



The Stilt

Volume 34, Issue 4
April 2005

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

BAS Spring Banquet: "Bear, Birds and the Bottoms"



Joan Degiorgio, Northern Mountains Regional Director of The Nature Conservancy, will speak on TNC's interest in the Bear River Bottoms at Bridgerland Audubon's Spring Banquet, April 28 at 7 p.m. at Aspen Grove Reception Center.

28th at the Aspen Grove Reception Center, 860 North 600 East, Logan, beginning with a social hour at 6 p.m., and dinner at 7 p.m. We'll also be announcing winners of the Carl M. Johnson Environmental Education Award and the Allen W. Stokes Conservation Award. Bring your own libations, or enjoy those donated by BAS Board members. Tickets are \$25 per person and will go on sale April 1 at Maya's Corner, Fuhrimans Fine Art and Framing and Caffé Ibis.

For more information, contact Bill Masslich, 753-1759, bmasslich@pcu.net, or Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com.

— Bryan Dixon

Inside this Issue

BAS Spring Banquet	1
Chapter Notes	2
Audubon Calendar	3
From the Field	4
BAS Contacts	7

Ms. Joan Degiorgio, Northern Mountains Regional Director of The Nature Conservancy, will be addressing how TNC became interested in a 35-mile stretch of the Bear River in northern Cache County known as the Bear

River Bottoms, and how their recent 5-S Planning Process will guide conservation actions on behalf of this important neotropical migrant habitat.

The banquet will take place Thursday, April

Chapter Notes

Citizen Scientists Wanted

BAS has several citizen science opportunities this year. We provide training, you provide enthusiasm and time. Some projects require only a couple of hours; others are suitable for longer term involvement.

Barrens Sanctuary – In May 2004 we celebrated our acquisition of 146 acres in the Amalga Barrens. We now need to complete wildlife and botanical surveys in preparation for projects to improve the habitat for shorebirds. Some folks have volunteered to coordinate the flowering plant survey, small mammals survey, bird survey, as well as investigating a small parking lot, finishing the fencing, etc. We still need volunteers who can help these folks learn about birds (especially nesting success), small mammals, and plants (especially grasses) during a few monitoring trips this spring and summer. Contact Jim Cane, 713-4668, jcane@biology.usu.edu, or Val Grant, 753-5370, biores@mtwest.net, for

guidance on getting involved.

White-faced Ibis Colony

Census – Ever since the Great Salt Lake flooded in the 80s we've had a colony of White-faced Ibis nesting in Cutler Marsh. This was one of the reasons we were able to get the Cutler Marsh designated as an Important Bird Area in 2004. The world population of White-faced Ibis is only about 150,000, and as anyone knows who has paddled near the rookery in May and June, our colony has thousands. If we can document enough birds, we may be able to raise the Cutler Marsh designation as an IBA of Global Significance. That, in turn, would make it possible to provide even more protection. Our project will involve counting birds as they leave in early morning and return in late evening during a few days in late May and early June. We need volunteers who can monitor the rookery by canoe and on foot. Contact Bryan

Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com, or Val Grant, 753-5370, biores@mtwest.net.

Bear River Avian Survey

– We've embarked on a project with The Nature Conservancy to protect and enhance the habitat along the Bear River Bottoms, a 35-mile stretch of the Bear River from the Idaho border to Benson in Cache County. One of our principal objectives is to improve habitat for migratory land birds. We need to census the populations along this stretch to know what's there now. We will use boats to travel along the river, stopping at designated places to conduct point counts of specific migratory species. We need coordinators as well as workers with boats (canoes, kayaks, small motorized skiffs, etc.). Counts need to be done in May and June. Contact Melanie Spriggs, 245-4376, mkspriggs@earthlink.com, or Bryan Dixon, 752-6830, bdixon@xmission.com.

Audubon Calendar

April 2005

9 Logan Sewage Lagoons Revisited. Please come join us for another trip to the Logan Sewage Lagoons at the time when waterfowl migration is at its peak. You can be sure the lagoons will be teeming with activity. Expert birder Keith Archibald will be leading this trip. Meet at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North) at 9 a.m. Saturday. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Carpooling will be available. Wear clothing appropriate for the season; there is often a strong cold wind blowing through the lagoons. We should be finished by about noon. For more information, call Keith at 752-8258, or Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

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

16 Road Cleanup and Birding. Let's get spring going in the right direction by fulfilling our responsibility to keep our adopted highway west of Richmond clean. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring a pair of gloves, a snack and wear suitable clothing. Bags, safety vests, and trash pick-up sticks will be provided. Carpooling will be available. For those who desire, we can do some birding in the Newton/Clarkston area after the road cleanup. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

23 Guided Tour of the Bear River Bird Refuge for Migrating Shorebirds. Join us as Betsy Benecke, the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge officer in charge of non-hunting activities, takes us on a tour of the refuge, including parts that are not normally open to the public. Migrating shorebirds are at their peak numbers at this time in April, and Betsy will take us to the parts of the refuge where they can best be observed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station. Bring a lunch and binoculars, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. Carpooling will be available. For further information call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

30 Amalga Barrens for Shorebirds. The BAS 200 Club will have a field trip to the Amalga Barrens area of Cache Valley. This is a wonderful place where one can see many different shorebirds migrating through. Lots of gulls, ducks, swallows, other songbirds can also be seen. We may also make a short side trip to Newton Dam to see loons, grebes and osprey. Meet in the parking lot between Logan Fire Station and Caffé Ibis (50 E. 150 North) at 8 a.m. Saturday. Bring a lunch and be prepared for any kind of weather. The wind can be chilling, so you may want to bring a jacket. We will return in early afternoon, between 2 and 3 p.m. For further information call Dick Hurren at (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.

From the Field

Birding in Hawaii with Dick and Val

We knew all was well when we were greeted at Kona airport by Dick Hurren, our intrepid trip leader, and instead of wearing a le'i around his neck he wore binoculars even though it was after dark! Yes, we were in for five days of challenging birding and what a lovely place to do it in and with great people as companions. Janet and Richard Hurren, Sue and Val Grant, De Ann (that's me) and Dean Lester all met together on Hawai'i, the Big Island, with the common goal of finding some of the rare, endangered Hawaiian birds. I think we had other goals as well such as finding a respite from the frigid temperatures and bleak colors of winter in Utah. We were not disappointed in either case. The temperature was usually in the high 70's and flowers bloomed

prolifically splashing brilliant color everywhere!

We arrived in Miloli'i after dark so we didn't see any of this until the next morning when we awoke in a house perched on black lava rock cliffs 30 feet directly above the crashing waves of the blue-green ocean! All night waves pounded the cliffs. Occasionally the house rumbled. With daylight we saw just how close we were and our thoughts turned to tsunamis! This house was built by Janet's brother, Delose (Andy) Anderson, who came to Hawai'i when he was nineteen and never left. Andy graciously lent his spacious home to Janet and Dick and the Bridgerland Audubon birders for the week. For two days he also

became our expert native guide taking us to out-of-the-way places and sharing tales.

The first place he took us to was a wayside park. As soon as I stepped out of the car I felt the curiosity of a baby sweep me up and prompt me to touch, smell, look at, and ask questions about everything; EVERYTHING was new to me as I'd never been here before. Here Andy collected wild passion fruit. He ripped them open with his hands and I drank the tart juice, slimy seeds and all. We found Kapok trees with cottony seeds with which the military fills life preservers. And we saw birds, lots of birds. Many of them common (and introduced!) but to me they were beautiful! Brilliant orange-yellow Saffron

Birding in Hawaii

(Continued from p. 4)

Finches, green Japanese White-eyes (they have a very conspicuous white eye-ring.), Common Myna, the small but brilliant Red-billed Leiothrix, the Lavender Waxbill and Red Junglefowl ancestors to modern chickens brought to the Hawaiian islands by the earliest Polynesian immigrants. We saw one native bird—the Omao, a secretive thrush who hid very still on a branch while we got a good look at it.

For naturalists there could be no more interesting island than Hawai'i. Extending from sea level to nearly 14,000 ft. the island hosts 21 out of the 22 possible climates in the world! Hawai'i is the youngest and the largest of the Hawaiian Island chain and it is still growing. The Kilauea Caldera and others actively ooze miles of lava covering with molten rock forests, roads, houses, and anything else in its path. One eruption occurred recently near Hilo and filled an entire bay; another in 1975 took out

1,500 homes. This one flowed right up to but stopped short of bowling over a lighthouse. I wanted to bring a small lava rock home but Andy told us that it would make the goddess Pele angry and bring me terrible luck. I put the rock back.

Andy interspersed our birding with other interesting activities; he took us swimming in what once was a privately-owned spring-fed pool. This was walled off from the ocean waves but occasionally they broke over the wall. The water was salty and filled with brilliant yellow and blue fish just like in a salt-water aquarium. Before the recent lava flow the springs were cool but now the water temperature is as warm as a bathtub! The state bought the property and made the pool a public bathing park. I think Sue enjoyed the swimming more than anything; with her goggles she swam like a seal peering underwater at the beautiful fish and a 3-foot-long eel!

We went to beaches in Hilo to look for shorebirds where we had a long debate about the identification of a Buff-

breasted Sandpiper (possibly). In order to change the subject Andy led us further along the lovely beach but suddenly the road went from paved with pricey homes to rutted dirt with tarpaulin and cardboard shacks.

Scruffy squatters leered in a not-too-friendly manner at us white folks with big binoculars driving through. One kid was spray painting a (hot?) car bright yellow. Signs saying "Keep Out" and "Beware of Dog" were posted everywhere and the dogs were real, rotweilers and pit bulls. We were driving a rented Impala with very low clearance. As we scraped bottom over the ruts we looked at the dogs and hoped we wouldn't high-center and have to get out of the car. After turning around and passing back through the shacks Sue said, "That sure wasn't Mr. Roger's neighborhood!" Andy said that he just wanted us to see some real Hawaiians. Only this could come from a real native guide!

We found that areas at higher elevations with the most native plant life were productive

Birding in Hawaii

(Continued from p. 5)

places to find endemic bird species. This is because mosquitoes carrying avian pox and malaria have wiped out native birds in warmer climates. Saddle Road is a 41-mile-long winding narrow road that runs west to east across the island through the saddle between Mauna Kea (13,796 ft.) and Mauna Loa (13,679 ft.) neither of which we ever saw because of clouds. We took off of saddle road, once again on a dirt road, (Maybe we should have rented a Jeep!) into a hunting area. Here we found many of the small native honeycreepers. One that I felt especially privileged to see was the Akiapolaau. It is only found on Hawai'i and is endangered. It is a tiny olive green bird with a long curved upper bill and a short straighter bottom

bill. The odd thing about it is that it pecks at bark for insects with its bottom mandible similar to a woodpecker. Hawai'i has no woodpeckers or hummingbirds. The honeycreepers fill the niche of both.

The Akiapolaau inhabits high, dry chaparral. Other spectacular natives we found in the moist kipukas high in Volcanoes National Park. Kipukas are oasis of native vegetation separated from other plants by lava flows. Here tall Ohi'a Lehua trees, with their crowns of brilliant red bottle brush flowers, attracted Apapane and the liwi, both bright red endemic birds. Finding the liwi was the birding highlight as it took some serious searching and patient waiting before we found one of these spectacular birds!

Punalu'u is a black sand beach famous as a resting and nesting

place for endangered Pacific Hawksbill Sea Turtles. We went there just to chance a look and found a turtle! We watched it slowly work its way toward the water. When it caught a wave big enough to lift its weight it was off to sea like a shot! Later, Val spotted another turtle swimming below the cliffs at the house in Miloli'i. We all were looking down at it when Dick called, "Thar she blows!" We'd been searching all week for Humpback Whales, also endangered. They frequent the shallower leeward Kona coast of Hawai'i during breeding season. Finally, on our last day together, we watched two groups of whales spout and play: the first, a nursery group with one adult and four babies, the second had two larger adults. The gift of seeing the whales brought a satisfying end to our Hawaiian adventure!

—De Ann Lester

Monthly Meeting Suggestions? Do you have an idea for a speaker or program for a monthly meeting? Someone who's traveled to an interesting ecosystem, knows something intriguing about wildlife, is involved in environmental science or conservation programs? Let's give them an opportunity to share it with other members. We're scheduling speakers for 2005-2006 this spring. Also, anyone interested in helping to provide refreshments for monthly meetings? Contact Bill Masslich, 753-1759 bmasslich@pcu.net.

Check Off that Utah State Tax Charitable Contribution!

This year's Utah State Tax form offers an opportunity for you to donate towards a good cause. On Line 23, you can enter a code and an amount that sends not only money, but an important message - you support wildlife! Two codes relevant to wildlife protection this year are:

Code 01: Utah Nongame Wildlife Fund (to let the State know that citizens care about wildlife that isn't hunted)

Code 08: Wolf Depredation Fund (to help make it possible for wolves to return to Utah once more)

What's more, you can deduct this on next year's federal income tax as an itemized deduction!

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

Ballot BAS 2005 Election of Officers

Board of Trustees (Three-Year Term)

Vote for Three:

Richard Hurren

Richard Mueller

Jim Cane

Only BAS members may vote and each membership is entitled to one vote. To vote, clip this ballot and mail to Bridgerland Audubon Society, P.O. 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501. Alternately, you may vote at the banquet, Thursday, April 28, 2005. All ballots must be received by April 28, 2005.