

## The Stilt

Volume 30, Issue 9 September 2001

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

## animal tales

Being a scientist of sorts, in my

occasional field trip to preserve

sanity. But back in 1974 I got

case a biologist, I am usually

confined to an office with an

- by Uncle Val, the Kiddies Pal

lucky. I was a grad student at Utah State working on how to keep starlings, lots of starlings, from mucking up cattle feedlots. OK, so a feedlot is pretty well mucked up in its own right; even so, starlings could eat beaucoup amounts of cattle feed each winter, costing feedlot owners in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. By the way beaucoup is my addition to the PEK measurement system: Squat for zero, a few, some, a lot, a butt load, and a bijillion; beaucoup belongs somewhere between a lot and a butt load. My luck was Pete Kung asking me to help him monitor the wildlife on Utah's Oil Shale Tracts near Bonanza in the Uinta Basin. Little did we know that this job would last eleven years, monitoring seasonal population of amphibians (only a few, but we did find a red-spotted toad), reptiles (lizards are way cool), birds (of many makes and varieties), and mammals (deer, cattle, sheep, rodents and bats). For a physiology-behavior kind of guy who dreamed of spending his days and nights studying

Being of unsound mind, generally directionless, and with a warped sense of good and evil, I figured, why not pass on tales of how I learned how smart

when, where, and how many

seasons for eleven years, my

ship had come in.

animals there were during four

(read: intelligent) animals are and how little we know about them. My objective (some modicum of direction still exists) is to convince ye of young body and soul to become field biologists, then lead the nation. the world to peace and prosperity through the eyes of the animals, a modest goal at

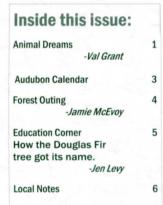
That being the case, let's start with the bats, the small mammals in the Order Chiroptera, not the ole bat who lives next door, or the bat that hits baseballs or softballs or whatever they call the ball in cricket, but small, furry, flying mammals who

haunt the darkened corners of the world in search of insects. rodents, fruit, nectar, fishes, and the water buffaloeating bat of Borneo. See, you just learned something new; I can't be trusted with the truth. Be that it may, I will now regale you with more information than you'd ever want to know about the hoary bat. OK, so the name results in a few sniggers, maybe a lot, a bijillion maybe, but once you meet one face to face,

sniggering disappears and rapt attention is paid to this ounce of energy trying to kill you.

The hoary bat is named for its white-tipped fur that looks like hoar frost on its yellow, red and black hairs that cover its body and some of its wings, which are really its hands. They are beautiful to look at, all wrapped up in a mist nest. But when you gently try to extract them, they bite, they scream, they claw, they beat you with their hands. You really get to know this mouth full of sharp teeth, slashing, biting, ripping at your gloves (no gloves= torn flesh).

(Continued on page 2)





These little bundles of joy were the most abundant bat we caught during five summers (June and August) in Asphalt Wash, on the western edge of 16 square miles called the Oil Shale Tracts.

In June 1976 none of us had any clue how or when or where to catch bats. We'd convinced our employers that these data would be very useful in monitoring affects of oil shale mining

Mexico that's a butt load of flying.
Actually the Hawaiian population is now a permanent resident. These bats cruise all over the United States mainly the Midwest then return to the West to breed in September. The females migrate first into the Midwest to bear their young in June. In the fall after maturing the female holds the sperm on retainer through much of the fall and winter and conceives in spring. It's like the gift that keeps on giving and

flying bundles of love are solitary, no communal roost like most bats; they roost in trees. A relative of the hoary bat, the red bat, is an eastern species that sometimes roosts in peach trees, is mistaken as such and has resulted in lifetime aversions to peaches (undocumented truth). The hoary bats only contact with one another was during mating season, an especially welcome behavior, required for survival. The mating season, thought by

### When we started catching lots of males in June, they would arrive in groups and clog the two mist nets with screaming nasty packages of flesh and teeth.

on wildlife (at least we'd learned something from years of education). Our first four attempts of bat trapping resulted in long nights, convulsive laughter by kibitzers and relatives, and the capture of two Myotis at a little pond north of Bonanza that none of us could identify to species. On the fifth night we traveled to an isolated pond formed by artesian flow from an abandoned oil well. We set up our nets and caught a pallid bat, a big brown bat, a Townsend's big-eared bat, a silver-haired bat and a few different species of Myotis, little non-descript dudes weighing between 3 to 8 grams each. We then spent five days each beginning in August, 1976 through June, 1980 at the Asphalt Wash pond, trapping bats from sunset to sunrise, and yes Virginia, we're still here to talk about it.

When you handle any animal, you have the opportunity to get up close and personal with the animal in hand and its parasites, fleas, ticks and the like. There were creatures that crawled out of the fur of some bats the made the beast in Alien look like Barbie. I had a mite crawl onto my glove whilst holding a pallid bat that made my blood run cold. This was followed by another beast that I've repressed a description of for fear of going sane. But enough of the fun stuff.

The hoary bats are known as solitary species, roosting in trees, and capable of flying long distances. They've been found in Greenland and Hawaii and since they winter in the Southwest and

you get pregnant way after the joy of sex. The males strike out in whatever direction they want. When we started catching lots of males in June, they would arrive in groups and clog the two mist nets with screaming nasty packages of flesh and teeth. They'd go after each other, other bats, even elephants avoided Asphalt Wash and we were just finding out why.

After extracting our prizes from the nets, we'd determine their gender, measure their forearm, ear, body, and hindfoot using calipers, then weigh each one on a Pesola scale. During these activities, each hoary bat would bite, scream, etc and even use its thumb, a distinct appendage on its wing (hand), and thumbnail, an amazingly sharp claw, to snag your skin and try to pull your hand into the Jaws of Hell. By about midnight most hoary bats were somewhere else creating havoc and we could relax until sunrise, only to repeat this experience the next night.

In August, things changed. Where the males made up 97% of the hoary bat captures (at one time there were 10 in the net, something akin to your worst nightmare) in June 1977-1979, the sex ratio in August was one male to one female. They were a little less nasty, and definitely distracted by mating behavior. How we determined this was not by the smiles on their cute little faces, but by evidence too graphic to use in a family oriented newsletter. Plus we captured male/female pairs in the nets. There were definitely fewer hoary bats captured in August. These

Merriam, a noteworthy old-time biologist, to be in August, was according to Findley and Jones, noted modern batmen, in September and October somewhere in the west.

Well, whoop-de-doop, we found these "love bunnies" breeding in August (like Merriam said) and in the West, like Findley and Jones said. Solitary behavior may have applied to roosting but our June captures of foraging bats averaged 3 individuals in the nests at a time and about half the captures ranged from 2 to 10 bats. So, a marauding bunch of males with an occasional female in a group swept over the Uinta Basin's desert during June. Bugs, moths, small bats, rodents, elephants for sure, based on their absence, were fair game for these creatures of the night. Anything moving between an hour after sunset and midnight was subject to the "great white shark of the air". After midnight few hoary bats were captured. We figured the bats in Asphalt Wash were roosting in cottonwood trees along the White River and after scaring the pants off anything on the river, they flew up the wash, foraging at the isolated stock ponds before cruising further upland in their quest for total domination of the natural world.

Capture in Asphalt Wash were quite variable, a few one night, beaucoup the next, back to a few, then a lot during June and August, the former featuring marauding males; the latter, love struck males and females. In 1980 everything changed. Females, distinctly pregnant, showed up with their male (Continued on page 7)

## Audubon Calendar

#### Saturday, September 8. Annual Kokanee Salmon Run.

Visit Porcupine Reservoir to find the spawning Kokanee salmon run; streams can be choked with crimson fresh-water salmon. Dr. Chris Wilson, head of the local Fisheries Experiment Station in Logan will lead the trip to explain the ecology and natural history of this unique fish. A excellent family trip. Leave 8 a.m. from the parking lot north of the Straw Ibis (150 North 50 East). After viewing the salmon, some of us will take a short hike up Cinnamon Creek to explore a beautiful riparian valley. Return early afternoon. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars; sunglasses are also useful for viewing the fish in the water. For more information, contact Chris Wilson, 753-3769.

#### Thursday, 13 September, General meeting.

The Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been out for review for almost three months, with comments due November 1. (Available online: http://www.fs.fed.us/wcnf/) BAS has participated in past planning efforts and this revision seems like a marked improvement. At the September general meeting, Jim Cane and Bryan Dixon will provide an overview of the plan including changes from the 1999 version. They'll review the new management concept of Management Prescription Categories as they relate to our local district, and also describe the summer and winter recreation plans in the Proposed Alternative 6 of the DEIS. The Forest Service is influenced more by informed individual letters than mass postcard campaigns, so we hope this meeting will stimulate action as well as discussion. We'll provide writing materials and summary sheets of BAS' position on the plan to help guide our members and we'll leave the many maps on display to help you formulate your own comments. Refreshments will be served. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 13 in the Logan City Meeting Room.

#### Saturday, 22 September. Wellsville Raptor Trip.

Hike to the Wellsville Mountain's ridge to observe one of the great birding displays in our area, the southern migration of hawks and other raptors along the mountain ridge. Last year 3000 birds were observed by the HawkWatch International people who spend about eight weeks at the lookout site counting and classifying the birds. The hike will go up Deep Canyon to the lookout point overlooking the Bear River to watch the birds; we generally stay a couple of hours with the HawkWatch people who can answer questions and tell us about their count so far this season. The trail is a steady uphill and gains about 3000' in four miles. The ridge is generally windy and might be cold so bring appropriate clothing as well as rain gear for possible afternoon showers. Also bring lunch and drink. Overall the hike is moderately strenuous, and in addition to the hawks, it is a very scenic trip with great views from the ridge. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot across from the Straw Ibis in Logan (about 50 E. 150 North); carpooling will be available. For more information call Jim Sinclair, 752-0061.

#### Friday-Sunday, 27-30 September. Annual Trip to Hear Elk Bugling in Jackson Hole.

Camp together near Jackson. Most people arrive Friday, but you can arrive on Thursday, as trip leaders Terry and John Barnes will be there early to spot the animals. Spend Saturday looking for bison, pronghorn, elk, and other wildlife. After supper, go out to listen for elk bugling. Sunday free for various hikes. Return by suppertime Sunday. This was one of Allen Stokes' favorite BAS trips, and we'll be remembering him around the campfire; great family trip. Call Terry Barnes at 563-3910 (evenings and weekends) or email wapiti@mtwest.net, for reservations and carpooling arrangements. Bring your own food and camping gear. Be prepared for freezing weather.

#### Thursday, 11 October, General meeting.

Peter Kung, biologist and president of the non-profit organization EarthMatters.org, will be the featured speaker. The title of his presentation is "A Different Approach to Eco-tourism, and will focus on structuring eco-tourism in ways that tourists and scientists can give something back to host countries instead of benefiting middlemen who live elsewhere. He will highlight work in remote rainforest areas of Venezuela and Peru where EM.org has involved locals and indigenous people in eco-tourism efforts such as studying Harpy eagles. The meeting will be held at the Logan City Meeting Room, 255 North Main at 7 p.m.

## forest outing by Jamie McEvoy

If I were asked to describe Forest Ecology and Forest management in one word, I would say: COM-PLEX. Dr. Fred Baker, a forestry professor at U.S.U. led a group of 13 community members on the outing to the T.W. Daniel Experimental Forest. Through his broad knowledge of forest ecology and management issues, he helped us to realize the complexities of this area.

The forest is complex both ecologically and socially. We looked at the soil biology, plant and wildlife biology, and various disturbance ecology factors such as fire, disease and human use. Our first stop was the Beaver Mountain turnoff where we had the opportunity to see the impacts of the late June snowfall. Most conifers had a distinct orange-brownish hue due to the frost killing the new growth and the lack of water thereafter causing many needles to fall off. Fortunately everything is predicted to recover well.

We also looked at a large lodgepole pine stand and talked about the effects of fire and various diseases. As we all know, fire is a natural effect on the landscape that has been suppressed by the Forest Service since before the days of Smokey the Bear. Ecologists have realized that it is important and healthy to reintroduce fire, but changing the public mindset has proven to be a difficult task.

We talked about diseases such as Rust Disease, caused by a fungus, and Ips Beetle and Mountain Pine Bark Beetle infestations. Dr. Fred Baker was even able to pull back the bark and find a pair of beetles in a rather intimate moment, which was good for a few laughs.

We then continued up the canyon to the T.W. Daniels Experimental Forest where we discussed the complex management and social issues. This forest is unique in that it allows for some private logging operations, but U.S.U. gets to experiment with various prescriptions (that is, how much they can take or leave within a given area) and then study how that area regenerates. We saw everything from a traditional 5 acre clear-cut on a steep slope to a new and unique technique on a 200-acre area. This unique prescription tries to mimic a natural fire. Various "patch" stands, 1/4 acre in size, were left standing throughout the 200-acre cut. If the wind doesn't knock over these stands in the next twenty years, it could prove to be a successful new logging method that leaves some cover for wildlife, some organic matter for the soil, and some mature tree species for the new growth.

The complexity of this forest was overwhelming. When it comes to truly understanding the infinite complexities of the natural world, I think it is wise to be reminded of the ancient words of Socrates, the Greek philosopher: "I know that I know nothing." The concept of "managing" natural resources (a. k.a. wild nature) becomes very difficult to the humbled mind.

However, from the questions that were asked and the discussions that were sparked, it is certain we all learned something- and that's one step towards making better decisions about our natural resources.

- Jamie McEvoy

#### educational corner

# HOW DOUBLAS ago, there were no hawks in the skies or on the eran free. They ate without worry, ran among the ers, played in the giant cone-bearing trees, and wuntil there was a blanket of mice covering the

A long, long time ago, there were no hawks in the skies or on the land and the mice ran free. They ate without worry, ran among the grasses and flowers, played in the giant cone-bearing trees, and their families grew until there was a blanket of mice covering the earth. Mother Nature, in all of her wisdom, knew that soon they would run out of food to eat and have no room to run around in. After much thought, Mother Nature invented the beautiful hawk. The hawk would be a skilled hunter taking only enough mice to feed herself and her hawk family.

Meanwhile...a silly pocket mouse named Douglas found out about Mother Nature's plan and gathered all of the other mice for a meeting. They gathered under one of the giant cone-bearing trees. Of course, there was panic among the mice who worried they would all be eaten until there were none of their kind left. They looked to Douglas for a plan. They thought he was wise because he was the one who found out about Mother Nature's plan. Douglas leaned back against the giant tree and thought for a few moments.

Finally, he came up with a plan. "We'll hide," he said. "Where?" yelled the mice...and then it happened. A shadow covered the land as the first hawk flew across the sky. The mice ran in all directions looking for places to hide. Douglas, followed by hundreds of mice, ran up the giant tree and dove into the cones for cover. Now, not all of the mice made it to safety. They provided a good meal for the new hawk and her family. The hawk family grew and the land was no longer covered with mice.

Meanwhile...Douglas and his friends stayed in the cones until they were very hungry. "What do we do now Douglas?" He thought again. "Well," he said, "we can eat the inside of these cones." The mice did just that.

They ate, and ate, and ate. They ate so much that they started to get fat. They got so fat that they got stuck in the cones and could not get out! Even today, if you look closely at the cones of this giant cone bearing tree, you can still see Douglas and his friends. Their back legs and tails are sticking out of the cones. In honor of Douglas and his attempts to save his friends, Mother Nature named the tree after him. It is called the Douglas Fir tree. *The end.* 

-From a folktale. Contributed by Jen Levy,
 Director, Stokes Nature Center



## local notes

#### Cache County Master Gardener classes

will be taught from September 4 -November 15, 2001 Classes held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM every Tuesday and Thursday at the ASTE building. 1498 North 800 East, Logan. Extension horticulturists and specialists will cover subjects about soils, composting, plant materials, landscape design, disease, insect and weed control. A completed registration form along with \$75 class fee must be submitted to the Cache Extension office. 1780 No. Research Pkwy (1800 No 500 East) by August 15. Questions - Loralie Platero, 752-6263

#### **Outings Organizer Needed**

Bridgerland Audubon is looking for an energetic and committed individual to organize outings. Responsibilities include arranging two outings a month, each with a leader, writing a description, and sending it to the *Stilt* editor and the BAS web master. Board members are good sources of ideas, and many trips are annual events, requiring only a few calls. Please apply soon to Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net.

#### Straw Bale Greenhouse building

Want to donate some volunteer muscle for a good cause? We will be meeting at 9 am, Sept. 8th at our new straw bale greenhouse located just west of Logan high school in the southwest corner of the parking lot behind the English building (approx 220 West 100 South). We will be there throughout the day putting the finishing

touches on our project including installing rain gutters, doors, insulation, and security fencing; landscaping (leveling); and lime washing. If you have any time, or just want to see this remarkable structure being built primarily by LHS and USU students under the auspice of Wayne Bingham of SLC and Dennis Caufield of Park City. the first ever straw bale project approved by the Logan City Building inspector, please stop by! Any questions, call or email Jack Greene at 563-6816, email: jgreeneatsummitcreek@msn.com

#### The Stokes Auction Is Coming!

On November 3rd, the Allen & Alice Stokes Nature Center in Logan Canyon will be hosting its third annual fundraising auction. It's time to start thinking about donations: Do you have artwork to donate, trips to lead, dinners to host, services to share? Please let Jen Levy know at 435/755-3239 or email her at jlevy@logannature. org.

#### Stoke's Nature Center Utah's Birds of Prev

Saturday, 8 September at 10 a.m. Join Hawkwatch International for an exciting program on Utah's Birds of Prey. Come learn how to identify our local birds of prey and learn about the current status of raptor populations in Utah. You will also get to meet a live hawk! This program is designed for families and participants of all ages. Program fee: \$5 for adults and \$3 for children, half-price for Nature Center Members! Following the program, join SNC naturalists for a

raptor birding trip in Cache Valley! Transportation will be provided. Field trip space is limited, call today to reserve a spot. The field trip is designed for ages 7 and older. Field trip fee: \$5 per person for nonmembers and \$3 per person for members.

#### Wetland Monitoring Volunteers Needed

Cache Valley has tremendous wetland resources. We are currently monitoring several sites for birds, vegetation, water quality, macroinvertebrates, and surrounding land use, but more help is needed. All volunteers will be trained in identification, so if you ever wanted to learn the flora and fauna of Cache Valley, sign up! Just call Brian Nicholson 797-2580, email monitoring@utahwetlands. org.

#### Bear River Institute Needs Your Support

I write to you today in search of some comments in support of experiential education. With a new president of Utah State University, many changes are being made related to the goals and financial structure throughout the university community. Many of these decisions have already trickled down and the Bear River Institute (BRI) is at risk of being lost. The Extension program, the colleges of Natural Resources and Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; all of these programs are redefining their goals and future vision. A letter of support for Experiential Education and the Bear River Institute could help build a supportive atmosphere within the university. BRI has

attempted to enhance learning opportunities for the university and the communities. Our courses and lectures are open to the public, attempting to bring our diverse valley together to study our communities and surrounding landscapes. Give us your thoughts and experiences. What would you like to see from the university and our surrounding communities? Put your thoughts together in a letter or email and send them to the individual of your choice or call us for more information regarding experiential education opportunities in Cache Valley. We appreciate your support, involvement, and interest in the past. Stay in touch. Individuals of Interest: Kermit

Hall, President of Utah State University, 1400 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-1400, email: kermit.hall@usu.edu; Fee Busby, Dean of College of Natural Resources, 5200 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-5200, email: feebusby@cnr.usu.edu; Chris Balling, Assoc. Dean for Conference Services, Extension 5005, Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-5005, email: cmb@ext.usu.edu -BRI Staff, 435-797-7379.

Mary Barkworth has secured permission from USU for us to collect on their property in Logan Canyon. Bring the usual sun protection, sturdy footwear, snacks, etc, in addition to baggies or coin envelopes to hold your collected treasures. Tami Coleman, 435/258-0303, unps\_cache@hotmail.com,

(Animal Dreams-Continued from page 2)

escorts, only 65% males rather than 97%. Every night about seven bats, one or two more or less, flew through Asphalt Wash. For whatever reason, hoary bats were having their babies in the West, not the Midwest. During August the males averaged 86% and most of the males were juveniles, based on their weight. What a deal! Here we were, a bunch of no account biologists working for private industry, rewriting a bit of natural history. We realized that what we knew about our wildlife was quite a shallow database and what we needed were field biologists to lead us into the new millen-

- by Uncle Val, the Kiddies' Pal

#### Utah Native Plant Society Seed Collecting Expedition

Sunday, August 26th, we'll meet at 10:30 at the big parking lot by the lbis for a seed-collecting expedition.



#### **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 Jack Greene, 563-6816, jgreene@lhs.logan.k12.ut.us Education 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

#### **Trustees**

1998-2001 Jack Greene, 563-6816; 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 2000-2003 Mae Coover, 752-8871; Ron Goede, 752-9650 Don McIvor, 753-2051; Teri Peery, 753-3249

#### welcome

#### New members

Stan Petersen

#### Transfers into Chapter

Justin & Angela Henney

#### **Renewing members**

Jerry Burn
Keith L. Dixon
Joanna Endter-Wada
Barbara Farris
Tim & Jacquelyn Henney
J. A. Hoffman
Deann Lester
Austin & Krista McHugh

Nancy Mesner Clyde Milner II Harvey Mohr Charles L. Salzberg Beth Walden Karen Wood James L. Woodson





Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

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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

<b>National</b>	Audubon	Society
Chapter Mo	embership A	pplication

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.

\_ is enclosed (\$20 membership dues)

Name

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National Audubon occasionally makes its membership

list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.