



The Stilt

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Newsletter of Bridgerland Audubon Society

Go Behind the Gates

By Betsy Beneke
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Road work to close main road, but volunteers will lead guided tours off the beaten path at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

The federal roads project to raise (in certain places), widen and pave Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge's main road is set to begin this spring. Although some work may begin as early as April, the road will be COMPLETELY CLOSED to the public for approximately 3 months - June 1 through August 31. There will be NO access to the refuge or auto tour route AT ALL during this time - at least via the main road (please read on...). The project will begin out at the main part of the refuge, in the area of our security gate (Duckville - where the old tundra swan sign is) and work toward town. Phase I construction (2007) will have the road mostly completed from the refuge to approximately the Canada Goose

Club by fall. Phase II (2008) will complete the road from the Goose Club to Interstate 15. In addition, they will work on a piece in front of the wildlife education center this summer - widening, putting in turn lanes, etc. Besides raising and widening the road, several large culverts will be installed in certain places, where there has historically been water over the road during high water times. The decision to allow complete closure of the road was made because it will significantly shorten the amount of time the road is under construction.

Refuge Guided Tours

Because our refuge staff feels it's important to allow visitors to see SOME part

of the refuge, I'm launching our volunteer "Refuge Tour Guide Program." We will train volunteers to take visitors on guided car caravan tours of the refuge, beginning in April and continuing through fall. Although the program will continue on into future years, we're really in a "crunch" this summer because of the road closure. We're asking for YOUR help! We need folks with good bird identification AND people skills, who are willing to be trained to lead tours for the refuge. We will begin the training sessions in early March. Sessions will be one day long (6-8 hours), partly classroom, partly out on the refuge.

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Regional Notes

Refuge Volunteers Needed

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Guided refuge tours will begin in April. During the time the road is completely closed (June through August), trained guides will take visitors on tours "behind the gates." This is a MAJOR perk for those willing to help us, as you'll get to bird in an area of the refuge not normally open to the public! And it's a REALLY COOL part of the refuge...lots of birds out there! Training will be provided on: 1) Brief history of the National Wildlife Refuge System; 2) History of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge / wildlife education center tour; 3) Management of the Bird Refuge / a little on history and uniqueness of the area; 4) Bird hot spots on the refuge; 5) Customer service skills; and 6) Managing a tour group ETC... Guides should be able to identify MOST of the birds they see on tours. We don't expect folks to know every single one. Guides may work in teams of two as well. Tours will last approximately two

hours total. A "kit" will be available for guides to take along on tours. Kits will contain a "leader manual" with lots of good resource information in it, bird checklists, field guides, a spotting scope, a few sets of binoculars, etc. We'll send along whatever folks think they need. We'll ask that trained tour guides commit to a schedule for leading tours - at least twice per month during the three months the road is closed. More, if they're able and willing. We'll set up the schedule according to how many volunteers will lead tours and what days they're available. Saturdays will be our number one priority. Other days of the week, priority order, to be determined. We'll offer tours as many days of the week as can. We're going to need a SET SCHEDULE, so the information can be advertised to the public. Example: Every Saturday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., Fridays 10 a.m. and Tuesdays 7 p.m. or whatever. The tour days and times will remain constant during the road closure. If guides are willing to lead tours before and after the June-July-August clo-

sure, that will be wonderful, as we plan to continue guided tours after the road project is done, and "seasonally" on into the future. However, this is strictly voluntary. Right now, my main concern is June-July-August.

Anyone interested should contact me.

If I don't know someone personally, I'd appreciate a reference as to their birding and people skills. THANK YOU for considering this request! I hope we can get a good group of birder volunteers, so that we can offer lots of refuge tours during our "peak" tourist season! And if you think it will make a difference, tell folks I'm a pretty darn good cookie baker...

Betsy Beneke
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Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
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Brigham City UT 84302
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(daytime only)
Betsy_Beneke@fws.gov
<http://bearriver.fws.gov>

Audubon Calendar

March 2007

1 BAS Board of Trustees. Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets at 7 p.m. this Thursday at Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend.

3 Waterfowl in Winter: The Logan Sewer Lagoons. We will go to the best places for waterfowl based on the weather. Our focus will be on gulls. During the Christmas Bird Count we found six different types of gulls in the valley. Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Dress very warmly, bring binoculars, and a spotting scope if you have one. Carpooling will be available; beginning birders are welcome. For more information call Buck Russell (435) 512-9641.

8 Spring Birding by Ear and Mapping Conservation Habitats of Cache Valley. Join us for a dual, roundtable workshop, Thursday, March 8 at 7 p.m. at Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. We will be learning some techniques on how to identify common spring migrants by their songs and calls. Many species, such as warblers, are difficult to pick out with the eye, but with their continuous singing and calling, you can identify them by ear, without ever seeing the bird. We will then be looking at aerial maps of Cache Valley on a computer to record spots that members think are critical for bird habitat in Cache Valley. Come share your personal knowledge about special places you know and we'll put these into a GIS database for use in our conservation and education work. As always, Crumb Brothers and Caffé Ibis will be providing refreshments.

17 Returning Waterfowl and other early Spring Migrants. If you hate mosquitoes and your position on their food chain, then this is the perfect time of year to seek early spring migrants. The Benson Marina or Amalga Barrens are areas in Cache Valley filled with shallow ponds that attract tadpoles, aquatic invertebrates, and birds! Short-eared owls may also be there, and we could find Sandhill cranes or even some falcons. It's a bit early for the shorebirds, but you never know if you don't go! This trip will be led by local birding expert Reinhard Jockel, who is not only good with visual birding, but also a gifted birding by ear expert. Leave from the parking lot north of Caffé Ibis (150 North 50 East, Logan) at 8 a.m. and return by lunch. For more information call Buck Russell (435) 512-9641.

April 2007

28 Audubon Council of Utah Spring Retreat. Wasatch Audubon will host the Audubon Council of Utah's spring retreat at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge's Education Center on Saturday and Sunday, April 28 & 29. Members of Utah's four Audubon chapters will attend to decide our state direction on many conservation issues, to bird, and to share fellowship. As with previous retreats, the agenda features a mix of presentations, field trips, meals and business meetings. Please plan to attend. The Bear River Refuge Education Center is located just west of the Forest St. exit from I-15 in Brigham City. Overnight accommodations are available in Brigham City, at Willard Bay State Park campgrounds, or at homes of Wasatch Audubon members by advance arrangement. For more information about the retreat, please contact John Bellmon at (801) 444-3704

Regional Notes

Aleutian Goose Festival



What: 9th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival—A Celebration of Wildness

When: March 30 through April 2, 2007

Where: Crescent City/Del Norte County, California

Join the migration to Del Norte County, California, for the 9th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival. Three days+ of awesome birding in the home of Redwood National and State Parks, natural history, Native American cultural presentations, Drift boats on the Wild and Scenic Smith River for birds, geology, redwoods, salmon stories, Pelagic trip, lagoon kayaking, beaches, tide pools, thousands of Aleutian Geese..... some of the more than 60 field trips/workshops packed into the weekend. For the whole story, visit the web site www.aleutiangoosefestival.org and register online to reserve your favorite trips.

Opening day of the festival, Friday, will conclude with the keynote presentation by Ron LeValley, internationally traveled photographer/biologist. Just back from sailing the Pacific, Ron will present "Outside My Window," a look at the everyday from a keen perspective.

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Dale Azevedo
Gary & Susan Etherington
T O Thatcher
Lucy Watkins
Michael L Wolfe

Renewing Members

Fred Baker
Karen Beard & Andrew
Kulmatiski
Ralph Clark

Alene S Fornoff
Martha R Hansen
David Liddell
John G Lyne

Marion S Murray
Melanie K Spriggs
Michael J Stones
Kazuko Toelken

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

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; Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-
4935
2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Bret Selman, 435/257-5260;
David Liddell, 245-2705

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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 stilt@bridgerlandaudubon.org.

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*.



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