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The Stilt

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Leading the Way

Every year Bridgerland Audubon recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the conservation of our natural world.

The award is named for naturalist, conservationist and BAS founder Allen W. Stokes. The memory of Allen as an inspirational leader of people and dedicated advocate for all wild creatures lives on in our hopes for a better world.

Our award this year goes to Kent Clegg, a farmer and wildlife biologist from south-eastern Idaho who spear-headed an incredible project of leading Sandhill Cranes and then Whooping Cranes to their wintering grounds using an ultralight flying craft.

This project, carried out in the falls of 1996 and 1997 demonstrated the importance to the Whooping Cranes of imprinting on each other and also learning the route from the trip behind the ultralight.

They flew from Grace, Idaho to the Bosque del Apache refuge in New Mexico, braving snowstorms, windstorms, and even an attack

by a Golden Eagle on one of the young Whoopers.

Kent's dedication to the birds and endangered species recovery clearly required great personal sacrifice by Kent and his family.

The 9-day odyssey (1997) and the 15-day trip (1996) are beautifully described and illustrated with photographs on Kent's web site: <http://www.clegg.org>.

I highly recommend that you visit the site to get the day-by-day narrative.

In the recently-released 10-part video series, The Life of Birds by David Attenborough, Kent's project with the cranes was chosen as the final message to end the video series.

The combination of fabulous visual footage, personal commitment by Kent, and perilous situation of the birds themselves was just the inspiration Attenborough wanted to tell the world that saving our priceless heritage is worth all the effort we can rally.

—Alice Lindahl

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Kent Clegg and his flock over Mount Timpanogös

Important Bird Areas

The Utah Important Bird Area (IBA) Program is almost ready to take off. Around mid-May nomination forms will be available. Individuals, organizations and agencies throughout the state are being encouraged to nominate Important Bird Areas.

Nominated areas will be reviewed by the Utah IBA Technical Team, which consists of individuals throughout the state and is headed by Val Grant, President, Bridgerland Audubon Society. Kim Sullivan and Keith Archibald represent Bridgerland Audubon on this committee.

Many of you are probably asking what an IBA program is. Put very broadly it is a way of connecting (not just thinking) globally and acting locally. The IBA program is a worldwide effort that was initiated by BirdLife International in Europe during the mid-1980s. IBAs are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird.

IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. The IBA Program is designed to be proactive, voluntary, participatory, science-based and credible.

National Audubon Society is the sponsoring organization for the IBA program in the United States. National Audubon has a goal of identifying IBAs in all 50 states and then promoting sensible management and protection of these sites.

In the next issue of *The Stilt* more information about the IBA program will be provided. To find out more about the IBA program visit www.audubon.org. And please feel free to contact me regarding nomination forms for the IBA program at wmartinson@audubon.org or (801) 355-8110.

—Wayne Martinson
Utah Wetlands Coordinator
National Audubon Society

Hello Campers — I had the recent misfortune of spending three days at the Big Sur Lodge in a second conference about IBAs, important bird areas. It was loathsome and miserable at all times, having to walk among towering redwood trees and fighting off the pesky Stellar's jays and chestnut-backed chickadees. But I persevered, knowing that the folks in Bridgerland Audubon were waiting with baited breath to hear the latest in IBA news. And that news is good.

Forty-two states have begun their IBA process; National Audubon hopes to have all 50 states signed on this December. Utah is moving along according to a process I've adhered to for, lo, these many years — we may not be the best, but we are slow.

Since Audubon has joined forces with Bird Life International, the founder and chief poobah of IBAs, they — Bird Life and Audubon — have established criteria that make a site an IBA from a global, regional (continental), and national perspective.

We are now working on a Utah criteria and will make these available to all by the end of the month. We are emerging from the "tastes better, less filling" part of the process.

If you have some ideas about potential IBAs, please contact Kim Sullivan (yejunco@biology.usu.edu), Keith Archibald (archie132@attbi.com), or Val Grant (biores@mtwest.net).

—Val Grant
da prez

Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird. IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. IBAs may be a few acres or thousands of acres, but usually they are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may include public or private lands, or both, and they may be protected or unprotected.

To qualify as an IBA, sites must satisfy at least one of the following criteria. The site must support:

- Species of conservation concern (e.g. threatened and endangered species)
- Restricted-ranges species (species vulnerable because they are not widely distributed)
- Species that are vulnerable because their populations are concentrated in one general habitat type or biome
- Species, or groups of similar species (such as waterfowl or shorebirds), that are vulnerable because they occur at high densities due to their congregatory behavior

Identification of a site as an IBA indicates its unique importance for birds. Nonetheless, some IBAs are of greater significance than others. A site may be globally important, or important at the continental, national, or state level.

The IBA identification process provides a data-driven means for cataloging the most important sites for birds throughout the country and the world. The use of a hierarchical classification system further helps to establish priorities for conservation efforts.

Green Calendar

May 2002

4 Sharp-tailed Grouse or General Birding. We have very recently been made aware of a large lek of Sharp-Tailed Grouse in southern Cache County and are trying to find out whether they will still be on lek in early May. If they are, we will go out very early and observe them and then do general birding in the south end of the Cache County. If we are too late for the grouse, we will still go out, but a bit later, to bird the beautiful southern end of the county. This trip is suitable for both novice and experienced birders. Since departure time is still up in the air as this announcement goes to press, please call Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653 or Bryan Dixon 752-6830 around the first of May to get the start time. We will meet Saturday morning in the parking lot behind the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Carpooling will be available. If you need binoculars, talk to Dick. We will plan to be back by about 1 p.m.

9 Bridgerland Audubon Society General Meeting. Ghost Forests, Global Warming and the Mountain Pine Beetle will be the topic of our guest speaker, Jesse Logan, research entomologist for the USDA Forestry Sciences Laboratory. This month's meeting is Thursday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Logan City Meeting Room, 255 North Main.

Evening Hike in Smithfield Canyon. The Cache Chapter of the Utah Native Plant Society invites one and all for a spring ramble up Birch Creek in Smithfield Canyon. At 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 9, local naturalist Jack Greene will lead the group to see early spring flora, with an emphasis on ethnobotanical lore. Call (435) 258-0303 or write to unps_cache@hotmail.com for more information.

11 Antelope Island and the Causeway. This is a great time to visit this island state park in the middle of the Great Salt Lake. There are likely to be countless thousands of shore birds along the causeway to the island, and the island itself will have a large variety of migrating and resident songbirds, as well as big game. Please join us on this Saturday morning trip, which will be suitable for adults and children and for experienced and novice birders. Meet in the parking lot behind the Logan Fire Station at 8 a.m.; bring a lunch, because we will not be back until mid-afternoon. Carpooling will be available. For more info, or if you need binoculars, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

18 Cutler Marsh with Eve Davies. Join Senior PacifiCorp Biologist Eve Davies for a fascinating view of the PacifiCorp property around the Cutler Marsh, and see some of the great innovations Eve has put into place to make the marsh more wildlife friendly. This trip will be great for individuals interested in the flora around the marsh as well as the fauna. We will meet in the parking lot behind the Logan Fire Station at 8 a.m. and will be back around noon. Carpooling will be available. For more info, call Bryan Dixon, 752-6830 or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

Identifying Northern Utah Natives Workshop. Mary Barkworth, USU Herbarium Director, will lead this oft-requested outing for all ages and skill levels at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 18, sponsored by the Cache Chapter of the Utah Native Plant Society. Participants will be introduced to the basics of identifying northern Utah's native plants. The Logan-area location will be chosen in early May for the best selection of species. There will be a small fee to cover the cost of handouts. Call (435) 258-0303 or write to unps_cache@hotmail.com to register. Class size is limited to 15, so call early.

25 Birding the Lower Cache Valley Canyons. This is a wonderful time of year to bird the lower elevations of the canyons in Cache Valley. Both resident and migrating songbirds will be in abundance. It is also a great time of year to be in the great outdoors enjoying nature. Dr. Keith Archibald, one of the state's best birders, will lead this trip. Meet in the parking lot behind the Logan Fire Station at 8 a.m. Carpooling will be available, and we will plan to be back by lunch time. For further info, call Keith, 752-8258, or Dick (435) 734-2643.

Are You Interested in Seeing Burrowing Owls? If so, contact Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653. He has at least three nesting pairs staked out in Box Elder County.

Splashdown!



Percy, a friend of ours from back east had a perplexing problem. He was a wildlife hobbyist who could raise

almost anything, but not wood ducks.

His farm was a fun place to visit. It was a honking, squawking, quacking menagerie that sprawled over acres and acres.

Well, it was a fun place to visit when Bambi, the cute whitetail fawn, was small. He was the welcoming committee, hanging around the front gate to greet visitors. But he got a lot bigger and a lot less cute. In fact, after a few years he wasn't Bambi anymore but had become the stag. His method of greeting changed too, lowering his massive antlers to challenge any approaching stranger.

"Don't get many visitors anymore," Percy lamented. "He pokes some people with those antlers so hard their feet come off the ground."

We ask, "Aren't you afraid to have such an aggressive animal around here?"

"Aggressive?" Percy said. "He's just playing. Come back during rutting season and you'll see aggressive!"

The less fainthearted who got past the whitetail buck would find Percy somewhere with his charges, mostly sharptails. He liked to imitate them. With arms outspread he circled, stomping

his feet and making cooing noises. The sharptails responded in kind. After all, who could resist such an invitation to dance? Even with someone over six feet tall, size 12 boots and no feathers.

The sharptails had been one of his challenges. He nearly lost his flock to starvation even while he kept them belly deep in Purina Game Farm Food. Finally he figured out that they wouldn't eat from the ground. When he hung up the bird seed, they thrived.

A similar bird, the ruffed grouse, had also been difficult. The cock would attack the hen immediately after mating with her. He was losing hens to this spouse abuse, or maybe grouse abuse. In nature, of course, the hen could escape by simply flying away. A brush pile in the corner of the pen solved this problem, the hen would safely hide there until Percy could remove her.

But the wood duck problem was more difficult. He removed their eggs from the nesting boxes and hatched them in his incubator. The hatchlings wouldn't settle down. He gave them everything a duckling could want, heat lamps, water pans and mash. What more could they need? Yet they frantically destroyed themselves against the walls of their pen.

"Ritalin," he mused. "It makes zombies out of hyperactive school kids."

He could raise wood ducks when he left the eggs in the box for

the hen to hatch. Those ducklings seemed content.

We think of Percy sometimes when we are canoeing the Bear River. In May and June the river is alive with flora and fauna. Wood ducks flit past us, flashing their brilliant reds, blues and greens in the sunlight.

Someone has put nesting boxes down there. The woodies seem to be using them. Mother birds hatch their little ones in those boxes or in hollow trees. Upon hatching, the tiny puff balls climb out and drop, sometimes from terrifying heights, to the water or ground below. They land uninjured and follow their mother off.

Percy thought of this. But what was the problem? He contemplated, he cogitated, he meditated, perhaps even ruminated. Finally, he had it! The answer had been obvious all of the time. Each tiny bird was programmed to climb out of the nest and jump.

That was it all right. His birds were missing something. The exhilarating drop to earth and the crash landing!

After that, Percy would take each baby bird from his incubator and drop it into a pan of water. Splashdown! Contented ducks. Problem solved.

We're canoeing the Bear River again. There is lots of honking, squawking and quacking. Wood ducks are there too with their coarse, distinctive call. A menagerie about like Percy's farm. He would be right at home.

—Cora and Warren Johnson

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Carma Caudell
Susan Gibson
Kazuko Toelken

Renewing Members

Robert & Lois Anderson
John Carter
Ralph Clark
Windsor Copley
Diane Hanson
Lyle Henderson

Glenn Jarrell
James E Kingsland
Norman & Marcia
LaBarge
Clyde Milner II
Karen Mock

Kim Sullivan & Bruce
Pendery
Miiko Toelken
Theresa Zmola

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
Outings Dick Hurren, 435/734-2653, hurrens@aol.com
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 Miriam Hugentobler, 752-8237, stiltnews@hotmail.com
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

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.

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:
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.



The Stilt

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P.O. Box 3501

Logan, Utah 84323-3501

Email: stiltnews@hotmail.com

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