



# The Stilt

Volume 30, Issue 12  
December 2001

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

## eyeballs needed

### 42nd Christmas Bird Count December 15th

**T**his year marks the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for Logan centered in Hyde Park. No, that 42<sup>nd</sup> is not a typo; we've got some newly found history here, folks. But first, the bigger picture on the history thing.

The CBC was started by one Frank Chapman, a New Yorker who found the tradition of the Christmas Side Hunt an intolerable wastage of wildlife. You see, at the turn of the century, many people viewed wildlife as merely a "resource," and an inexhaustible one at that. Market gunners shot thousands of birds in a day, hundreds of birds in one blast. Even sparrows, robins, and thrushes were killed for food markets. Wading birds were massacred for their plumage and smaller passerines were taken whole just to adorn ladies' hats. The "last straw" for some nature lovers was the Christmas Side Hunt, a tradition following the midday Christmas meal, where participants ventured afield for exercise and "sport" to kill as many birds as possible in an afternoon, with a winner declared for the highest count.

Chapman and others initiated an alternative: a bird census at Christmas time. Thus began, in 1900, the first Christmas Bird Count, a tradition that has contributed a great deal to the conservation, instead of the

consumption, of wild avian things. From the early years, the CBC has mushroomed into a hemisphere-wide effort to census all of the birds in prescribed "count areas" each 15 miles in diameter each year. In 2000, in fact, there were 1880 circles in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. In all, 51,637 observers counted 54,788,215 birds of 689 species. The high count in the United States went to Mad Island Marsh, Texas with 235 species. The overall high was the Mindo-Tandayapa count in Ecuador with 348 species. And, once again, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska saw but one species—the Common Raven—but they saw 73 of those in 2 ¼ hours!

This is the 102<sup>nd</sup> CBC and numerous researches have taken advantage of the years of data to ask about the distribution and ecology of birds. There are problems with the data, to be sure. Counts differ between themselves and across the years in terms of effort and weather. Some counts have many participants, some few. Some counts have more talent than others or devote more hours,

planning, and resources. Some are held in snowstorms, some on balmy, windless days. But all face the limitation of 24 hours between December 14<sup>th</sup> and January 5<sup>th</sup>. And all face the scrutiny of experienced compilers who don't hesitate to challenge unusual sightings. These data help scientists discern which species seem to be in decline and which are expanding.

Beware, though, of finding



#### Inside this issue:

Eyeballs needed -Bryan Dixon	1
Can you guess this bird? Quiz -Bryan Dixon	2
Answers to Quiz	5
Green Calendar	3
Green Party of Utah -Rob Morrison	6
Local Notes & Actions	6
Cache Valley Online Resources	7



(BAS CDC Continued from page 1)

Beware, though, of finding something really unusual. Jean and I found some Bushtits a few years ago and faced the prospect of "writing it up"—what field marks did you see? What experience have you had with this species before? What else could it have been, etc.? Are you prone to hallucinations? Fortunately for us the next day other, more experienced birders confirmed our sightings. Whew! That was close! Still, there's always some count that reports a Swainson's Hawk, which has come to be regarded as almost an impossibility, since they migrate so far away to Argentina for the winter.

**W**ell, last year, we marked three out of four years with a Peregrine Falcon reported. I couldn't help but blurt out (to demonstrate my "extensive" experience of almost 6 years) how this was so unusual and how it was great to finally have a Peregrine on the count.

It was only a day or two later that I got a call from Buddy Smith, who remarked that, yes, it was great to have Peregrines again; that the last time he had seen a Peregrine on the CBC was the 1975 count. Huh, says I, what 1975 count. MY data said the count hadn't begun until 1976, so

how could he have seen it in 1975? Patiently, Buddy explained that there were quite a few of them who did, in fact, conduct a 1975 CBC count. The National Audubon Society and Cornell University have labored hard to make all of the last 100 years of data available on the web. So, I took mouse in hand and clicked my way eastward to the depths of disk space to see what was what. And history I found.

The first count in Utah was 1903 in Provo. They found 25 species, including Dusky Horned Owls and Pallid Horned Larks. Since then, there have been 25 different counts in Utah, including Arches National Monument, Bear Lake, Bear River

(BAS CDC Continued on page 4)

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In the end, the results are compiled into a single volume annual report with extensive commentary about trends and unusual sightings. These days, the National Audubon Society publishes the report as *American Birds* and the results are available on the Internet at <http://birdsource.cornell.edu>.

**A**nd that's where this year's tale starts.

I first got involved in the Logan CBC in the early 1990s when Jean would drag me along to look for birds (rather than backcountry skiing???) with promises of companionship and a great evening potluck. I went, ever the O.H. (Obedient Hubby), and in 1994 got really hooked on this birding thing. Since then, I've enjoyed every count and especially helping Keith Archibald, our merry compiler and scrutineer extraordinaire, by organizing the data into a database.

So, you see, I thought I had an inside track on the data. I could spit out totals and statistics and enjoyed keying in the data on count evening so everyone could get instant gratification on the number of species and individuals seen. I provided historical summaries for someone who would compare each species' count with historical highs and lows right as they were reported. Yep, I had the keys to the "history."

## Can You Guess These Birds?

Can you guess the currently recognized names for these species reported from Cache County in 1938? (Answers elsewhere in this issue.)

### Names Used in 1938

1. Treganza's Heron (*Ardea herodias*)
2. Brewster's Egret (*Egretta tricolor*)
3. Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*)
4. Baldpate (*Merica americana*)
5. Dusky Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*)
6. Natalie's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*)
7. Batchelder's Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)
8. Arkansas Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)
9. Little Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)
10. Wright's Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrighti*)
11. Black-headed Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri annectans*)
12. Woodhouse's Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*)
13. Long-tailed Chickadee (*Penthestes atricapilla*)
14. Inyo Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)
15. Northwestern Shrike (*Lanius b. invictus*)
16. Nevada Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
17. Long-tailed Chat (*Icteria virens*)
18. Northern Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*)
19. Thick-billed Red-Wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
20. Rocky Mt. Grosbeak (*Hedymeles melanocephalus*)
21. Arkansas Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*)
22. Bendire's Crossbill (*Laxia curvirostra*)
23. Spurred Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)
24. Desert Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*)

Source: Stanford, J. S., *An Annotated List of the Birds in the Utah State Agricultural College Zoological Museum*, Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Vol. XV, 1938. Special thanks to the reference library of Dr. R. Keith Archibald.





# Green Calendar

## of Cache Valley

### December

**8 Stokes Nature Center Nature Second Saturday Programs: Holiday Decorating for Kids.**

Second Saturday Programs are designed for all ages. Need to finish your holiday shopping? Drop the kids off for two hours, and we will keep them busy making holiday decorations with a nature theme. 10:00 a.m.- noon. Program fee is \$5 per child, half price for Nature Center members. Registration is required, call the Nature Center for information. 435/755-3239 or visit <http://www.logannature.org/>

**13 Bridgerland Audubon Society General Meeting.** Be armchair travelers (pictures, pater, and poetry) on a last sabbatical with Jim and Debbie Gessaman—the cheap, safe way to see East Africa! Join Jim's climb on Kilimanjaro; visit Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti; fly to exotic Zanzibar; and meet the animals and people of Kenya in Samburu. Flight will board on December 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Logan City Meeting Room, 255 North Main.

**15 Bridgerland Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count Alert!** Saturday, December 15. BAS's Annual Christmas Bird Count is conducted every year in the same 15 mile diameter circle with compilations sent to a central database for an annual report and analysis. This will be the 102nd CBC since it was started in 1900 by Frank Chapman as a substitute for the Christmas Side Hunt. Last year, over 1800 counts across the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Islands involved over 52,000 participants and tallied over 78,000,000 birds. Here in Logan, we have the largest participation in Utah. We hope to find 90+ species (in December no less). This is a fun and educational winter day spent in our own natural surroundings; a joy for birders of all levels of skill. After the count, we'll meet for a potluck supper and the annual compilation. If we're lucky, someone will have seen something really unusual which means you should leave a little time the next day to go see it for yourself! If you'd like to help out, contact Keith Archibald, 752-8258. Cost is \$5 per person to cover national compilation costs (under 18 free).

Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, September through June, in the Logan City meeting room, 255 N. Main St., 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 change monthly. Everyone is welcome.

**Be sure to call about non-Audubon events—we can't be responsible for these descriptions!**  
More community events are available at: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org/greencalendar/index.html>



(BAS CDC Continued from page 2)  
 Migratory Bird Refuge, Bluff, Bryce Canyon N.P., Cedar City, Clear Lake, Dinosaur National Monument-Jensen, Duchesne, Evanston, Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, Flaming Gorge Dam, Heber Valley, Jordan River, Kanab, Logan, Moab, Ogden, Parowan, Payson, Provo, Roosevelt, Salt Lake City, Silver Reef, St. George, and Zion National Park Seventeen of

me into the basement and amid the "expanding stacks" I found copies of *Audubon Field Notes* beginning in 1950, continuing in 1970 as *American Birds*. In these volumes were recorded all the details of all the counts in our circle. Dates of the counts, weather conditions, times and party hours of each count, species listings, and, perhaps one of the most

birds? What possessed them to spend a cold winter's day counting birds? Were they well-rounded naturalists, focused listers, scientists?

Those early years show a steady level of effort: 3-4 participants and total counts of 3,000-4,000 birds. Species counts rarely broke 40. Then in 1974, everything changed. The old observers disappeared for the most part and a new crop of observers took their place. Allen Stokes appears again, and in 1975 there were 20 counters including Barbara Abraham, George Biggs, Jim Haefner, Steve Hoffman, Patricia Howard, Fritz Knopf, Alice Lindahl, Steve Montgomery, Linda Mycek, Judi and Rick Nunes, Roger Olson, Karen and Lee Rentz, Ann and Dave Schimpf, Jeff Short, Diane Siegfried, Frank Smith, Kim Smith, and Jan Young.

With the increasing number of participants, the total number of birds seen annually rose gradually to 15,000-20,000 and species counts rose to 85-90 characteristic of recent years. As shown on the accompanying chart, the transition is quite dramatic. More effort in terms of number of participants or party hours is generally

(BAS CDC Continued on page 5)

## The first CBC in Cache County was in 1956.

these are still active.

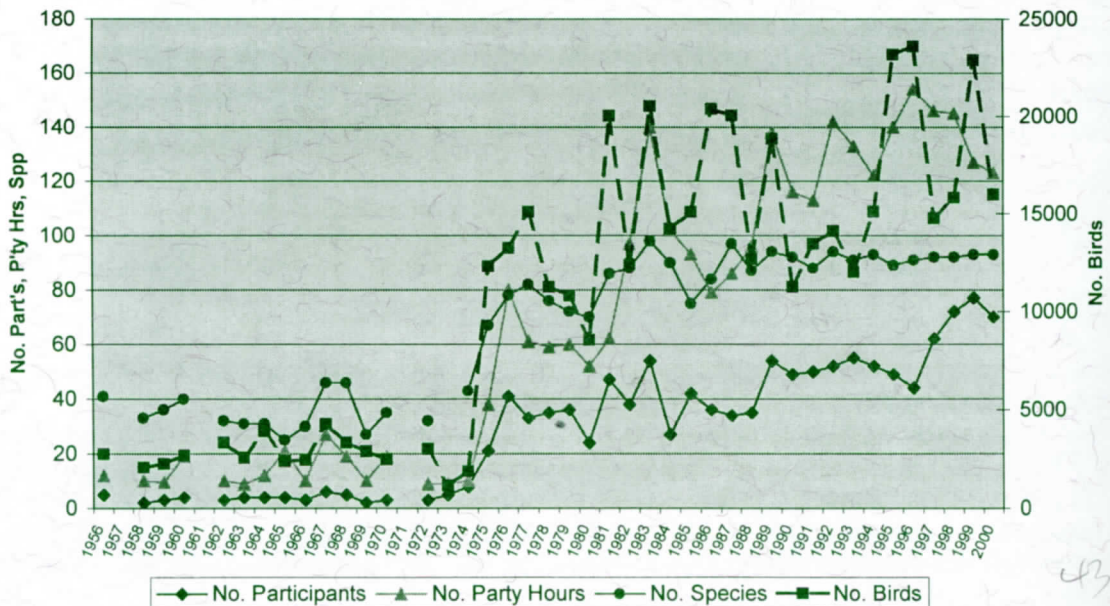
**T**he first CBC in Cache County was in 1956. At that time it was called the Hyde Park Count Circle, but it had the same boundaries as today. And there were the records of birds seen. Forty-one species in 1956, 33 in 1958, 36 in 1959, and so on right through the present. But the data on the web didn't say who participated, what the weather was like, and how much effort was made. I needed a different source.

In the SciTech Library on the USU campus, I found some answers. John Elswailer, the reference librarian, took

interesting aspects of this history, the names of all the participants each year.

The first year, the participants included J.M. Gaites, D. R. Mead, W. Pfeiffer, R. A. Ryder, and one A. W. Stokes. Yep, our own Allen Stokes was one of the founders of the Logan CBC, having arrived in Logan in September 1952. But then there's a mystery, for Allen doesn't appear again until 1974, eighteen years later! In the meantime, the count was carried on by 3-4 people who show up year after year: Wayne Hancey, George T. Morrison and Kent Morrison, joined occasionally by Richard Follett and Clair Kofoed. Who were these people and why were they interested in counting

BAS CBC Count by Effort





(BAS CDC Continued from page 4) rewarded with higher counts. But, while it's important to count total birds, a lot of the fun is in the number of species. We try hard before the count to find certain hard-to-find species and then we make sure we find them on count day. The result is that we seem to have gotten quite good at finding all the species that are likely to be here. Numbers of species have peaked somewhere in the low 90s. Our record was 97 in 1986. Will we ever break 100? What will that take? What kind of fall, and what weather on count day, and what kind of observers do we need?

**T**his last question is the easiest. We need all kinds. Beginners with an interest and a pair of eyeballs are just as important as seasoned veterans with a practiced ear for call notes. We need folks to ski and snowshoe high on the mountains looking for Pine Grosbeaks. We need kids to help count the thousands of starlings and House Sparrows. We need people patiently watching the feeders for the possible Harris' or White-throated Sparrow. We need people "not from these parts" who will see the bird that's unusual to us locals but common where they come from. We need hikers, canoeists, people in cars to drive and to look.

So, if you want to dedicate a day to science and conservation, spend time in the out of doors with like-minded nature lovers, and learn more about our avian world, join us on our 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Call Keith Archibald, 752-8258, to

find out where you're needed. Then, scout the area in the weeks leading up to the count. On count day, arise early to look for owls and spend as much time as you can that day with your comrades counting all the avian critters you can find. Meet at lunch at a predetermined spot to share successes and misses and get reoriented to make sure we find as many species as we can. Then, oh then, join the potluck at Susan and David Drown's house, 1774 East 1400 North in Logan, at 6:00 p.m. for the traditional potluck and compilation. The cost is a mere \$5 (under 18 free) to cover the cost of compiling the results. Everyone is invited. Bring your friends and family. Be a part of history.

- Bryan Dixon

## Join us on our 42nd annual Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 15th.

### And don't forget the other counts in northern Utah:

**Bear Lake CBC:** December 28. One of our newest CBCs scheduled on the anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Call Dennis Austin, 435/245-4177 to find out when and where to meet.

**Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge:** December 19. Contact John Bellmon, jcbellmon@msc.com, 801/444-3704 for registration and more information. Help needed!

**Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge:** December 30. Would love to have some birders from our coverage area participate. Chili and cornbread feed for all counter who are pre-registered. For more information contact Jay Banta at 435.831.5353, ext. 2223 or jay\_banta@fws.gov.

**Jordan River:** January 1. Meet at Johanna's Kitchen (9725 S. State St, SLC); for breakfast at 7 am. Assignments will be distributed to start birding at 8:00 a.m. At the end of the day gather for a group report and final species tally at Sizzler (20 West 9000 South; 801/566-8021). To sign up, or for more information, call Jeanne Le Ber or Ray Smith at 801/532-7384, evenings.

**Morgan:** December 29. Contact John Bellmon, jcbellmon@msc.com, 801/444-3704 for registration and more information.

**Ogden:** December 15. Contact John Bellmon, jcbellmon@msc.com, 801/444-3704 for registration and more information.

**Provo:** December 15. Contact Merrill Webb, 801/224-6113 for more information.

### Answer to Bird Quiz on page 2:

Current Common Names: 1. Great Blue Heron, 2. Tricolored Heron, 3. American Kestrel, 4. American Wigeon, 5. Blue Grouse, 6. Williamson's Sapsucker, 7. Downy Woodpecker, 8. Western Kingbird, 9. Willow Flycatcher, 10. Gray Flycatcher, 11. Stellar's Jay, 12. Western Scrub-Jay, 13. Black-capped Chickadee, 14. White-breasted Nuthatch, 15. Northern Shrike, 16. Loggerhead Shrike, 17. Yellow-breasted Chat, 18. Wilson's Warbler, 19. Red-winged Blackbird, 20. Black-headed Grosbeak, 21. Lesser Goldfinch, 22. Red Crossbill, 23. Spotted Towhee, 24. Sage Sparrow.



# Green Party of Utah:

"Neither Left Nor Right But Out In Front"

**T**he Green Party of Utah (GPU) is a grass-roots organization and one in a group of state-based parties affiliated with the Green Party of the United States. We believe in empowering all citizens and communities to live the fruits of their Constitutionally guaranteed rights through being the actual power in government. As such, we are

determined to provide a distinct electoral alternative to the current two-party political monopoly which has psychologically disenfranchised the majority of Americans.

The Green Party of Utah's founding convention was held on October 20 where the Coordinating Council was elected and bylaws and platform officially adopted. Our eleven key values are: grassroots democracy, ecological wisdom, social justice and equal opportunity, non-violence, decentralization, community-based economics, feminism & gender equity, respect for diversity, personal & global responsibility, future focus & sustainability, and quality of life.

party, and forming Locals that will be the backbone of the party. We need the signatures of at least 2,000 registered Utah voters by February 15, 2002 in order to become an official political party in Utah and run candidates for office in 2002. Information on the GPU and petitions are available at this web site: <http://greenutah.com/gpu/>

Please visit this site or contact Rob Morrison, Local GPU Contact at 435/752-4232. if you are interested in working with the party and towards a civil society and sustainable future.

Rob Morrison  
[rob.morrison@mailcity.com](mailto:rob.morrison@mailcity.com)

Current activities include: a ballot petition drive, creating issue-based committees, establishing a political



## Local Notes & Actions

### Utah Birding Pals Needed

I just lost my only contact in Utah! My website is designed so people interested in birding can find local contacts when they are traveling. If you go to <http://www.birdingpal.com> you will find more 1500 contacts all over the world; I have had 45,000 visitors since I started the website last year. Any consideration and help would be greatly appreciated.

-Knud Rasmussen  
[krkr@sympatico.ca](mailto:krkr@sympatico.ca)

### New Outings Organizer

Dick Hurren has agreed to be our new outings organizer, starting with the new year. Thanks Dick! If you have any suggestions, give him a call at 734-2653.

### Stokes Nature Center Auction Another Great Success

\$23,000 was raised at the fourth annual Stokes Nature Center Auction! Another great result and a lot of hard work!

### Audubon Advisory: Blackbird Poisoning

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture is proposing to poison 2 million Red-Winged Blackbirds a year for three years starting in the spring of 2002. The poisoning threatens to kill numerous other birds including the steeply declining populations of grassland songbirds. The Dept. is conducting the blackbird poisoning in an effort to reduce sunflower crop damage in the Northern Plains. Audubon opposes the blackbird-poisoning program because it cannot be justified on economic or scientific grounds. NAS asks that members contact Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and urge her to end the poisoning of red-winged blackbirds in North and South Dakota! More information: [http://www.audubon.org/campaign/blackbird/save\\_the\\_blackbirds.html](http://www.audubon.org/campaign/blackbird/save_the_blackbirds.html). To send comments through Audubon's website: <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/actionalerts.asp>

### Audubon Advisory: The Farm Bill

On November 15, the Senate Agriculture Committee passed a sweeping farm bill that contains a number of conservation programs directly impacting birds, other wildlife and their habitat. While this bill has sufficient funding for Wetlands Reserve Program, it does not provide adequate funding for all of the other important programs such as Conservation Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Farmland Protection Program to sufficiently address the conservation challenges facing America's farmers in protecting important habitat for migratory birds, including grassland songbirds like the bobolink, and other wildlife. The alternative is the Reid-Leahy Conservation Assistance and Regional Equity Act of 2001. NAS urges its members to contact their two U.S. Senators and urge them to support for this bill for this year's Farm Bill! See the Audubon website (<http://www.audubon.org>) for more information.





# Bridgerland Audubon

*contacts*

## Trustees

- 1999-2002 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Allen Christensen, 258-5018  
Val Grant 752-7572 ; Dick Hurren, 734-2653
- 2000-2003 Mae Coover, 752-8871; Ron Goede, 752-9650  
Teri Peery, 753-3249
- 2001-2004 Merr Lundahl, 753-1707; Dick Drown 752-3797

## Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

President	Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net
Vice Pres.	Bill Masslich, 753-1759, bmasslich@pcu.net
Secretary	Suzanne Pratt, 713-0197, suzap@cc.usu.edu
Treasurer	Susan Drown, 752-3797, sdrown@jwscpa.com
Wetlands	Alice Lindahl, 753-7744, alindahl@biology.usu.edu
Education	Jack Greene, 563-6816, jgreene@lhs.logan.k12.ut.us
Newsletter	Georgen Gilliam, 787-4018, geogil@ngw.lib.usu.edu
Circulation	Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu
Hospitality	Allen & Gail Christensen, 258-5018, gaichr@pdp.usu.edu
Hotline	Nancy Williams, 753-6268, nanwill@cc.usu.edu

## New Members

David Anderson	Lance L Littlejohn
Tanis Appgood	Carol Oresick
John Butcher	Sandra M Robertson
Jeanette D Christian	Polly E Squires
Jeff Jacobsen	Merlin Tams
	Andy Zalit

## Renewing Members

Dennis D Austin	Heather L Keough
Patricia Bahler	Kerkman Family
Martha H Balph	Bradley Kropp
Star Coulbrooke	Ilone Long
John Dymerski	J Norton & G Wooton
Al Forsyth	Ivan G Palmblad
Cindy A Hall	James P Shaver
Kermit & Phyllis Hall	Jim Sinclair
Scott Hendry	Philip R Stafford
Daisy & Trevor Hughes	Mr & Mrs Robert E Taylor
Nathan & Chris Hult	Miiko Toelken
H Richard Hurren	Gene & Melle Washington

## Transfers Into Our Chapter

Norma Otte

# Cache Valley Online

*online information on birding, hiking, etc.*

### Bridgerland Audubon Website:

<http://bridgerlandaudubon.org>

### Bridgerland Audubon Hotline:

Want to know what birds are being seen by Cache Valley birders? Send message to Nancy Williams at [nanwill@cc.usu.edu](mailto:nanwill@cc.usu.edu) to join the hotline.

### Bridgerland Audubon Econet:

Alerts about conservation and environmental news. Send message to Alice Lindahl, [alindahl@bridgernet.com](mailto:alindahl@bridgernet.com), to join.

### Birdnet Birding Hotline for Utah:

The Birdnet Hotline is an email mailing list for sharing bird sightings and birding information of statewide interest with other Utah birders:  
<http://www.utahbirds.org/connections/birdnet.html>

### Northeastern Utah Birding:

Gathering place for birders from Northeastern Utah:  
<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/northeasternutahbirding>

### Birding in Cache County, Utah:

Maps and routes:

<http://www.utahbirds.org/counties/cache/index.html>

### Other Birding Organizations in Utah

<http://www.utahbirds.org/organizations/index.html>

### Cache Trails by John Wood.

Hiking trail descriptions and maps. Published by Bridgerland Audubon Society, reproduced with permission online at the Allen & Alice Stokes Nature Center website:  
<http://www.logannature.org/nature/canyontrails/index.html>

### Green Calendar:

Lots of local events:

<http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org/greencalendar/index.html>

### National Audubon Mailing Lists:

Audubon maintains mailing lists on many topics pertinent to Cache Valley, including conservation alerts, discussions on wetlands, population issues, etc.  
<http://list.audubon.org/archives/>

-georgen



# The Stilt

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3501

Logan, Utah 84323-3501

Email: stiltnews@hotmail.com

Visit our website: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org>

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Permit No. 104  
Logan, Utah

# Bird Count

15th of December

Call Keith Archibald, 752-8258, to find out where you're needed.

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 15th of each month. Send to stiltnews@hotmail.com.

## National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter *The Stilt* and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

- New member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.
- Renewing member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.
- Subscription only to the *Stilt*: \$20/year. Do not send *Audubon* magazine.

My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed (\$20 membership dues)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to:  
Bridgerland Audubon Society  
PO Box 3501  
Logan, UT 84323-3501  
W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.