



The Stilt

Volume 29, Issue 1

September 2000

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

New UDWR Program Needs Volunteers to Adopt Local Wetlands

Birders have long since known that wetlands are a rich habitat supporting a diversity of avian life. In Utah, the nation's second driest state, wetlands are an oasis for wildlife, providing essential resting, nesting, and feeding habitat for both resident and migratory birds. However, wildlife are not the only ones that benefit from wetlands. Wetlands also function to improve water quality by removing sediments and pollutants from our water, and recharging our ground water supplies. Wetlands can reduce the effects of flooding by absorbing water and releasing it slowly over time. These are just a few of the valuable functions that wetlands perform.

But not everyone appreciates the value of wetlands. In Utah, we have lost approximately 30 percent of our original wetlands, and urban expansion continues to threaten what remains of this critical ecosystem. To help assess the health of our "natural" and created wetlands, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, is starting a volunteer wetlands monitoring program. The UDWR's wetlands program will use data collected by the volunteers to enhance wetland management in Utah. Specifically, the data will be used to monitor the status and trends of mitigated wetlands and essential habitats, and to focus wetlands conservation efforts. The UDWR is focusing on Cache Valley wetlands for this initial pilot year of the project.

The program coordinators seek assistance from knowledgeable and passionate wetlands stakeholders such as Bridgerland Audubon Society members.



Volunteers collecting macroinvertebrates from Spring Creek. Their presence or absence can be used as an indicator of water quality

Volunteers will monitor chemical (water quality), biological (bird, macroinvertebrate, and vegetation surveys), and physical characteristics (land use practices, hydrology) of their wetland.

Twelve hours of training will be provided for volunteers to familiarize them with the monitoring protocols and the biophysical components of wetlands. Trainings will be conducted at the convenience of volunteers in mid-September. Equipment, transportation, and expert assistance will also be provided. Monitoring teams will be asked to monitor their wetland four times a year, twice in the fall and twice in the spring. Groups are encouraged to select a site of significance to them, or the program coordinators can assist volunteers in identifying a site of interest to the UDWR.

— Brian Nicholson

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If you would like to be a part of a monitoring team or would like more information about the program, please contact Brian Nicholson or Audrey McElrone at 435-797-7347, or by email at monitoring@utahwetlands.org.



*"This summer
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Our baby
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President's Message

Bridgerland Audubon does not have board meetings during the summer. Rather, the summer is a time to enjoy ourselves and mull over where we are organizationally speaking. Nevertheless, there is quite a bit to report on.

We probably will be moving ahead with several initiatives in the near future related to membership—efforts designed to increase our membership and better keep the members we have. We also will probably be moving ahead in some way on some budgetary matters, namely efforts to make sure our assets are allocated in the ways we want (both in terms of spending priorities and how we invest the funds) and perhaps the initiation of active fundraising efforts. Related to that, active fundraising will almost certainly be necessary if two things that have been discussed come to fruit, namely the establishment of an Audubon state office and the establishment of a local environmental office. These topics will be discussed at our combined board retreat and board meeting on September 9, and I should be able to give you more information about them in October.

We have been attempting to start a new kind of program, at least in the summer. We are trying to arrange for summer speakers that are more "hands on" or "in the field" than our regular monthly speakers, which is more of a slideshow format. Examples have included speakers showing us native

pollinators of flowers (bees) in a flower garden and the upcoming discussion on xeric landscaping options (see meeting announcement elsewhere in this Stilt). There have been some growing pains associated with this new kind of program, so maybe you had not heard about them, but we hope to make them a regular part of our programs.

This summer Bridgerland Audubon also rearranged its relationship with the Stokes Nature Center. The Nature Center, which BAS and the Presbyterian Church essentially created, has grown tremendously and understandably wants to strike out more on its own. Under the old relationship BAS and the church each nominated half of the Nature Center board. Following discussions, it was decided that in the future BAS and the church will have two appointments to the board each. This will allow us to have an ongoing role with the Nature Center, which we strongly desire, but not such a dominant role that the Nature Center cannot independently decide on its priorities. Our baby is all grown up!!

Additionally, this summer we were approached about the possibility of Bridgerland Audubon taking title to about 45 acres of wetlands property in Cache County. I will leave this nebulous at this time because this is very preliminary, but here are some details. Essentially, several property owners want to create wetlands

adjacent to a river and then sell "credits" for those wetlands to developers elsewhere (likely in the Logan) who need "mitigation wetlands" before their project can proceed. Before the Army Corps of Engineers would approve the use of these wetland mitigation credits (generally called Wetland Banking), the property owners would have to create the wetlands to the satisfaction of the Corps and other agencies and would have to agree to convey the property to an owner who would ensure the wetlands were protected in perpetuity. That's where we come in: we could become the owner who would ensure the land was maintained as a wetland (we would get an "endowment" from the owners to ensure we had money for maintenance purposes). There are many issues and potential problems to work through before we would actually take the property, but it's an exciting possibility, and I will keep you apprised.

Of course there are always the various upcoming Audubon events to keep in mind. We are well on our way to having a full slate of speakers for our fall monthly meetings. The field trip program is also quite active. Hope to see you at some of these! And before we know it, it will be time to start planning for the Christmas Bird Count and next spring's banquet

Until next month,

—Bruce Pendery

Audubon Calendar - September 2000

Saturday, September 9

Retreat/Monthly Board Meeting

This is our September trustees meeting and a retreat rolled into one at the home of Merv & Mae Coover, 435 Canyon Rd., Providence. The purpose of the retreat, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., is to discuss finances. Lunch will be served. Our regular monthly meeting will follow from 3 to 5 p.m. All interested are invited to attend.

Saturday, September 9

Amalga Barrens - Migrating Waterfowl and Shorebirds

The Amalga Barrens are famous for their shallow ponds which attract tadpoles, aquatic invertebrates, and the critters that feed on them - namely birds! Signs of fall are in the air (yikes!), and while you're thinking about bringing in those late summer tomatoes, many species of birds have begun their fall migration. It's a great time for fall birding and to take on the challenge of identifying those cryptic shorebirds. Hard to say what we'll see—western sandpipers, dowitchers, yellow legs, stilts and avocets—but with trip leader Keith Archibald along, at least you stand a good chance of a positive identification! Come out and celebrate the fall migration! Trip leaves from the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis at 8 a.m. and return by lunch. For more information, call Keith Archibald 752-8258.

Thursday, September 14

General Meeting- Speaker Dr. Richard Valdez

He's been called "the Indiana Jones of endangered fish," and for good reason. Dr. Valdez has studied endangered fish in their native Colorado River white water habitat for more than 20 years. He'll share his perspective on endangered fish and river management in the Colorado River Basin at September's general meeting. His presentation will include the most recent information on the status and management of endangered fish in the Colorado River Basin and updates on the operation of Flaming Gorge Dam, Glen Canyon Dam and other major impoundments. That's at 7 p.m. in the Logan City meeting room, 255 N. Main St. For more information, call Bill Masslich 753-1759.

Thursday, September 21

Final Summer Program - Low Water Landscapes

The weather is changing as our earth goes into a warming stage. We can weather the change more gracefully by thinking differently about the plants we choose for our personal landscapes. Join us Sept. 21 for a presentation on low water landscapes with native and adaptive plants by Roger Kjelgren, USU professor of plants, soils and biometeorology. That's at 6:30 p.m. at Greenville Farm on 800 East in North Logan. The entrance to this USU experiment station is ½ block north of 1800 North on the east side. For more information, call Mae Coover, 752-8871.

Saturday, September 23

Top of the Wellsvilles - Migrating Raptors

Hike to the crest of the Wellsville Mountains to witness one of the wonders of the avian world. Over 6,000 hawks migrate along the Wellsvilles between mid-August and mid-October. We'll hike up Deep Canyon to a station monitored by Hawkwatch International and get an update from this year's watchers. The trail gains 3,000' in approximately 4 miles and is steep in places, so wear sturdy footwear and bring water. We'll sit on top for a couple of hours to watch the hawks, and since it is usually cool and windy on the ridge, a change of layers, a warm sweater and a good wind shell make the experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and more water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot north of Straw Ibis, (about 55 East and 150 North in Logan); carpooling will be available. For more information or if bad weather threatens, call trip leader Jim Sinclair, 752-0061.

Thursday-Sunday, October 5-8

Jackson Hole, Wyoming - Bugling Elk

Annual Trip to Hear Elk Bugling in Jackson Hole. We'll circle the wagons at a campground northeast of Jackson (Gros Ventre, if it's open). Spend the last days of fall looking for bison, pronghorn, elk, coyotes, and other wildlife. The highlight of the trip is the haunting calls of the bugling elk. Sunday free for various hikes. Return by supertime Sunday. This was one of Allen Stokes' favorite BAS trips, and we'll be remembering him around the campfire. Call Terry or Jesse Barnes at 563-3910 (evenings and weekends) for reservations and carpooling arrangements. Bring your own food and camping gear. Be prepared for freezing weather.

Saturday & Sunday, October 7 & 8

State Council Retreat - Zion National Park

The Audubon Council of Utah will hold its fall retreat at Zion National Park in southern Utah. The Council convenes at noon Saturday and adjourns noon Sunday. See story elsewhere in this Stilt for more details. To make reservations, call Bruce Penderly at 792-4150.

Saturday, October 14

Logan Sewage Lagoons - A Hunting Season Hangout

Why, you ask, would we want to Bird the Logan Sewage Lagoons? Because the birds are there! Why are the birds there? Because they're safe as hunting season pushes the ducks to havens like the sewage lagoons where we can see the "regulars" in large numbers and usually find some "irregulars," too. Meet at 10 a.m. at the entrance to the Sewage Lagoons (aka Square Lakes) on 600 North in Logan as far west as you can go. We're usually finished within two hours, but those who want to bird longer can head out into the valley looking for other critters. For more information, call Bryan Dixon, 752-6830.



The next phase of road construction in Logan Canyon will be much more extensive than the recently completed bridge replacements

Conservation Update

This summer Bridgerland Audubon participated in several conservation efforts. A sampling (it is not exhaustive) follows:

Logan Canyon Highway

We submitted comments to the Utah Division of Water Quality and Army Corps of Engineers and asked for public hearing regarding the next phase of road construction in Logan Canyon. This phase will involve bridge replacements, passing lanes, road cuts, and retaining walls between Upper Twin Bridge and Franklin Basin. It will be much more extensive than the relatively minor bridge replacements a couple of years ago. Therefore, it is important to keep UDOT aware of environmental concerns regarding our precious and beautiful canyon.

Forest Service "Roadless Initiative" and Planning

As you probably know, the Forest Service is engaged in a major—and very controversial—nationwide initiative that would strongly limit further road building in the approximately 54 million acres of Forest Service lands that are roadless yet without protection from road building.

We submitted comments supporting the Forest Service's initiative and asking it to strengthen it by limiting logging and the use of ATV's in these roadless areas. This initiative is totally intertwined in national political maneuvering, and increasingly lawsuits, but if the Forest Service gets its way, these new protective regulations will be issued this fall/winter. It's a little hard to say what the effect will be locally, but the Forest Service website shows a lot of roadless land locally, so much of it probably could be impacted by this initiative.

Locally, the Wasatch-Cache National Forest plods along with a revision to its Forest Plan, which governs management of local forests, including the Logan Ranger District. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the plan is scheduled for release this fall (we thought it would be this summer). When that comes out, it will be critical that you provide comments on the proposed plan. There will probably be public meetings on the plan, and you should put commenting and attending the meetings on your "must do

today list." If we don't speak for the forest, who will?

North Rich Grazing EIS

As with the Forest Plan, this effort to revise and update livestock grazing practices in the Sinks area (the "North Rich Allotment") plods along. The Forest Service is conducting a full environmental impact statement on grazing in the area, which will give us a good opportunity to provide input on grazing in the area. Whether it will lead to any meaningful changes is another story, but if you don't play the game you have little room to complain. Therefore, in preparation for the release of the Draft EIS this winter, Bridgerland Audubon has contributed toward a project that will insure that grazing impacts are fully considered and other resources are not ignored in the process.

Otherwise, Alice Lindahl and others have been keeping an eye on Division of Wildlife Resources hunting issues (especially the crane hunt, a spring bear hunt, and a deer hunt on Antelope Island), and as always the Barrens Dam.

—Bruce Pendery

Update Your Bookmarks—BAS Website Gets a New Address

Bridgerland Audubon established its own website with its own server this summer. It can be accessed at <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org>. Visit the site to learn more about us and get the latest on field trips, meetings, etc. You can also sub-

mit items for posting on the website if you want, and we encourage you to do so. The only real ground rule—other than the article not be libelous and not violate rules for nonprofits—is that it relate to Bridgerland Audubon's mission and interests: wildlife

(especially birds), its habitat, and conservation and education related to these.

Submit items you'd like to have posted by e-mail to Bruce Pendery at bruce@mail.n1.net.

Audubon Council of Utah Fall Retreat Set at Zion National Park

The Audubon Council of Utah will hold its fall retreat from noon on Saturday, October 7 through noon on Sunday, October 8 at Zion National Park. The Audubon Council is the association of the four Audubon chapters in Utah (representing Cache County, Ogden, SLC, and St. George). We meet in the spring and fall each year to discuss common concerns and interests, and to engage in birding in places most of us otherwise don't get to

that often. This fall should be a great meeting. Zion will be hard to beat for scenery, hiking, and birding. The basic agenda for the fall retreat is to meet at the Zion National Park Visitor Center for lunch, and to then embark on birding tours for the afternoon. That evening there will be dinner and a speaker will give us an update on the California Condor reintroduction project. A group reservation has been made at Watchman Camp-

ground in Zion for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. On Sunday there will be a morning birding trip, followed by Council business related to establishing a state office and hiring our new lobbyist. This is a great opportunity to have some fun and meet other Auduboner's from throughout the state. If you want to arrive earlier or leave later, and thus extend your stay, you certainly can do that. Call Bruce Penderly at 792-4150

Bear River Institute Offers Great Basin Raptor Workshop

Raptors of the Great Basin: From Fenceposts to the Goshutes

Starting this September, the Bear River Institute is offering a comprehensive workshop for all who are interested in migrating raptors. Two local, budding naturalists will lead evening classes and five days in the field, practicing raptor identification and discussing issues in research and conservation.

The workshop is offered in cooperation with Hawkwatch International, and the culminating weekend will include three days exploring their banding site in the Goshute Mountains. The course is offered for 2 credits through Utah State University's Fisheries and Wildlife Department. However, the workshop was created for anyone striving to discover a greater understanding of the Great Basin's birds of prey, and is open to the community.

Class Sessions:

Sept. 19, 21, 26, 28 and Oct. 3, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Field Sessions:

Sept. 23: 7 a.m. to noon,
Sept. 30: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Oct. 6-8: Backpack to the Goshutes

Limited to 12 participants
For more information call Darek at 797-7379 or check out the institute's website: www.ext.usu.edu/bri.

"Two local, budding naturalists will lead evening classes and five days in the field"



Thanks to BAS Members Who Joined or Renewed this Summer

New Members

Thelma Ackley
Paul V. Graham
Rebecca H. Johnson
Julie B. Pitcher
Kathleen VanSlyke
Gerald A Brunner
C D Cheney
Gail Drew
Scott Hendry
Fred Peterson

Transfers into Our Chapter

Sandy Sanderson

Renewing Members

Warren Brown
Keith Dixon
Cindy A. Hall
Glenn Jarrell
Rosalie Mueggler
Wayne Wurtsbaugh
& Linda L'Ai
Cheryl & Brett Adams
Mr Warren Brown

Mr Al Forsyth
Justin & Angela Henney
Tim & Jacquelyn Henney
James E. Kingsland
Austin McHugh
Harvey Mohr
Ivan G. Palmblad
Lawrence A. Ryel
Charles L. Salzberg
James P. Shaver
Mr & Mrs Robert E Taylor
Beth Walden

