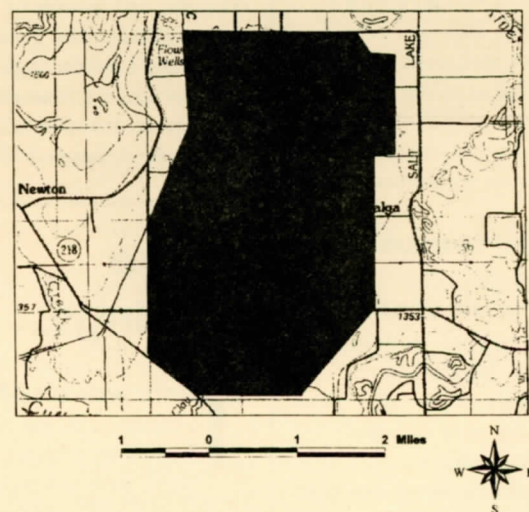
*--Alice Lindahl*

## Barrens Reservoir Watershed



**Figure 1**  
*The Barrens is a shallow basin that lies between Amalga and Newton.*

## Expanded Barrens Reservoir



**Figure 2**  
*The "footprint" of the proposed Barrens Dam would cover 5,400 acres and destroy all wetland, upland, mudflat and farmland in the area.*

## Speak Out

**B**ridgerland Audubon has a slide show and brochures on the Barrens Reservoir project and the basis of our opposition to it. If



# Loose Ends

## Retreat

*continued from p.1*

of dollars that would be better spent on other programs. The attempted mitigation of lost wetlands would consume thousands of additional acres of agricultural lands. Not least egregious is the fact that the visual and social impacts of such a development would fundamentally change the character of Cache Valley. Meanwhile, the State of Utah has made only pitiful efforts at water conservation or reuse.

We hope, by continuing to discuss the Amalga Barrens and educating our citizens about its valuable attributes, to enlighten the populace of the Wasatch Front and encourage the

powers that be to find better alternatives to meet the state's water demands.

## Retreat Agenda

**Saturday, 12:00 noon:** meet at Smithfield Senior Citizens Center

**12:30 p.m.** Field trip to the Amalga Barrens and other local birding spots to look for shorebirds and other critters.

**5:00 p.m.** Social hour at the Smithfield Senior Citizens Center.

**6:00 p.m.** Potluck dinner. Bring your own beverages.

**7:00 p.m.** Slide show on the Amalga Barrens and panel discussion by experts on

habitat, geology, soils, and water issues.

**9:00 p.m.** End of evening program, out of town visitors leave for overnight accommodations at the homes of local hosts.

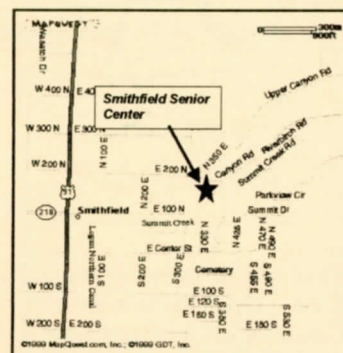
**Sunday, 6:00 a.m.** Meet at the Senior Center for morning birding in Smithfield and Birch Canyons.

**7:30 a.m.** Pancake Breakfast hosted by Bridgerland Audubon Society.

**9:00 a.m.** Audubon Council business meeting, and discussions on strategies for the Amalga Barrens.

**12:00 noon.** Adjourn.

## Directions to Retreat Site



To reach the Smithfield Senior Citizens Center, take Route 91 (Main Street) north from Logan approximately 7 miles to Smithfield. Turn east on Center Street. Turn north on 3<sup>rd</sup> East. Follow for about 2 blocks. The Smithfield Senior Citizens Center is on the north end of Mack Park.

## Membership Update for February and March

### New Members

Renee Chi  
Jackson Evans  
Kayo Robertson  
Laura Bennett  
Jerry Burn  
Jennifer Cheney  
Steve & Jeanna Livingston  
Brent Nielson  
Marion Denton  
Sara Lemieux  
Ben Baldwin  
Ronald Goede

K. Gilbert  
Reinhard Jockel  
Jim Cane & Linda Kervin  
Norman & Marcia La Barge  
Maggie Nelson  
Carl Saunders  
Kennita Thatcher  
Rebecca Wallace  
M. Coburn Williams  
James Woodson  
Dr. Janet Lee Young  
Doris Zemlicka  
Marion Andersen  
Patricia Fullmer  
Mr. And Mrs. T. J. Gordon

Fred Baker  
Windsor Copley  
David Drown  
Jake Gibson  
Diane Hanson  
Straw Ibis  
Merrilyn Lundahl  
William Masslich  
Nancy Mesner  
Rosalie Mueggler  
Keith Nielsen  
Ann Peralta  
Craig Riger  
Ron Ryel  
Tim Slocum  
Louise Thomas  
Cathy Webb  
Theresa Zmola

### Renewing Members

Robert Atwood  
Mr. & Mrs. John Barnes  
Max Elliot Brunson Jr.  
Kevin Connors  
Mervin Coover  
James Dyer  
John Dymerski  
Rebecca Echols  
Glen Gantz  
James Gessaman

J. A. Hoffmann  
Loye Painter  
Janis Parent  
Dr. R. J. Shaw  
Michael Stones  
Marie Velbell  
John Wood  
Leon Astle  
Robert Atwood

## Transfers into Our Chapter

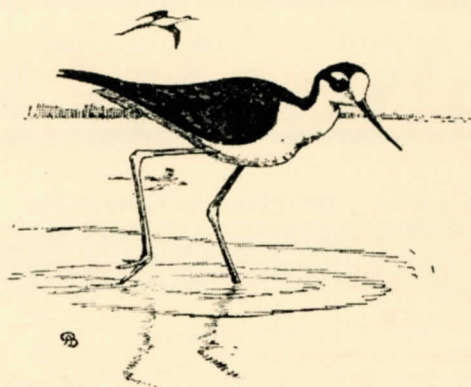
Nicholas Allan  
Patricia Gantt  
Paul Swaner

## Captive Bird's Gourmet Delight

"You'd sing, too, if you were a thrush and your owner, a retired 75-year-old cook in Beijing, China took you along on his daily walk to the park where he hung your exquisite bamboo cage in a tree and fed you a carefully prepared breakfast of crushed peanuts, egg yolks, walnuts and insects with a strip of cucumber for garnish."

*—Recipe spotted by Merv Coover in last month's National Geographic, Vol. 197, No. 3, March 2000.*





# The Stilt

Bridgerland Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3501  
Logan, Utah 84323

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The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, September through June, in the upstairs of Chapter Two Books, 130 N. 100 East, Logan. Meetings start at 7 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, September through June. Locations may change monthly. Check calendar page. Everyone is welcome to attend.

President	Bryan Dixon, 752-6830
Vice President	Chris Wilson, 753-3769
Secretary	
Treasurer	Susan Drown, 752-3797
Conservation	Bruce Pendery, 792-4150
Education	Jack Greene, 563-6816
Membership	Alice Lindahl, 753-7744
Field Trips	Keith Archibald, 752-8258
Newsletter	Miriam Hugentobler, 752-8237
Circulation	Susan Durham, 752-5637
Hospitality	Tim & Jackie Henney, 755-6888
Hotline	Nancy Williams, 753-6268

## Trustees

1997-2000 Mae Coover, 752-8871	Teri Perry, 753-3249
1998-2001 Jack Greene, 563-6616	Ron Hellstern, 753-8750
Merr Lundahl, 753-1707	Lois Olson, 752-9085
1999-2002 Jim Cane, 713-4668	Allen Christensen, 258-5018
Val Grant, 752-7572	Dick Hurren, 734-2653

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions of any kind, due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Send to

## National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

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

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.



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

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

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

W-52  
Local Chapter Code  
7XCHA

Subscriptions to *The Stilt* are available to non-members for \$10.00 per year. Call Susan Durham, 752-5637. Also, call Susan for new subscriptions or address changes.