



The Stilt

Volume 34, Issue 2

February 2005

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

The CBC Tally's In!

What is it about 100? I guess the fates are tempting us, figuring if we are allowed to find *almost* 100 species, it'll motivate us to do it again. Joke's on them, I suppose, because Auduboners are one hard-core lot.

This year's CBC was typical. Folks started at 4 a.m. searching for owls, and some parties stayed out until darkness fell. During the course of the day, 60 intrepid souls forsook the shopping malls and stuck binocs to eyeballs searching and counting birds as part of a hemispheric citizen science effort. (For a history of the Christmas Bird Count, visit <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/history.html>). At the end of the day – literally – amidst as many calories of potluck desserts as feathers seen that day, we tallied 98 species. But wait! Will Pitkin called to report a White-breasted Nuthatch he'd seen in

Smithfield on count day. That's 99, which ties our record set just two years ago! Sooner or later, we're going to dial in that 3-digit number. If only we could have counted the pair of bighorn sheep that the Welkers saw up high in the cliffs at the mouth of Logan Canyon!

This year, I didn't know what to expect. November and early December had been very cold, with temps below zero – Fahrenheit! Substantial snows covered the ground for a time. Then, it warmed up, the ground cleared, and surface water opened up. As count day approached, I worried that the weather would clamp down with cold temps and white stuff to drive the last lollygaggers south. But fortune held, and count day was splendid. Cold enough in the morning to freeze the mud for easier walking and driving, but warm enough during the day to keep gulls and other fair weather birds (like us!) hanging around.

It seems every year results in record numbers or reports of new species; this year was no exception. We added two new species, and tallied nine record high counts (see Table, p.2)

Analysis by Group

Counts of almost all of the duck species were lower than normal – dabblers as well as divers – perhaps due to all the open water that let them disperse far beyond the sewage lagoons. Canada Geese were an exception, with the second highest count we've ever had. Also of interest were a relatively high number of Common Goldeneyes and a single Double-crested Cormorant.

We found a respectable number of hawks, though no records. We even found a Peregrine Falcon slumming around the gulls and pigeons at the landfill. Unfortunately, we missed see

Continued p.2

Inside this Issue

Wolf Tax Check-off	4
Audubon Calendar	5
Riparian Repairs on the Forest	7
Project Feederwatch	8
Audubon Contacts & Membership Update	9



Species	2004 Count	Previous High	Year of Previous Record
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	—	—
Red-naped Sapsucker	1	—	—
Greater Scaup	4	3	1983
Sharp-tailed Grouse	30	19	1997
Western Screech-Owl	13	10	1995
Northern Pygmy-Owl	6	5	2003
Downy Woodpecker	40	39	1992
Hairy Woodpecker	8	6	1983 & 1992
Brown Creeper	29	21	1983
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	30	25	1993
Yellow-rumped Warbler	15	14	2003

Tally

Continued from p.1

ing a single Cooper's Hawk, the first time in a decade! That species alone would have put us in the triple digits. Another miss was Gray Partridge. One group thought they had seen a flock exploding off into the wild blue yonder, but couldn't be sure, and a return to the area the following day didn't locate them. Among other "chicken birds," Ring-necked Pheasants were low (shot out?), but we had high numbers of both Sharp-tailed Grouse and Wild Turkeys (oh, joy, the next introduced avian rat).

Warm weather kept three Herring Gulls, strutting pink legs, hanging around the landfill amongst large numbers of both California and Ring-billed Gulls.

We "owled-out" again this year, an infrequent phenomenon when we see at least one of all of our winter owl species. This included a record number of Western Screech-Owls and Northern Pygmy-Owls, the highest number of Northern Saw-whet Owls in 13 years, a family of Short-eared Owls, and even a Long-eared Owl that quite a few folks got to see for a change.

Most of the corvids were about normal in numbers,

good news since they have proven susceptible to West Nile virus. Clark's Nutcrackers were surprisingly absent from the count, though. A single Blue Jay was good compensation, however, kept in town by peanuts regularly dispensed by the Ges-samans in Smithfield.

Other passerines were kind of mixed. For example, we had high numbers of Black-capped Chickadees, Brown Creepers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Pine Siskins, but low numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's Solitaires, American Robins, White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos,

Continued on p.3

Western Meadowlarks, and Brewer's Blackbirds. Among these, Brewer's Blackbird has been trending downward all across our continent for years. No one was disappointed that we fell far short of 2002's obscene number of European starlings.

This year 15 species where represented by only one individual, inevitable when recording almost 100 species.

All-in-all, it was a respectable showing of birds, especially considering that our Main Man, Keith Archibald, was off gallivanting in Southeast Asia with family members. He'd put in many hours before he left organizing all the leaders and count details, but that's enough sloughing off, Mr. A. You can't expect us to main-

tain this kind of count without you again. Some of our other stalwarts, Sue and Dave Drown, were also out of town for the count, so we had to find another venue for the potluck. Ron Ryel came through in a pinch and offered his home, while Melanie Spriggs organized the feast, with participants exuding enthusiasm that belied their weariness, buoyed no doubt by the extravaganza of desserts. There must have been enough calories there to blow out even the best Christmas eating resolutions!

The CBC is the longest running example of citizen science. This was the 105th year for the CBC, and our 45th. Our data have been submitted to the national database where researchers and the public can access

them on line:

[http://
www.audubon.org/bird/
cbc/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html)

The results of our local CBC results back to 1956 are also available electronically (MS Excel spreadsheet) or by hard copy (\$1.00 to cover postage and printing). Contact Bryan Dixon at bdixon@xmission.com or 10 Heritage Cove, Logan, UT 84321.

We are also grateful to the many landowners of our valley, who year after year graciously allow us to tromp around their properties, looking for birds. Often they are responding to an annual phone call from someone they may never have met. We must be a trustworthy bunch!

—Bryan Dixon and
Jim Cane

2004 CBC Participants

Thanks to this year's participants! We always seem to have more counters than any other CBC in Utah: Alan Hoffmann, Allen Christensen, Amy Marcarelli, Anastasia Trumm, Andree Walker, Andy Leidolf, Anne Mull, Asseya Grant-Aithamad, Barbara Farris, Bill Masslich, Bill Sedivy, Bruce Pendery, Bryan Dixon, Buck Russell, C. Val Grant, Caitlin Laughlin, Chris Cokinos, Dan Zamecnik, Dennis Austin, Dennis Welker, Eddy Berry, Eric Meyer, Frank Smith, Gaia Nafziger, Grace Mull, Grace Saul, Jack Greene, Jake Gibson, Jake Masslich, Jamey Anderson, Jean Lown, Jessie Barnes, Jim Cane, Jim Gesaman, Jim Kingsland, Joanne Hughes, John Barnes, John Mull, Julie Hollist, Kim Sullivan, Larry Ryel, Linda Kervin, Lisa Grant, Martin Welker, Mary DeByle, Melanie Spriggs, Melissa Weber, Norb DeByle, Peter Daniels, Reinhard Jockel, Richard Hurren, River Haggerty, Robert Atwood, Robin Pendery, Ron Ryel, Russ Olsen, Stephen Peterson, Terry Barnes, Val Heusser, Zane Masslich.

State Notes

Wolf Tax Check-off Box

Beginning this year, Utah taxpayers who wish to support wolf management in the state can make a donation on their state tax return. Northern gray wolves from recovering populations in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho have begun natural dispersal into surrounding states in recent years, and these states, including Utah, are in the process of developing management plans and budgets.

Two years ago the Utah Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 12, providing for the gray wolf to be a state protected species at such time as the wolf is de-listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and directing the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to develop a Wolf Management Plan.

UDWR soon assembled a Wolf Working Group comprised of diverse interests from livestock production, sportsmen's groups, the Ute Tribe, academia, and conservation groups, and the WWG has been working with UDWR to complete a Wolf Management Plan this year. Utah Audubon

Council is a member organization of the WWG, and is supportive of the plan in its current draft form.

Proper wolf management will involve some expenditures above and beyond the existing UDWR budget. For example, funds will be needed to support collaring and tracking of dispersing wolves in order to understand where they settle, what they eat, their impacts on other species, and their prospects for survival in Utah. Funds are also needed to compensate livestock producers for losses to wolf predation, thus encouraging societal acceptance of this once-extirpated animal.

UDWR will draw funding from multiple sources (federal, state, non-profit) for this effort, and the Tax Check-off Box will be an important component. The Wolf Tax Check-off is perhaps even more critical as a political statement than as a financial resource.

Elected officials, particularly those who oppose

wolf protection, will examine the level of public support for wolf management directly by the success of the Tax Check-off program. For this reason, I have made my own donation to the fund already, and ask that others do likewise. Even if you can only give \$10, it is an important statement of your support for the return of the wolf to Utah. If you can give more generously, please do.

You can help by making a donation, by encouraging others to do the same, and by spreading the word. Raising money for wolf management could be an educational project for student groups interested in environmental conservation issues. The Utah Territorial Government once paid a bounty on wolves, and they were eliminated from Utah in the early 1900s. A century later, we have an opportunity to reverse old attitudes, but it will happen only with demonstrated and prolonged public support.

—Debbie Goodman
Utah Audubon Council
Lobbyist

Audubon Calendar

February 2005

2 BAS Board of Trustees Meeting. Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets this Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the offices of Bio-Resources, Inc., 135 E. Center, Logan. All are welcome to attend.

5 Winter Birding In and Around Smithfield. Smithfield and its environs often contain some very interesting birds during the mid-winter period. We plan to visit Mack Park, the Smithfield Cemetery, and other spots around the town that have lots of birds. Owls may be seen on this trip. Meet at 9 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Caff  Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Dress warmly and bring binoculars and some munchies. We will hook up with our guides, Smithfield residents and wildlife experts John and Teri Barnes, in Smithfield. For more information, call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

10 General Meeting—The Business of Birding will be the subject of Bridgerland Audubon Society's general meeting for February 2005. Our featured speaker will be **Bill Fenimore**, longtime naturalist and owner of The Wild Bird Center in Layton, UT. He will talk about how he became involved in birding and how that early interest became a lifelong hobby and passion, now his livelihood. He will also show and explain different products that are offered at the Wild Bird Center in Layton that are helpful in attracting birds to your own backyard. Join us Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Logan Library meeting room, 255 N. Main, Logan. All are welcome.

12 Elk and Birds at Hardware Ranch. Join us for a trip to Hardware Ranch to enjoy the elk and to do some birding along the way. We will take the wagon ride out among the elk as they are being fed and we will do a little birding on the way up to the ranch and considerably more on the way back down Blacksmith Fork Canyon. We always see both bald and golden eagles and often see northern shrikes and other birds of interest. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot between Caff  Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Dress warmly for the season and bring binoculars and a snack. We will plan to be back by 1-2 p.m. For more information, contact Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

18 Great Backyard Bird Count. The 8th Annual GBBC will be held over President's Day Weekend, February 18 - 21. This event takes a snapshot of North American bird populations. The data collected become more important each year. During last year's annual count, 42,500 checklists from across the continent were sent in, reporting 554 bird species and more than 4 million individual birds! The GBBC data complement those from the Christmas Bird Counts. Go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc or call 1-800-843-BIRD (2473) to participate. You can also check out the results of last year's, and other year's, counts at the website.

19 Winter Birding in Box Elder County. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot between Caff  Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) or at Dick Hurren's place in Brigham City at 8:45 a.m. (call Dick for directions) for a tour of some of the winter birding hot spots in Box Elder County. Carpooling will be available. Dick will, of course, try to have some owls spotted in advance. Itinerary will be according to the weather, open water, etc. Dress warmly and bring a lunch, because this trip may last into mid-afternoon. We don't want to make promises in advance, but there are almost always some bird species in Box Elder County in winter that are not present in Cache Valley. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

26 Waterfowl and Raptors in Central Cache Valley. By the end of February, we usually begin to see some early movement of geese, swans and some other waterfowl. In addition, winter raptors are often seen in very large numbers. Join us as we explore by motor vehicle the areas in central Cache Valley that are usually hot spots for birds at this still-cold time of year. Meet at the parking lot between Caff  Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) at 9 a.m. Dress warmly, bring binoculars and a snack. We will return around noon for those who have had enough; for those who haven't, we will continue until early to mid-afternoon. For more information call Bryan Dixon at 752-6832, or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

March

The Audubon Council of Utah (ACU) will meet in Delta on March 5-6 in conjunction with the Snow Goose Festival. The Council meets to share ideas and information among the chapters and cooperate on joint projects. All Audubon members in the state are invited, so that means you! Our chapter is the host for this meeting. The festival gets under way Friday the 4th, so plan to arrive then if you can. The Council activities will begin at noon on Saturday and continue until about noon on Sunday. Plans are still being made but tentatively include:

Saturday:

12 noon - 1:15 pm: Potluck lunch at the fairground

1:15 - 3:15 pm: Chapters share what's new and hear about the legislative session from our lobbyist

4:00 - dusk: Birding

Evening: Dinner on your own; festival program

Sunday:

7:30 am: Light breakfast, followed by birding

10:00 am - noon: Finish Council meeting (over brunch at a restaurant?)

More information about the Snow Goose Festival, scheduled for February 25-26 and March 4-5 this year, will be found at: www.millardcounty.com/sgf_attractions.html. Accommodations in Delta are also listed, including a Best Western motel and RV parks. We recommend making reservations well ahead. Plan to join us for geese, fun, and fellowship!



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.

From Our Readers

Concerning the article "Felines & Feathers" (The Stilt, December 2004), I have a tip. Under my bird feeder, which hangs from a tree in the back yard, 5 feet above the ground, I keep a brush pile of tree branches. It's about 6 feet across and 3 feet high. Since doing this some years ago, my four cats and several in the neighborhood have been unable to get any birds around the feeder. The brush pile prevents the cats from jumping up and snatching birds from the feeder. Seed spills to the ground but the birds are safe in feeding on it. They go down through the brush but the cats can't. For my window sill feeder, I have a brush pile below it, against the house, with the same results of no birds lost.

—Charles Romesburg

Local Notes



Riparian Repairs on the Forest

Several streams and springs of the Logan Canyon drainage that have suffered from human abuses are being given some protection by the Logan Ranger District. A couple of years back, the district re-routed the tire track road that used to closely follow the riparian margins of Temple Fork Creek. The new road was cut into higher ground and shows no signs of erosion, while the old lower riparian route was closed to motor vehicles. More recently, our local Forest Service folks have moved sections of this path upslope too, to make room for the welcome flooded pools that have formed behind the series of beaver dams in Temple Fork's canyon. The resident beaver population on Temple Fork was nearly exterminated by unregulated trapping two years back. This incident and its subsequent ecological damage motivated us to convince the Division of Wildlife Resources to allow our District office to have final say about trapping on this

one stream, at least. When you next walk or ski up Temple Fork, note how effectively these dams have captured sediments that otherwise would have washed downstream. Note too the vigorous suckering and fast-growing aspen saplings that have sprouted up amid the stumps of beaver-felled trees. You are also likely to see Bonneville cutthroat trout swimming in place in these pools; anglers recognize the value of beavers for creating good stream habitat for trout.

Improved trout habitat has motivated a recent decision by Rob Cruz, our District Ranger, to allow USU and Cache Anglers to construct a 60-100 acre riparian fencing enclosure on Spawn Creek, the tributary that joins the lower reaches of Temple Fork. This creek has been important for spawning by Bonneville cutthroat trout, but its margins have the telltale signs of cattle damage: broken down banks, close-cropped forbs and grasses, and sparse, distorted willows with little recruitment. This damage and the

sedimentation that it entails are thought to favor the tubifex worms that harbor whirling disease that infects trout. We should find out, as researchers at Utah State University will monitor sedimentation rates and the incidence of whirling disease for the next 10 years, both of which are predicted to diminish once riparian vegetation recovers its foothold on the banks of Spawn Creek. The Cache Anglers chapter of Trout Unlimited has generously agreed with the Forest Service to take responsibility for maintaining the new fencing, while the grazing permittees will continue responsibility for maintaining the let-down fence. Some lengths will be buck and pole, others will be let-down fence that will allow wildlife access when cattle are not on the allotment. Individual Audubon members should consider volunteering their aid. If there is broader interest in our group, perhaps we can coordinate a work day with the Ranger District, or

Continued on p.8

Project Feeder Watch

*P*roject Feeder-Watch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from November through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance." They are expecting that their one *millionth* census checklist will be submitted some time this winter. It is remarkable, then, that there is but a single participant in the 2004

program from Cache Valley!

"Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation." For all of the details, check their web site at: <http://birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>

The protocol for Feeder-Watch is frankly fun and easy to implement. "Count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you provided commercial or natural food, or water). For each species, report only the highest number of individuals that you saw in view at one time. By

following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You'll report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology, either over our web site or on paper Data Forms." There is an annual \$15 participation fee, which defrays their costs of managing the program and compiling/analyzing its data. There is particular interest in tracking the eye disease of house finches, and monitoring for any declines in those bird species that are more sensitive to the West Nile virus that was recently detected in northern Utah.

—Jim Cane

Repairs

Continued from p.7

perhaps several of you would be interested in regularly monitoring bird species that are attracted to what should be vigorously recovering riparian revegetation.

Finally, if you take a short drive up Franklin Basin Road from the Logan Canyon highway, you will

come upon Beaver Spring on the right side of the road. This soggy wet meadow has suffered too many cattle hooves in recent years, churning it into a muddy mire. Here again, Rob Cruz and the Logan Ranger District will be building a cattle exclosure fence to give vegetation on the site a chance to recover. Tin Cup spring will be receiving similar improvements. These are not cosmetic

fixes or publicity tricks, but long-term substantive improvements to riparian areas along the Logan River's tributaries. We are grateful to Rob Cruz and his staff on the Logan Ranger District for having the vision, perseverance and patience in negotiations to design and implement these improvements on our Forest.

—Jim Cane

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Reed M Darley
Keli Goodmane
Juanita Obrien
Renee L Payne

Renewing Members

Robert Atwood
Star Coulbrooke
Lu Georgi
Steve & Jeanna Livingston

Jane Murphey
Emily Speth
Michael J Stones
J & E Wellington

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2002-2005 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Richard Mueller, 752-5637;
Dick Hurren 435/734-2653
2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608;
Andreé Walker, 755-2103
2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816;
Melanie Spriggs, 245-4376; Reinhard Jockel;
Stephen Peterson.

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 Jamey Anderson, 881-1244, jameya@cc.usu.edu
Treasurer Susan Drown, 752-3797, drown6@attbi.com
Wetlands Alice Lindahl, 753-7744, alindahl@bridgernet.com
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, 757-0185, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
Webmaster Stephen Peterson 755-5041, cllslp@msn.com
Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu, or 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.
☐ 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

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>

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