



The Stilt

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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Only 69,901,741 Birds? Come Now, We Can Do Better!

Yup, it's a group thing. Since 1900, Auduboners and associates have been counting birds in the Christmas season rather than shooting them, as was the practice before then on the Christmas side hunts. Last year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) totals set many records, due to the work of those tens of thousands of volunteers.

This will be our 46th count in Logan, and you should be there.

All CBCs are one-day affairs conducted in a 7½ - mile-radius circle centered in the same place each year between December 14 and January 5. Our Logan CBC is centered in Hyde Park, and includes mountains, benches, valley fields, and marshes. We even include (some very productive) sewage lagoons. This year, the date is Saturday, December 17, early enough that some of the unusual gulls and other birds may still be hanging around.

We divide the circle into 10 sectors, each with a leader whose job it is to organize helpers, scout the area before the count, and then conduct a thorough count of all the birds in that sector. We also need feeder watchers for the 11th "sector." If you know of someone who doesn't want to spend all day outside, but likes to watch birds from the comfort of their living room, let us know! (Some "very good" birds have been seen at feeders.)

Our local data is compiled that same evening beginning at 6 p.m. at a potluck, once again at Sue and Dave Drown's home at 1776 East 1400 North (752-3797). After tallying our local numbers, they're entered into a national data base that you can peruse yourself to explore counts all over the western hemisphere. Check out the database yourself at: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html>

You can participate in this year's count by registering with the lead compiler, Keith Archibald, 752-8258 or archie132@comcast.net, or his sidekick, Bryan Dixon, 752-6830 or bdixon@xmission.com. We need both experienced and beginner birders.

The CBC is the longest running, most comprehensive data source for research on bird populations in the world. Scientists use it to gauge the health and dynamics of bird populations over long periods of time. The data are priceless, for it'd be impossible to gather this much information without volunteer dedication. We make it fun, and we hope newcomers will feel welcome, but the bottom line is that it's important for bird conservation. And bird conservation is at the heart of the BAS mission.

Please come and be a part of history. Who knows? Maybe this is the year we break 100 species!

—Bryan Dixon

Last Year's CBC Statistics:

Number of count circles: 2,022
Number of counters: 56,623
Number of species: 652 in U.S., 300 in Canada, 1544 in Latin America
Highest number of species in one circle: 246 (Texas)
Maximum enthusiasm and fun experienced: Logan, UT

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Local Notes

Critical Time for Comments About Reduced Motorized Closure in Franklin Basin

The Forest Service is moving aggressively to open up more of Franklin Basin to snowmobiles.

Early this summer, the Forest Service substantially reduced the closure area adopted in the agency's Forest Plan without full public involvement and environmental analysis. The increase in motorized use was pushed on the agency by a small band of snowmobilers this summer.

The change now includes a groomed snowmobile trail three and a half miles long paralleling the west side of Highway 89 between the Franklin Basin parking area and the Tony Grove parking area approximately 500-2,000 feet from the highway.

The agency is doing this to appease a few snowmobilers who want to be able to snowmobile around a loop.

The Forest Service doesn't understand the conflict that snowmobiles cause to non-motorized users. The reopening of this area, originally closed by the Forest Plan in 2003, will cut off families, beginners, and intermediate skiers from some gentle to moderate terrain.

Who wants to have to cross some noisy, smelly snow road, frequented by snowmobiles racing through the woods? And who really believes all those snowmobilers will stick to the narrow eight-foot wide trail?

If you value a quiet, peaceful winter experience in Franklin Basin, contact Rob Cruz, the Logan District Ranger, and tell him you don't want a snow road cutting across what remains of the paltry non-motorized area.

Also, tell him you want the closure of Franklin Basin to motorized use in the Forest

Plan restored. It was a small enough area to begin with.

The Forest Service never gave the public a chance to comment on this sudden, behind-closed-doors reduction in non-motorized use. There was no NEPA review. Tell him that's not right, that increased snowmobiles will only cause more conflict, and that we need greater protection from the negative impacts of motorized recreationists.

You should be able to reach Rob Cruz at 755-3620, 1500 East Hwy 89, Logan, UT, 84321, or rcruz@fs.fed.us (and please send a copy to BAS or the Econet so we can document these letters). He works for us, remember.

We need lots of calls and letters. We need them now. This is a critical time for the people's forest.

—Bryan Dixon

Audubon Calendar

December 2005

*Carpooling is available for many BAS field trips.
Please plan to share the cost of gasoline with your driver.*

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

8 BAS General Meeting. This fall BAS is partnering with Stokes Nature Center and Utah Conservation Corps to explore and discuss topics related to sustainable living in Cache Valley. This month we'll explore the topic "*Family Rituals & Celebrations: Alternatives to Elaborate Celebrations & Gifts.*" Over the holidays, many of us feel overwhelmed by the cultural pressures of consumption. Join us Thursday at the Logan City Building meeting room, 255 N. Main St. in Logan, at 7 p.m. as we explore how we can bring more meaning and simplicity into our lives this holiday season through the creation of family rituals and celebrations.

10 Looking for Rare Birds in Box Elder County. Due to its northern location and flat prairie-like habitat, northern Box Elder County is more often than not the place where very unusual bird species are found in Utah in winter. Lapland longspurs and snow buntings are found there most winters. On our trip to this area last year, we found a Eurasian collared dove. Even a gyrfalcon was there for a short time a few years ago, and there are even records of snowy owls having been in the area. Join us for a fun day to explore various habitats from Snowville through Park Valley and the Curlew Grasslands. We will almost certainly see ferruginous hawks, prairie falcons, great horned owls, and golden eagles, among other things. Bring binoculars and a lunch (or plan to buy one at Molly's Café in Snowville), and wear warm clothing. We will plan to return to Logan by mid-afternoon. Meet at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) at 8:30 a.m. Saturday. For more information call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

17 BAS Annual Christmas Bird Count. Christmas bird counts are held in many areas of the U.S. and have been held in the same area in Cache Valley for more than a quarter of a century. Last year we counted some 20,000 birds and about 100 species. Teams are assigned particular areas, and some folks (but certainly not all) start before dawn and go until dark. Participants are welcome, even if they can take part for only a few hours. Inexperienced birders are welcome; they will be teamed with experienced birders. A potluck dinner is held afterwards, where we go over the numbers and species of birds seen. Please come and join us. The more participants we have, the more fun we will have and the more accurate and complete our count will be. If you would like to participate contact Keith Archibald at 752-8258 or archie132@comcast.net or Bryan Dixon at 752-6830 or bdixon@xmission.com.



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.

January 2006

1 Start your 2006 Bird List. BAS invites all birders to come on an outing in Cache Valley on the first day of the New Year to start their 2006 bird lists. We often see 40 to 50 species on this trip, which will be led by Reinhard Jockel. Meet at the parking between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) at 1 p.m. We will return by 4 p.m.

7 Learn How to Attract and Feed Winter Birds. See the various types of feeders, feeds, and water devices in use locally as we visit some people who have really elaborate bird feeding and attracting set-ups. Bring binoculars and dress for the season. Most observing will be done outdoors. Leave at 9 a.m. from the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available; beginning birders are welcome. We will finish up in early afternoon but people can leave early if they need to. For more information call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653, or Dave and Sue Drown at 752-3797.

Tell Us What You Think: Extended Forays to More Distant Areas

We intend to take at least three longer, out-of-area trips this year. One of them will be to the Texas Gulf Coast in late April. (We did an absolutely fabulous four-day trip there last year thanks to Val Grant and want to hit some of the places we visited on that trip as well as some new areas.) If you want more information or have ideas on places near the Texas Gulf Coast that you would particularly like to see, please call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653, Val Grant at 753-5370, or Dave or Sue Drown at 752-3797.

We are also planning on doing an overnigher to southwestern Utah (around St. George and Zion National Park) in early spring. If you have interest or there are particular places you would like to visit in these areas, please call Sue, Dave, or Dick.

We would also like to hear your thoughts on other extended forays you think would be of interest. We are thinking of places like Washington's Olympic Peninsula and the Cascades, southern Arizona, or Glacier National Park and surrounding environs. We are also considering another trip to Hawaii in January 2007. Please let us know which of these areas you would like to see, or other areas you would prefer to see.

—Dick Hurren

Join the Econet!

Calling environmentalists! Get connected! Join the Econet email notification list. Send an email to bdixon@xmission.com to join. We use your address only for Econet messages. We also respect your privacy - we suppress the listing of all the recipients' addresses in the To: field when we send messages and we do not release these addresses to anyone. As a recipient, you're also entitled to submit a notice for distribution. We circulate notices for local events of conservation interest, BAS outings, and meetings.

—Bryan Dixon

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Andreas Leidolf
Joel Teuscher

Renewing Members

Dale Azevedo
Leanna Ballard
Debby Bronson &
Graham Hunter
Ian Campbell
Windsor Copley
Jacquelin Frantzen

Transfers into Our Chapter

Lauren L Mastro

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608;
André Walker, 755-2103
2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816;
Melanie Spriggs, 245-4376; Reinhard Jockel;
Stephen Peterson, 755-5041.
2005-2008 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Richard Mueller, 752-5637;
Dick Hurren 435/734-2653

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

President	Val Grant, 752-7572, biores@mtwest.net
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Webmaster	Stephen Peterson 755-5041, cllslp@msn.com
Sanctuary	Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu
Conservation	Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.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 Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

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

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

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 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.



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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

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