



The *Stilt*

Volume 34, Issue 6
Summer 2005

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Field Notes from Our Amalga Barrens Sanctuary

An effort is currently underway to conduct a systematic survey and document the flora and fauna that exists at the Amalga Barrens Wetland Sanctuary. Each month we will keep our Audubon members up to speed on what is being discovered in the area in this column. In the near future, a comprehensive, detailed count and description of species found in the area will be available on Bridgerland Audubon Society's website at: <http://www.bridgerlandaudubon.org/barrensproject/>.

Survey Area

The Barrens Sanctuary is located west of Amalga, incorporating the east and west banks of the Clay Slough between 7000 North and State Route 218, south of Trenton. Bridgerland Audubon Society purchased the 156.4-acres of mudflats, marshes and grasslands from Utah Power in 2003. The area was dedicated on May 7, 2004 and

recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA), which is a network of critical habitats for nesting and migrating birds throughout North America.

Avian Findings for April/May 2005

In the past two months I have documented 4,239 individual birds, consisting of 52 species within the area. Using GPS coordinates, I have set up a walking transect line, approximately two kilometers long, around the boundaries of the property, identifying point count areas as well.

Species observed the first weekend of April included many of the usual suspects such as northern pintail, green-winged teal and red-winged blackbirds. Six Canada goose nests were confirmed within the area. Spring migrants included American avocets, black-necked stilts, savannah sparrows and a lone long-billed curlew that passed overhead giving its familiar, curloo call. A few winter

visitors were still lingering, including common goldeneye, bufflehead, and a single, third year, bald eagle, scanning the waters of the Clay Slough that runs through the Barrens. Passing above the area, I was surprised to see four snow geese winging their way to their Arctic Tundra breeding grounds.

A single day survey in the middle of April produced newly arrived eared grebes, and a flock of 180 plus white-faced Ibis, returning from their wintering grounds in Central America. Ruddy ducks were present with the usual waterfowl including redheads and many cinnamon teal, giving their head bobbing display to one another. Three Swainson's hawks were observed soaring over the grasslands to the west, as flocks of Franklin's gulls glided through the area.

Continued p.5



Inside this Issue

Sanctuary Field Notes	1
Local Notes	2
Audubon Calendar	3
Chapter Notes	6
BAS Contacts	7

Local Notes

Biking for Birds— Cache Valley Veloists Turned Birders?

If you think driving and birding is a dangerous mix, try biking and birding! But, somehow we all survived a wonderful morning of doing just that. A crew of 16 intrepid souls left from Willow Park to wind their way through the center of our amazing Valley May 14th. For many, it was their first experience with birding, but definitely not their last! It took more than a few emergency stops to convince those in tow that a hot bird means more than a safe ride, especially for those who are more interested in logging in miles than viewing the landscape.

Well over 60 birds were recorded that morning, including a pair of osprey soaring above our new wetlands on Benson

Road, a bobolink just north of Valley View on the Newton road, and a pair of Caspian terns on the mitigation wetlands immediately west of the landfill. All were amazed at the abundance and diversity of bird life along a route most had pedaled many times before, but unaware of the splendid avifauna surrounding them.

The highlight came when we were recruited to participate in a cattle drive along the Benson road. A good-sized herd of bovine moms and youngsters were slipping and sliding in their own fecal material along the road. The cowboys encouraged us to join the herd assuring us it would be O.K. with the mamma cows. Bob Bayne and I took the lead to test our mettle among the

thousand pound beasts. At times my handle bars were rubbing the bellies of the beasts, totally enclosed in giant, super-sized Big Macs on the hoof. I was concerned for Bob, as his low recumbent bike put him directly in the line of fire should a quick release from an anal orifice occur. I'm sure the cowboys were amused by our foolhardiness, hoping for a minor mishap. But none came, and we emerged unscathed and unsoiled well ahead of the herd!

Many commented that it was the most enjoyable outing they had experienced—I blame it on the birds!

—Jack Greene
BAS Board Member

Audubon Calendar

Summer 2005

June

4 A Visit to Bear Lake Wildlife Refuge. Many of us go regularly to the Bear River Bird Refuge west of Brigham City, but very few of us get up to the Bear Lake Bird Refuge at the north end of Bear Lake. Join us for a day trip there to see the birds, other animals, flowers and plants. All of them are a quite different collection from those seen in Cache Valley or at the Bear River Refuge. We will leave at 7 a.m. Saturday from the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Please bring a lunch, because we will not be back before mid-afternoon. We will, however, make a stop for raspberry shakes in Garden City. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

8 Morning Birding by Sight and Ear. Join local bird expert Sue Drown for a morning of birding by sight and ear. Sue is an excellent birder and is particularly knowledgeable about the songs of the birds we hear around us in the valleys and canyons. Meet at 8 a.m. Wednesday at the parking lot between Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and maybe some munchies as well. The trip will finish by about noon. For further information, call Sue or Dave Drown, 752-3797, or Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653.

11 Birding Some of the High Country in Logan Canyon. Local bird and wildflower expert Reinhard Jockel will lead us to some very interesting habitat high in Logan Canyon to enjoy both the flora and fauna to be found there. Reinhard knows this part of the canyon extremely well and is an expert on both the birds and the wildflowers in this area. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars, water, insect repellent, and a lunch. Hiking will be moderate, so dress accordingly. We will return by mid-afternoon. For further information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

18 Visit Cache Valley Residences Landscaped for Wildlife. A number of individuals and families in Cache Valley have gone out of their way to make their residences bird and wildlife friendly. Some of these places have used plantings to make their yards xeric (water wise) as well. Join us for a morning of visiting these places to see what wildlife they attract and to see what you can do to make your place wildlife friendly and water wise. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars for the best views of feeder birds. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

25 Birding Cherry Creek Canyon in Northeastern Cache Valley. Sue and Dave Drown will lead us up into this extremely beautiful and often overlooked part of Cache Valley. Not only is Cherry Creek a real Mecca for wildlife in general and songbirds in particular, it is also a gorgeous place to spend a morning and early afternoon. Come join Sue and Dave as they introduce us to this productive wildlife area. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and a snack. Be prepared to do light hiking. For further information, call Sue or Dave Drown, 752-3797, or Dick Hurren, (435) 734-2653.

July

9 Tony Grove Wildflower and Bird Walk. This is an annual event led by native wildflower expert Reinhard Jockel. Reinhard is a true expert on native flora. If you have never been on this trip, you owe it to yourself to come, and if you have already been, you will probably want to come again. We will take a slow-paced walk around the circumference of the lake. Reinhard will describe the flora, and he and others will describe the birds and other fauna. Meet at 8 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars, water, a picnic lunch, and plan to have a great time. We will plan to be back by mid-afternoon. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

16 Observing Nature Around Logan Canyon's Right-Hand Fork. Not only is this the final resting place for Utah's legendary grizzly bear, it is also a relatively cool and very scenic place to spend a hot Utah July morning and early afternoon. Join us as we explore this wonderful natural part of northern Utah. Hiking will be moderate in length and easy in degree of difficulty. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Café Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and a picnic lunch and plan to have a wonderful time. For more information call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

30 A Full Day in the Uintas. Come join us for a very full day of fun in Utah's High Uinta Mountains. Although the birds have quieted down in Utah's lower elevations, they are still actively singing in the Uinta's high country. We hope to see unusual species such as pine grosbeaks, white-winged crossbills, three-toed woodpeckers, and a host of others. Fauna other than birds are also spectacular. Because of the distance and because there is so much to see, we must leave early. We will meet at 7 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station, from whence we will carpool. We'll drive up through Bear Lake, Randolph, Woodruff, and Evanston, making short stops at special birding spots along the way. Your leader has seen greater sage grouse at this time of year at one particular stop along the way. We will spend the bulk of our time in the high country, making some short hikes of mild difficulty. We will return through Kamas, Huntsville, Ogden, and Brigham City. If some want to camp Saturday night in the high country and return Sunday, they are welcome as long as they understand the official trip will return home Saturday. Please bring a substantial lunch plus some high energy goodies, water, binoculars, good hiking shoes, and appropriate clothing. For further information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

August

6 Migrating Shorebirds in Cache Valley. The adult shorebirds that nest in and near the Arctic of the far north head south very early in the migration season and begin showing up here in Utah in early August. Based on observations by our experienced birders, who will act as scouts, we will go to the location in Cache Valley where the greatest concentrations of birds happen to be. Our first choice will be the Barrens in northwestern Cache Valley, but if our scouts find that another location is better, we will go there instead. We will leave at 8 a.m. Saturday from the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and some munchies. If you have a spotting scope, bring it also. For more information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

13 The Layton Wetlands. The Nature Conservancy along with interested local groups have put a great deal of effort into making the Layton wetlands, one of Utah's most productive wetlands systems, even more productive and much more accessible to visitors. Join us as we tour this area and view the wonderful sights. There will be some walking, but it will all be on relatively level ground.

August *(continued)*

Bring a binoculars and a lunch. We will plan to return by early to mid afternoon. Meet at 7 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). We will carpool from there. For more information, call Dave or Sue Drown (752-3797) or Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

20 Antelope Island and the Causeway. At this time of year the causeway to Antelope Island State Park is loaded with migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, and the island itself is packed with migrating songbirds. Come join us as we observe this event. Meet at 7:30 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Café Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North), from whence we will carpool down to the park. Bring a picnic lunch or plan to purchase a burger or something at the snack stand on the island. Bring binoculars and a scope (if you have one). We will return in mid-afternoon. For more information, call Dave or Sue Drown (752-3797) 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.

Field Notes

Continued from p.1

Migrant willets were seen foraging near black-necked stilts, which promptly chased off the less aggressive willets. A pair of marsh wrens chattered away in the cattails, as yellow-headed blackbirds squawked their greeting. Five lesser yellow-legs were spotted on the northern side of the sanctuary, taking advantage of the area as a stopover site, feeding for their flight to their nesting grounds in the open Boreal forest's scattered wetlands. At the end of the day, five marbled godwits flew overhead, their cinnamon-tinged wing linings gleaming in the afternoon sun.

Two weeks later, my three-day survey found the Barrens Sanctuary property flooded out, with all found nests washed away. The southeast corner of the property was still above the water line, where I usually park. Numbers of American coots topped 230, with three pairs of blue-winged teal seen in the area. American white pelicans were observed in groups of three and four along the slough. Wilson's snipe were commonly heard winnowing, which is the hollow, whistled sound of air flowing over the tail feathers, used by the male to defend his territory and attract a mate. New sightings included a single horned grebe; dozens of tree, cliff and barn swallows;

a pair of short-eared owls, three Forster's terns, and a couple of Brewer's sparrows. Seven Wilson's phalaropes had made it to the north end of the sanctuary, where I observed them swimming in herky, jerky circles, stirring up food from the bottom of the shallows of the slough. These are stopover, migratory species that traditionally breed further north, into Canada, but have been known to nest in Cache Valley. Much work is still to be done on collecting the data we need to document all species in the sanctuary. I am looking forward to the job ahead and will keep everyone posted on what I find.

—Stephen Peterson
BAS Board Member

Chapter Notes

BAS's 200 Club Visits Amalga Barrens

April 30—After days of heavy rain, flooding, and an ominous forecast of thunderstorms, we decided to risk going to the Barrens. Just as we got there, the sun came out so we did get very nice views of some birds, such as blue-winged teal, a semi-palmated sandpiper only a few feet away on the side of the road, and close views of pipits, horned larks, and swallows, etc.

But since most of the area was under water and the road was only a few inches above the surface of the water, the birds were scattered all over the area, not concentrated at a few ponds, as in normal years. So we didn't see hardly any of the 30 some shorebirds that have been seen over the years at the Barrens.

On a few higher points in the Barrens, there were some flowers blooming: big leaved balsamroot, groundsel, blue-eyed Mary, and some old yel-

lowbells that had turned red-brown.

After spending a lot of time at the Barrens, we went on to Newton dam. We found it was all filled up again after being empty last year. Here, the first western kingbird of the season was sitting in a cottonwood tree.

We made one more stop before going home—the Benson Oxbow—almost all flooded and very few birds about except some gulls (ringbilled, California).

Birds Seen at Amalga Barrens

Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
American White Pelican
Great Blue Heron
White-faced Ibis
Canada Goose
Mallard
Gadwall
Northern Pintail
Northern Shoveler
Cinnamon Teal
Green Winged Teal
Blue Winged Teal
Redhead
Lesser Scaup

Bufflehead
Ruddy Duck
Northern Harrier
Swainson's Hawk
Red-Tailed Hawk
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Killdeer
American Avocet
Black-Necked Stilt
Willet
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Common Snipe
Wilson's Phalarope
Franklin's Gull
Forster's Tern
American Magpie
Horned Lark
Rough-Winged Swallow
Violet-Green Swallow
Tree Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Marsh Wren
Starling
American Pipit
Brewer's Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-Headed Blackbird
Red-Winged Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird

—Reinhard Jockel
BAS Board Member

Welcome to BAS

Renewing Members

James Dyer
 Barbara Farris
 Sue & Jerry Fuhriman
 Louise Murch

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; Andree Walker, 755-2103
 2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Melanie Spriggs, 245-4376; Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041.

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.

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*.



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

1*1*****3-DIGIT SCH 840

W BRYAN DIXON

JEAN M LOWN

10 HERITAGE CV

LOGAN UT 84321-3300

