

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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Nonprofit Organization BULK RATE U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 104 Logan, Utah



The Stilt

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When we hear his call we hear no mere bird. We hear the trumpet in the orchestra of evolution. He is the symbol of our untamable past, of that incredible sweep of millennia which underlies and conditions the daily affairs of birds and men."

> -Aldo Leopold "Marshland Elegy"

During the summer of 1992, Briggy Thomas began looking at the resident population of Cache Valley's sandhill cranes, Grus canadensis. She was beginning a study to obtain a population abundance over time. Ten years later I find myself doing the same thing. It's 6:30 a.m. as I creep along 3600 West, all my windows down, the heat running, "Morning Edition" mumbling, mosquitos beginning to buzz and bite. "What's it all for?!" I wonder. About then, I hear the distinctive call of cranes, and after some searching, find a group of four in a plowed field. "Aha!"

I count cranes on five different routes, one in Mendon, one in Young Ward and Hyrum, Benson, the Barrens, and Lewiston. I record the number of adults and juveniles, the type of habitat selected, and the birds' activity. Driving Cache Valley, seeing open space and birding, isn't a bad way to

spend one's summer vacation.

This is my second summer of crane counting, and, well, it's been a rough summer. Whether I project circumstances of my own life onto the cranes, or whether the state of the wild is reflected in personal life, I'm not sure. Either way, the Cache Valley crane population seems somehow less abundant this year. My notes bear witness to this: "June 10: Did the Mendon decreasing, somebody route. Almost always see cranes on 3600 West but not today." "August 7: Did route three. Nada." My route totals don't even begin to approach Briggy's for the same place and time a decade ago.

The relative rarity of cranes makes finding them more meaningful. The encouraging thing, after all, is that I do find cranes. Take today, for example. I sat on the hood of my car, in the mist of sprinklers, in a Utah Department of Transporta-

tion parking lot overlooking the Barrens. A contrast of green and gray in alfalfa pastures, and the gray takes shape into 18 cranes. Nirvana.

The purpose of counting cranes, however, isn't really about me. Though sighting the birds gives me the wake up thrill I need, it's the discrepancy between my numbers and Briggy's that most interests Bio-Resources. If the crane population is indeed should be taking note. Ideally, Bio-Resources and Bridgerland Audubon can give input on how the crane population is managed. The drop in numbers should concern state officials, especially as they increase the number of hunting permits allocated each year. It might even spur them to rethink hunting and land use policies. Why should the state-or anyone for that matter-care about cranes? Anyone who has watched cranes fly over-

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head or listed to their gurgling, musical call can answer that question easily: without cranes, the quality of our lives is diminished. Every crane encounter is magic, a gift reaffirming the miracle of life. The cranes remind me that we're all part of an ancient story, one based on geologic time scales. Cranes have been walking and calling and flying on this planet for some 60 million years. Ultimately, they might out-survive our own species. Zen Master Dogen, of 13th century Japan, says it best:

The world?
Moonlit water drops
from the crane's bill*

* Quoted in *The Birds of Heaven: Travels with Cranes* by Peter Matthiessen, 2001.

-Merr Lundahl

As of mid-August, the mail-in dona-

Sanctuary Fundraising Update

tions have added up to \$8,925. The total number of donors in this group is 82! This is a tremendous vote of confidence from a small Audubon chapter of only 300 members. Added to the donations sent directly to Bio-Resources, we have now raised nearly \$20,000!

Our thanks to recent donors Victor Nelson, Al Forsyth, Warren H. Johnson, Isaac Spooner, Cheryl and Brett Adams, Joanne Hughes and Dennis Welker, Pam Riley and Bryan Spykerman, LeRoy and Debra Beasley, and Mae and Merv Coover.

-Alice Lindahl

BAS Plays Host to State Council's Fall Meeting

BAS wishes to welcome you to the fall Utah Audubon Council meeting that will be held September 28-29 here in beautiful Cache Valley!

The fun will begin at 9 a.m., when we meet at the parking lot immediately north of the Café Ibis on Federal Avenue in downtown Logan. From here we will carpool to various locations around Cache Valley including our newly acquired Amalga Barrens property where shorebirds will be wheeling about on their sojourns to points south.

The afternoon will include a color tour up Logan Canyon with birding stops along the way; so do bring a lunch, trail snacks, water, and other comfort requirements. We will lunch somewhere in Logan Canyon, perhaps Woodcamp in the midst of fall splendor.

Evening will include a catered meal at the Allen and Alice Stokes Nature Center in Logan Canyon with leisurely hikes out from there. If anyone needs a place to spend the night, BAS

board members will be happy to accommodate you.

Sunday from 8 a.m. until noon we will conduct our business meeting, again at the Stokes Nature Center. Breakfast snacks and drinks will be provided.

The agenda will be similar to spring's St. George meeting with brief reports from each chapter, further discussion on the quest for a state office, a legislative report from our wonderful lobbyist, and other business.

If you have any other items you wish to see on the agenda, please send them to me. Also, this weekend should be the peak of hawk migration in the Wellsville mountains, so if you're interested in details, please contact me. RSVP by September 21 for the Saturday evening meal. Looking forward to seeing all of you!

—Jack Greene UAC Chair (435)563-6816 or jgreeneatsummitcreek@msn.com

Upcoming Reading

Chris Chester will read from his new book "Providence of a Sparrow: Lessons from a Life Gone to the Birds" at Chapter Two Books, 130 North 100 East, Logan, Utah at 7:30 p.m. Friday, October 4, 2002. "Providence of a Sparrow" is Chris Chester's witty, heartwarming account of his lifechanging friendship with an orphan house sparrow.

A reception and booksigning will follow. The event is free and open to the public. For more information call Chapter Two Books, (435) 752-9089.

Audubon Calendar

September 2002

Board of Trustees Meeting. The BAS Board of Trustees will hold its first fall meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, September 5 at Bio-Resources, 135 E. Center, Logan. All interested are invited to attend.

Evening Canoeing on Cutler Marsh. Cool down and let your troubles float away with a leisurely Monday evening paddle around part of Cutler Marsh. Join canoeing and marsh expert Jean Lown for this relaxing tour. Meet at 6 p.m. at the parking lot between Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North) in Logan. Bring your own canoe or call Jean, 752-6830, for suggestions on where to rent one.

Fall Hawk Watch for Beginners. By this time there should be lots of migrating hawks around Cache Valley, so join us Saturday for a mostly driving trip around the valley to learn to identify the various species passing through. Bring a field guide and binoculars if you have them. If you need to borrow binoculars, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653 before the trip. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot between Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North) in Logan. Carpooling will be available. We'll be back around noon.

On the Trail of the Meercat: Two Utahns in the Namib Desert of Africa. Bridgerland Audubon member and biologist Alice Lindahl and her husband Jim Haefner took a photo safari to Namibia and Botswana and brought back some photographs that could be from another planet. Etosha National Park and the Namib desert have creatures found nowhere else on earth. The campers caught up with meercats in the Kalahari National Park in Botswana. Teaming up with their friend and guide, Godfrey Mbeha, they explored the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park. If you have never seen elephants using their trunks as snorkels to cross a deep river, then come to this 7p.m. talk (and BAS's monthly general meeting) at the Logan City Building, 255 N. Main.

A Wild Ride to the Wilds of Western Box Elder County. If you've never been to western Box Elder County, you owe it to yourself to come on this one—it's crazy country. We'll be putting in quite a few driving miles, so be prepared—it's worth it. We'll head out Saturday to Locomotive Springs via the Golden Spike National Monument. Then we'll come back northeast to Snowville and have lunch at Molly's Restaurant before returning to Cache Valley mid-afternoon. Bring binoculars and plenty of water. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North) in Logan. Carpooling will be available. For more information, call Allen Christensen, 258-5019, or Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653. Al and Dick have done this one several times and have always come back alive.

Annual Trek to the Top of the Wellsvilles. Hike up 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. On a good day, we'll see over 100 raptors, including golden between mid-August and mid-October. On a good day, we'll see over 100 raptors, including golden eagles and falcons. We'll hike up Deep Canyon Saturday to a station monitored by Hawkwatch International and get an update from this year's watchers. The trail gains 3,000 feet in approximately 4 miles and is quite steep in get an update from this year's watchers. The trail gains 3,000 feet in approximately 4 miles and is quite steep in get an update from this year's watchers. We like to sit on top for a couple of hours to watch the hawks, and since it some places, so wear sturdy footgear. We like to 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 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 water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable. Bring lunch and water. Leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot between Logan Fire experience more comfortable.

Logan High Students Compete at National Envirothon

On May 4, 2002, the Logan High School Envirothon team took 1st place at the Utah State Envirothon competition. As winners, the team qualified to represent the state of Utah at the Canon Envirothon held in Amherst, Massachusetts July 29-August 4. This was the 3rd year in a row that Logan High School has qualified for the Canon Envirothon.

The Canon Envirothon, like the state competition, consisted of testing on five different areas of ecology; aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and the introduction of non-native species and their effect on biodiversity. As well as taking written tests, the team was also required to prepare an oral presentation.

The oral presentation composed 200 of the 700 points awarded overall in the competition. For the oral presentation, there were only 6 hours of work time allotted for preparation. Following the announcement of the oral presentation scenario, teams were given 4 hours of presentation and clarification on the topic. With an apple basket full of materials and 6 hours ahead of them, the team set out to prepare an in-depth presentation. The presentation consisted of explaining at a "town meeting" how to spend a budget of \$252,000 for the

town of Amherst. Particular emphasis on preserving the biodiversity of the area while still appeasing the different interest groups in the community was a big part of the presentation. To a panel of four judges, the team was awarded points accordingly for the 20-minute presentation.

The Logan High School Team did very well overall placing 16th out of the 49 states and provinces represented. Areas that the team scored particularly well on include the aquatics test, 2nd overall, and the oral presentation, 8th overall.

Although competition was the main objective, teams were also given a chance to learn about the ecology, history, and community of Amherst. "Learning Day" and "Field Trip Day" were set aside during the week to immerse the teams in knowledge. On Learning Day, team members were separated from their teams to learn about different aspects of ecology and much of the information appeared on tests taken the following day. Field Trip Day consisted of learning about the history and community of Amherst. Hiking, canoeing, and riverboating were some of the activities offered. However, the trips weren't just fun and games, for the participants were asked to

complete community service projects as well. For example, participants of the canoe trip were asked to remove Chinese waterchestnuts from a local waterway, and during the course of the day, over 3 tons of plant material were removed.

Socializing was also a major aspect of Canon Envirothon. Many of the team members networked with people from all over the United States and Canada. During one of the nights, round-tables were held where each team could share the work that they had been doing to better their school or community. Other activities were planned to help the teams loosen up and have fun. Games, water fights and dances were some of the many activities that helped team members make friends during the week.

Emerging from the competition with newly acquired knowledge and many friends, the team enthusiastically stated, "Envirothon is the best high school competition ever!" The team thanks organizations like the Bridgerland Audubon Society and the Utah Soil Conservation Districts for supporting such noble causes.

-Katie Trieu

Ed. note: Our congratulations to Logan High's Envirothon coach Jack Greene, who is

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Lynn Avis Virginai Gilbert Lyn Larsen Wally S. MacFarlane

Renewing Members

Ruth Eller
J. A. Hoffmann
Deann Lester
Steve & Jeanna Livingston
Diane Browning Oblock

Charles L.. Salzberg Tim Slocum Kim & Peggy Smith Kim Sullivan Elaine H Watkins

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2000-2003 Mae Coover, 752-8871; Ron Goede, 752-9650 Teri Peery, 753-3249

2001-2004 Merr Lundahl, 753-1707; Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816

2002-2005 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Joyce McMullin, 713-4399; Dick Hurren 435/734-2653; Jamie McEvoy, 753-3559

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts President Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net

Vice Pres. Bill Masslich, 753-1759, bmasslich@pcu.net
Outings Dick Hurren, 435/734-2653, hurrens@aol.com
Secretary Suzanne Pratt, 713-0197, suzap@cc.usu.edu
Susan Drown, 752-3797, drown@jslip.com
Wetlands Alice Lindahl, 753-7744, alindahl@bridgernet.com
Forest Issues Kathy Gilbert, 752-0946, gilbert@mtwest.net
Education Jack Greene, 563-6816, jgreene@lhs.logan.k12.ut.us
Newsletter Miriam Hugentobler, 752-8237, stiltnews@hotmail.com
Girculation Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu
Hospitality Allen & Gail Christensen, 258-5018, gaichr@pdp.usu.edu
Webmaster Chris Wilson, 753-3769, cwilson@sisna.com

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, 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

New member of the National Audubon Society and
Bridgerland Audubon.
Renewing member of the National Audubon Society and
Bridgerland Audubon.

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

Address

City_____State___ZIP____



Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to: National Audubon Society Membership Data Center PO Box 51001 Boulder, CO 80322-1001 W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8 week delay, contact Susan Durham, 753-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.

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