



# The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

## Great Backyard Bird Count

All across the Americas, our birds face survival challenges from loss of habitat to introduced predators to diseases like West Nile Virus. The Sixth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 14-17, will focus on the effects of these threats, bring conservation home by telling participants what they can do about them, and add vital new information to our understanding of our birds and their environment.

Once again, the National Audubon Society and The Cornell Lab of Ornithology call on volunteers of every age and skill level to make the Count possible. "We need every birder to join us," said Audubon Senior Vice President of Science Frank Gill. "The Great Backyard Bird Count has become an important means of gathering data to help birds, but it can't happen unless people take part. Whether you're a

novice or an expert, we need you to take part and help us help birds."

Audubon and Cornell are asking participants to pay special attention to the more than 200 species on the Audubon 2002 WatchList, issued last autumn, which lists North American birds in danger or decline.

"WatchList is an early-warning system designed to raise awareness of birds in trouble, before they become endangered or threatened," explained Audubon's Gill. "Think of it as preventative medicine, protecting our great natural heritage." The GBBC website [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) includes features on these birds and what participants can do to help them.

The GBBC will also focus on the effects of West Nile Virus on crows and jays, owls, raptors and other birds, and will educate participants about the disease. "We need as many volunteer counters as possible to tell us what they see,"

said Sally Conyne, Audubon Director of Special Projects. "The GBBC can serve to educate people about the real effects of the disease, and will help our scientists reach a better understanding."

The GBBC combines high-tech web tools with an army of citizen-scientist bird observers. The Count asks families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days. Participants enter their sightings at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). The state-of-the-art website was developed by Audubon and the Cornell Lab. GBBC is sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited stores.

Begun in 1998, the GBBC has engaged more than a quarter-million Americans of all ages and backgrounds,

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## GBBC

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and united them in the effort to keep common birds common. In 2002, more than 47,000 participants counted millions of birds throughout North America, helping reveal information on Evening Grosbeaks, Snowy Owls, Collared Doves, and many other birds.

"When the last Ivory-billed Woodpecker was seen in the 1930s, there was no concrete way for citizens to help professional ornithologists monitor bird populations," says Cornell Lab of Ornithology Director John Fitzpatrick, who this past year led an expedition to rediscover the Ivory Bill, possibly North America's



rarest bird. "We cannot allow other species to face the same fate as the Ivory-bill. The Great Backyard Bird Count provides a way for citizens to help us determine which birds are where and in what numbers, so we can take steps to protect those that need protecting."

The GBBC site invites beginners and experts alike to participate, providing useful information to make participation easy and enjoyable. There is a vocabulary section, bird-watching and bird-feeding tips, bird vocalizations, and more, including information about House Finch eye disease. Educators will find the bibliography and geography section especially handy; as

well as suggestions on how to conduct the Count with groups of children. For those tired of winter and ready for spring, there will be tips about planning and preparing for the spring bird garden.

Instructions can be found at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org). There's no fee or registration. Those who would like to participate but aren't online can try their local library, and many Wild Birds Unlimited stores accept reports. Libraries, businesses, nature clubs, Scout troops and other community organizations interested in promoting the GBBC or getting involved can contact Sally Conyne at Audubon, at 215/355-9588, ext. 16; or the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at 800/843-2473.

## Historical Vegetation Detective Needed

*Wh*at was the nature and extent of woody vegetation along watercourses in Cache Valley before farming and cattle so profoundly transformed our valley?

We know from some written records that vast herds of bison roamed here (a pleasant scene to imagine!). One publi-

cation concluded that there was more grass and less sagebrush in upland areas. We have been told that some trappers and colonists reported lots of willow (presumably short-statured ones like coyote willow, although narrow-leaved cottonwood may have been called "willow" too!), but in what context and how widespread? Were

there gallery forests of cottonwoods along the bigger streams like the Bear? Such early records could guide us in selecting the "right" vegetation to plant or favor at our Barrens Sanctuary (or what to skip), as well as help us advise others in restoring vegetation along the valley's water courses. If you have the time and inclination to be a his-

torical flora sleuth, hunting through and carefully interpreting old diaries, printed records and possibly photographs at campus and public libraries (and maybe talking to members of the local historical society), please contact Jim Cane (713-4668) for some starting citations to pursue such detective work for our Chapter.

—Jim Cane

# Audubon Calendar

February 2003

**1 Antelope Island in Winter.** Pull yourself out of winter hibernation and meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) for a morning and early afternoon of birding and general nature watching at Antelope Island State Park in the Great Salt Lake. At this time of year the bison and pronghorn are usually easy to see up close, and there is always a possibility of seeing bighorn sheep. Unusual birds are often seen both from the causeway leading to the island and on the island itself. Bring warm clothing, a lunch and binoculars. Carpooling will be available. Be prepared to pay \$1.50 per person for the entrance fee for the state park. We will plan to be back by early to mid-afternoon. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

**5 BAS Board of Trustees.** BAS Trustees meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the offices of Bio-Resources, 135 E. Center. All interested are invited to attend.

**13 BAS Special Logan City Planning Meeting.** Join a focus group to provide the environmentalist perspective for a survey of citizens as Logan City begins the process of rewriting its General Plan (see story, p. 5). The session, led by Bryan Dixon, will follow our general meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Logan City meeting room, 255 N. Main St.

**15 Beavers and Birds.** Join us Saturday as we ski and snowshoe to an active beaver colony to study the inhabitants, their architecture and their friends. Big game such as moose could also be seen, and there could also be some unusual birds in the area. Meet at Logan's First Dam at 9 a.m., return early afternoon. Dress warmly and bring skis or snowshoes. The trail we will be skiing is gradual and should not be too taxing. Bring something to drink, and bring munchies if you feel for inclined. Carpooling will be available. For more information call Jim Cane 713-4668 or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

**22 Winter Animal Tracks.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot between the Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) for a fascinating trip with tracking expert Kayo Robertson to investigate animal tracks in Cache Valley. Animals on the ground leave evidence of who they are and what they do—easily seen preserved in winter's snow and mud. Even birds leave evidence in their footprints and marks left by wing feathers on takeoff. This is a good trip for families, but parents should make sure their children are dressed warmly. If snow is deep, parents may have to carry small children for short distances. We'll return at about 1 p.m. For more information call Kayo Robertson, 563-8272 or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.



*If you'd like to come along on a field trip but do not have binoculars, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653. He'll try to find a pair for you to use.*

# Local Notes

## Logging in Bear Hodges

Recent articles in the Herald Journal about the cancellation of logging in the Bear Hodges drainage have been framed as environmentalists against logging and silviculture research in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Forest service wanted to cut trees for forest health and the environmentalists wanted to protect the valuable remaining old growth. This case is a local example of how arduous and complicated it is for the public to respond to complicated forest management issues and how difficult it is to coerce the Forest Service to respond to ecological concerns. Here, I try to summarize what the project was about, the process, what happened and how we can learn from this project.

According to the Forest Service, the Bear Hodges project was about forest health. It was to cure forest fragmentation, suppress beetles and to correct past forestry practices. It was never about logging, but logging always seems to be the cure. The environmentalists rejected the project from the beginning because the Forest Service failed to consider the cumulative impacts of fire suppression, grazing, logging and roads. There was insufficient data about indicator species, those

species that demonstrate a healthy forest, and most importantly the Forest Service's own assertion that the Bear Hodges area is a forest corridor for migrating species to move to or from other forested areas.

What was the process to implement this project? An Environmental Assessment (EA) was issued in 1997. Then followed a period of public comment in 1998 when letters objecting to the project were submitted. Then we met with Forest Service personnel to voice our objections, but the project was approved in February 1999. Making appropriate comments requires an understanding of the Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan, the National Environmental Planning Act (NEPA) and the Forest Management Planning Act. The environmentalists made an appeal, but it was rejected in June 1999. However, the appellants were to be informed about the project as it proceeded. In spite of the statement that tree cutting would only begin in 2001, trees were cut in August 2000 on a contract bid out of the Evanston, Wyoming district office. Even the Logan District was surprised by that event!

When the appeal failed, the only recourse was a legal challenge. In August

2000, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund decided to take the case. It was small relative to their other major environmental cases around the country, but thanks to hundreds of hours from a few volunteers with professional knowledge Earthjustice was provided with documentation for a strong case. The project had to be challenged on process. If an action is challenged in the court, the court is interested in HOW the Forest Service arrived at their decision (e.g., was the NEPA process followed?), not WHAT action was decided (e.g., cut the trees). Data for a decision must be reasonable. The Bear Hodges case was filed but the court did not hear it because the Forest Service withdrew from the case and canceled the project. A timber sale canceled in the Manti-LaSal for reasons similar to objections in Bear Hodges was a poor prognosis for the Forest Service winning the case. This means that the project could be resurrected in the future and we would have to start the battle all over again. However, in the meantime the mature forest still stands, not an insignificant victory — just one that took five years and a ton of work!

— Kathy Gilbert  
Forest Issues Chair

# ● Environmentalists Needed for Logan General Plan

Logan City is now rewriting its General Plan, the plan that must be followed when Logan City writes its zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations; develops property on behalf of its citizens; buys, annexes, and sells land; or otherwise plays a role in local land use. If the city undertakes some land use ordinance, program or project, it can be held invalid by the courts unless it conforms to the city's plans.

So, do you know what Logan's Plan calls for? Do you know when to object to the city's placement of a power plant in a residential area? Do you know when to shower them with kudos for requiring trees in front of commercial buildings on either side of the road (as they did along North Main Street)? Do you know which parts of the city are planned for high densities to facilitate mass transit and lower air pollution? Is it reasonable for all those high priced homes on the benches to pave the front yards of those below them for a little faster access? Which

neighborhoods are to be provided close access to parks and natural areas?

Even if you don't know what Logan's current plan is, don't you care what it becomes?

Logan City has recently undertaken a comprehensive program to rewrite the general plan. They expect this effort to take the next 12 months, including an extensive survey of residents, articulation of concerns and issues (things about which people disagree). To ensure they cover all citizens' concerns, they've assembled 25 "focus interest groups." Seven of these groups represent the designated neighborhoods in Logan. Five of them represent business, economic development, and real estate development interests. One group - added at the last minute - is "environmentalists."

On Thursday, February 13, we environmentalists will be asked what we want Logan City to become. What is our vision for this town? Will

it be more shopping malls or will there be parks and natural areas within a few blocks of every neighborhood? Will we bow to the increasing demand for more cars or focus more on mass transit, bicycles and walking? Will we be satisfied with brown air, or is there a chance to return to blue skies in daytime and stars at night? You get to say.

On that night we will discuss what you want to see Logan City become. It doesn't have to be just the "environmental stuff." Of more importance is the perspective of those who care about the long-term environmental condition and are willing to behave as if it matters. Every citizen who lives in Cache Valley is welcome, for every citizen is affected by what Logan City becomes.

The results of the evening will be distilled - by the participants - into areas of concerns, and specific themes within those areas. The most important concerns and desires will find a place on the survey questionnaire to be sent to a rep-

resentative sample of Loganites this spring to find out if anyone else cares for the things we do. We may be discouraged when we find that what the majority really wants is easier automobile access to more shopping malls. But we may be surprised when we find that a majority of citizens are not liking the brown hue of the air. We may find a silent majority out there who really understand, at some level, that achieving and maintaining a high environmental quality is what quality of life is all about - "it's NOT just the economy, stupid."

Wherever it goes, the process will be fun. This is our time to dream. Only if our dreams see the light of day and expression, is there any chance they can become reality. Come to the Bridgerland Audubon Society special Logan City Planning Meeting in February and play your part. Be the citizen that future citizens are counting on you to be.

—Bryan Dixon

# State Notes

## 2003 Utah Legislative Session

### **Audubon Action Network**

During this session, I hope to give all of you the opportunity to use a helpful and innovative tool provided by National Audubon Society's Public Policy Office to contact your local representatives about at least one wildlife issue. The tool has been available for some time, and you can access it now by going to the National Audubon Website, clicking on Issues and Action, and following the prompts. You can sign up to receive action alerts, get names and addresses of your federal and state representatives, and even send them e-mails and faxes (your own, or modify a form letter provided for you) through this site. It is incredibly easy, even for technologically handicapped people like me. Currently, the site is focused on issues of national scope, such as drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

With the help of National Audubon's Kristen Berry, what I hope to do during the upcoming session is to identify a local issue of interest to

our members, post all the relevant information (including a sample letter to your legislator) on this site, and give you the opportunity to participate in a grassroots, mass contacting to our state representatives during the session. You will be able to go to the site, read about the issue, see who represents you, and tell them what you think without having to do extensive research or even lick a stamp.

I will not know until the second week of the session what all the wildlife issues will be, but I will send out an e-mail alert through the Council when we have a good one in our sights (that would be binoculars, not rifle scopes). Stand by for details, and please do join in this effort when the time comes.

### **Wildlife-Related Bills**

Feel free to check the listing yourself at [www.le.state.ut.us](http://www.le.state.ut.us). You can use the website to read bills, learn who the legislators are, check committee schedules and agendas, or even listen to live audio from the house and senate floor. As of January 13, bill

requests have been filed for these issues, but no draft text is available:

- Control of wolf population, Rep. Styler
- Division of Parks and Recreation, Rep. Styler
- Expansion of access to fish and game opportunities, Rep. Clark
- R.S. 2477 Amendments, Sen. Hatch
- State Park fee amendments, Rep. Johnson
- Unlawful taking of game fish, Rep. Styler
- Wildlife spotlighting amendments, Rep. Styler.

The Bow Hunter Safety Education Bill, HB 56, has been introduced by Rep. Hansen and text is available on the internet site. For further information, feel free to contact me at 801-397-2142 or [goodmanslc@aol.com](mailto:goodmanslc@aol.com).

—Debbie Goodman,  
Utah Audubon Council  
Lobbyist

# Welcome to BAS

## Renewing Members

Desmond L Anderson  
 Leroy B Beasley  
 Mark W Brunson  
 Kevin Connors  
 Merv & Mae Coover

Windsor Copley  
 David B Drown  
 James Graham  
 Barbara S Hale  
 Dawn Holzer  
 Jim Cane & Linda Kervin

Frederick F Knowlton  
 Richard J Mueller  
 Diane Browning Oblock  
 Ivan G Palmblad  
 Sandra Romesburg  
 Alison Thorne

Janice Tucker  
 Nancy Williams  
 Karen Wood  
 Janet Lee Young

# 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

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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, due on the 15<sup>th</sup> 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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**Visit our website: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org>**

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