



# The Stilt

Volume 35, Issue 4  
April 2006

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society



## BAS Spring Banquet

Join us for Bridgerland Audubon's biggest event of the year, our annual spring banquet.

The banquet will be held on Friday, April 28, in the Upper Phoenix Room in the Copper Mill Restaurant, 55 N. Main. A social hour kicks off the evening at 6 p.m., followed by din-

ner and presentations at 7 p.m.

This year's guest speaker is Rick Danvir of Deseret Land & Livestock, who will tell us about the birds of Deseret Land & Livestock, and how this working ranch manages their land for the benefit of wildlife (see related story, p.2).

We will also honor the recipients of our annual conservation and education awards.

Tickets are \$25 per person. A cash bar will be provided. Tickets can be purchased from any BAS board member or at Caffé Ibis, Fuhri-man's Fine Art and Framing and Maya's Corner.

Our guest speaker, Rick Danvir, wildlife manager at Deseret Land & Livestock Ranch (DL&L) will discuss the diversity and abundance of bird life on the ranch.

DL&L was designated by Audubon as one of Utah's first Important Bird Areas. In recent years birders touring DL&L have observed more than 275 avian species on the ranch, the diversity of bird life reflecting the diversity and health of wildlife habitats on the ranch. Thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, passerines and raptors breed in the many wetlands, shrub-steppe and woodland habitats on the ranch

*"Birds of Deseret Land & Livestock: Managing for Diversity and Abundance on a Working Landscape"*

each year. Years of monitoring and management have resulted one of the largest sage grouse populations in the state, and land managers west-wide have visited DL&L to observe the ranch's simple but effective management strategy.

In recent years, DL&L has received recognition and

awards, recently receiving the prestigious W.R. Chapline Award for Excellence in Range Management from the Society for Range Management.

Would any birder in their right mind want to visit a working cattle ranch to go birding? Come to the banquet and decide for yourself.

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# Chapter Notes

## Birding with the Cows: An Unusual Opportunity in Northern Utah

*We* birders are pretty lucky here in Northern Utah. There are lots of great places to explore in search of our little feathered friends. Bear River National Wildlife Refuge, Cutler Marsh, Bear River Bottoms, Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the list goes on and on. We even have amazing sewage lagoons when it comes to birding! One place a lot of people would not expect to find birding opportunities is on a working cattle ranch. Well it appears that there is an exception to this notion right here in here in our neck of the woods. The place is Deseret Land & Livestock Ranch, near Woodruff, Utah.

I first heard about the Deseret Ranch several ago from my wife Penny. She toured the ranch as part of her work and was impressed with their holistic style of management and quality of habitat on the ranch. A few years later,

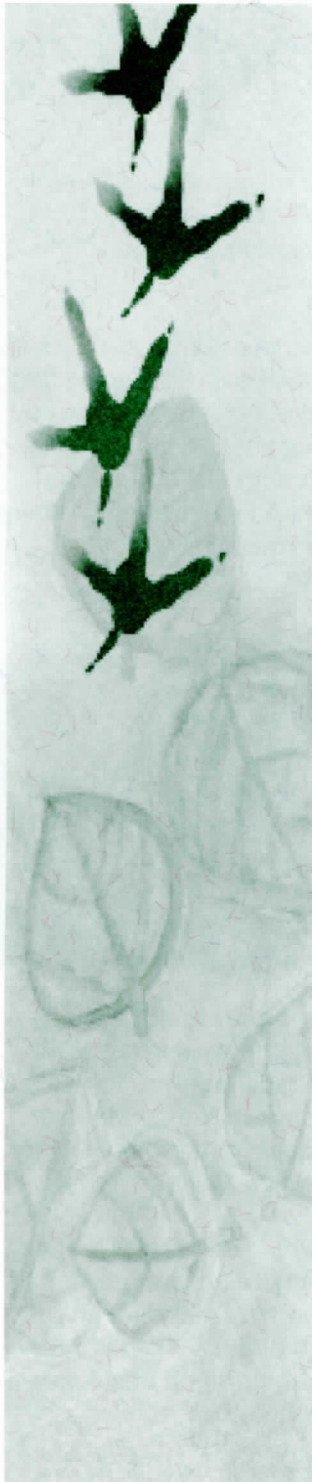
former UDWR Director, Kevin Conway, gave a presentation to the Utah Audubon Council, stressing the need for changes in management of sagebrush steppe habitat in order to stave off drastic declines in sage grouse populations in the West. He too spoke highly of the Deseret Ranch as a model of success in actively managing sagebrush habitats to promote ecological diversity. He cited some interesting numbers. On one percent of Utah's potential habitat, the Deseret Ranch has 20 percent of the sage grouse counted in the state and year after year, in an ecological site comparison, Deseret had 10 times more sage grouse than BLM-managed land.

The more I learned about this working cattle ranch the more I became intrigued. The 200,000 acre ranch boasts a diversity of habitats dominated by sagebrush grasslands at its lower elevation to aspen and fir at elevations

near 8,700 feet. Mark Stackhouse, a USU graduate and avid birder from Salt Lake City, has compiled a list of 273 bird species that occur on the ranch including 170 nesting species. A copy of this list is available on the internet at <http://www.utahbirds.org/PrintCenter/chlistDeseretRanch.pdf>.

On top of this, Deseret Ranch has been designated a worldwide "Important Bird Area" by the Audubon Society. Audubon has estimated that the ranch provided habitat for more than 2,000 waterfowl, more than 7,000 Canada geese, 20 breeding pairs of long-billed curlew, 50 breeding pairs of Franklins' gulls, 30 breeding pairs of burrowing owls, 100 breeding pairs of Virginia warblers, and 50 breeding pairs of broad-tailed hummingbirds. Combine this with 50 pairs of willow flycatchers on a short reach of Lost Creek and Blue Fork, ferruginous hawks, lots of

*(Continued on page 6)*



# Audubon Calendar

April 2006

**1 Bear River Bird Refuge West of Brigham City.** Join us for a morning and early afternoon of birding at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge west of Brigham City. This is a great time to view migrating shore birds as they fatten up before making their way north toward their Arctic nesting grounds. It's also a great time for viewing migrating waterfowl. We will try to have a member of the refuge staff as our primary guide. We will be sure to make time at the end of our birding to tour the beautiful new refuge visitors' center, which just recently opened. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North in Logan). Bring binoculars and a snack, which we will eat at the visitors' center parking lot. If you have a spotting scope, please bring it also. For further information, call Dick Hurren (435) 734-2653.

**5 BAS Board of Trustees.** Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the offices of Bio-Resources, 135 E. Center, Logan. All are welcome to attend.

**8 Early Spring Birding for Beginners.** Experienced birders are also welcome—they can assist the beginners. Sue Drown and Dick Hurren will lead this trip designed to help beginning birders identify birds that are fairly common in Cache Valley. We will pay special attention to the markers that set each kind of bird apart, including its song. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Caffé Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Bring a snack and binoculars if you have them. We will finish around noon. For more information call Sue at 752-3797 or Dick at (435) 734-2653.

**19 Trip to the Texas Gulf Coast to Greet Incoming Migrants.** This extended excursion to the Texas Gulf runs from Wednesday, April 19 through Sunday, April 23. We made a similar trip last spring and had an absolutely marvelous time. We will have rental vehicles available for all participants and will be staying right on the coast down by Brownsville. Because the birds are so tired from making the flight across the Gulf of Mexico, they are usually extremely approachable and can be viewed at a very close range. This is particularly helpful when viewing small birds like warblers. We will see both huge numbers of birds and large numbers of species, many of which cannot be found in Utah. For more information call Dave or Sue Drown at 752-3797.

**28 BAS Spring Banquet.** Don't miss our chapter's annual banquet on Friday, April 28 at 6 p.m. Rick Danvir, wildlife manager at Deseret Land & Livestock, will be filling us in on the opportunities available for wildlife enthusiasts in his presentation entitled, "Birds of Deseret Land & Livestock: Managing for Diversity and Abundance on a Working Landscape." Social hour starts at 6 p.m., with dinner and presentations at 7 p.m. in the Upper Phoenix Room at the Copper Mill Restaurant, 55 N. Main, Logan. A cash bar will be provided. Tickets are \$25 per person, and can be purchased from any BAS board member or at Caffé Ibis, Fuhriman's Fine Art and Framing and Maya's Corner.



*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.*

**29 Shorebirds in Cache Valley.** There should be plenty of mudflats this year, which suggests there will be lots of shorebirds fattening up in preparation for moving north near the Arctic to next. Reinhard Jockel and Sue Drown will lead this trip, and both are real experts on shorebirds. I'm sure Reinhard will also acquaint participants with the wonderful early wildflowers that will be blooming. Join us for a delightful and enlightening morning of nature watching. Our leaders will have scouted out the best areas to go to. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Caffé Ibis (50 E. 150 North). Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. We will plan to finish up in early afternoon.

*May 2006*

**6 Breakfast, Sharp-tailed Grouse and General Birding.** The wonderful land stewards and ranching family, the Selmans, have again invited us to their property in the foothills at the extreme south end of Cache Valley to view sharp-tailed grouse doing their mating ritual dance on their traditional leks. Some greater sage grouse have also recently been found near the same place. Because we need to be in place by dawn, we will meet at 5 a.m. Saturday at the parking lot between the Logan Fire Station and Caffé Ibis and will carpool to the location where the grouse are. Dress warmly because there is usually a cold wind blowing in the early morning. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Also bring your appetite, because the Selmans cook us a wonderful ranch style breakfast of the end of the viewing. For more information, call Dick Hurren at (435) 734-2653.

## Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Opens Its New Wildlife Education Center



"The Weekend Wing Fling" will celebrate the opening of Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge's new wildlife education center at Brigham City, April 21-22, 2006. The building features a large exhibit hall with educational displays on birds and wetlands. It also includes meeting rooms, classrooms, a large auditorium, and a research lab. An attached observation deck will offer close-up views of wetland wildlife. An outdoor amphitheater is located adjacent to a 1/2-mile long accessible interpretive trail. The not-for-profit "Friends of Bear River Refuge" will operate the Avocet Corner Book Shop within the building, offering the latest in books and other wildlife merchandise and souvenirs.

Kenn Kaufman - birder, conservationist and author of the popular Kaufman Focus Guides, will be on hand to help us celebrate. Kenn will lead field trips, provide tips for shorebird identification, and share his insights on birds and migration. He'll also sign books for you. Karen Hollingsworth, noted wildlife photographer, will display many of her national wildlife refuge photographs and give her popular, "Let's Go Wild!" program of images set to music. Events will include refuge tours, birding trips, workshops, arts and crafts, booths and demonstrations for all recreation interests. For information, contact the refuge at 435-723-5887 or via email at: [bearriver@fws.gov](mailto:bearriver@fws.gov). A schedule of events is available on the web at <http://bearriver.fws.gov>.

# Local Notes

## Bridgerland Outdoor Coalition and Audubon

*At* the February meeting of your Audubon Board, Mr. David Rayfield was our guest, representing Bridgerland Outdoor Coalition (BOC). You may know them from the Outdoor Expo that they launched last April. BOC is a regional umbrella organization that includes Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation and Pheasants Forever. As Mr. Rayfield freely admitted, their's is an organization largely of hunters and fishermen. Your Board was pleased to hear that this group of outdoorsman perceives that habitat degradation and loss, sometimes in association with diseases, parasites or over-exploitation, is the primary culprit behind declining population trends among many of northern Utah's fish and game species. To this end, the group is actively engaged in negotiations and funding for large-scale habitat conservation all around our valley, particularly along the benches and canyon mouths where willy-nilly sub-

divisions keep cropping up. They are also actively engaged in riparian habitat conservation for trout, as well as lobbying for expanded no-wake zones or non-motorized zones around Cutler Marsh to improve shoreline management where waterfowl are inclined to nest. Hunter education is also part of their mission. Mr. Rayfield concluded with an invitation to our Board to speak at one of their meetings and consider joining up with them, formally or otherwise.

Buck Russell and I attended part of their mid-February board meeting. We learned that much of BOC's time is currently occupied planning the logistics and funding for this April's Outdoor Expo (which will be held April 21 & 22), to which both we and Stokes Nature Center are again invited to have a booth. BOC is clearly effective in raising funds, much of which they turn over to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for projects that enhance or conserve habitats where trout spawn, ducks nest, and deer over-

winter. Audubon and BOC won't see eye to eye on every issue (indeed, your own Board's decisions are sometimes contentious and not unanimous), but it seems we have a great deal of common ground with BOC when it comes to habitat conservation and rehabilitation in Cache Valley and the Bear River Range. Selectively pooling our resources could strengthen our political and financial clout on projects or issues of common interest, such as negotiating conservation easements on private lands around canyon mouths (think of our spring warbler trip up Green Canyon), helping to maintain the experimental livestock enclosure on Spawn Creek and monitoring the avian response to its recovering willow thickets, or assisting those farms and dairies in our valley that recognize the value of putting back green belts along the floodplain of the Bear River. We hope that you will contact a Board member if you wish to help.

—Jim Cane  
BAS Board Member

# Chapter Notes



## Birding With the Cows

*(Continued from p.2)*

other raptors (many eagles), the sage grouse and other sagebrush obligates, 8,000 deer, elk, moose, and pronghorn along with pelicans on manmade rookery islands. It is

not hard to understand why the Deseret Ranch might be included as one of cool birding spots in Northern Utah.

To learn more about this unique cattle ranch and its birds come to Bridgerland Audubon Society's Spring Banquet. Rick Danvir, wildlife manager at the De-

seret Ranch will be filling us in on the opportunities available for wildlife enthusiasts in his presentation entitled, "Birds of Deseret Land & Livestock: Managing for Diversity and Abundance on a Working Landscape."

—Bill Masslich  
BAS Vice President

## Guest Speaker for Our Banquet Rick Danvir, DL&L

**R**ick grew up in Pennsylvania and New York, receiving an Associates Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management from the State University of New York at Cobleskill in 1975. After working as a wildlife research technician for several years with the New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Utah State University and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Rick re-

ceived a Bachelors degree in Wildlife Science from Utah State University in 1982. He began his career as a wildlife biologist at Deseret Land and Livestock ranch in 1983, and has been the wildlife manager since 1990. His wildlife research experience includes studies of black bear, prairie dog, cougar, mule deer, elk, pronghorn and sage grouse ecology. Rick served five years on the Utah Wildlife Board, co-authoring the Utah cougar and black

bear management plans. He currently serves on the Utah Habitat Council, and as a board member of the Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit Association, the Foundation for Quality Resource Management and the Utah State University-BEHAVE project. His work aims to better integrate agricultural production and wildlife management, improving the ecological and economic health of rangelands.

# Welcome to BAS

### New Members

Anne Bell  
 Robert Al Chokhachy  
 A Hoffmann  
 Lynne Rich  
 Don & Jacque Wahlstrom

### Renewing Members

David Anderson  
 Rebecca S Echols  
 David Hewett  
 R N Hirst, Jr

Eric J Meyer  
 D O Bray  
 Anne Shifrer

### Transfers into Our Chapter

Kay Bailey

# Bridgerland Audubon contacts

### Trustees

2003-2006 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Kate Stephens, 755-0608;  
 2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816;  
 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  
 Vice Pres. Bill Masslich, 753-1759, bill@cvlc-logan.org  
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 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 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.

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, 752-5637, 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*

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## BAS 2006 Election of Officers and Trustees

### Officers for Election to a Two-Year Term

(write in)

- President C. Val Grant \_\_\_\_\_
- Vice President William Masslich \_\_\_\_\_
- Treasurer Sue Drown \_\_\_\_\_
- Secretary Bryan Dixon \_\_\_\_\_

### Trustees for Election to a 3-Year Term

(write in)

- 2006-2009** Ron Goede \_\_\_\_\_
- Kate Stephens \_\_\_\_\_
- Bret Selman \_\_\_\_\_
- David Liddell \_\_\_\_\_

Elections are now being conducted for BAS officers and Board of Trustee members. Officers serve a two-year term, board members serve three years.

Please record your vote on this form and send to:

Bridgerland Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3501  
Logan, UT 84323-3501

Ballots are needed prior to April 15, 2006 so that votes can be counted prior to our banquet, April 28, when the results of the election will be announced.