

The Stilt

Volume 37, Issue 1 January 2008 **Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society**

CBC Results - Ya Shudda Bin Thar

e finally
broke – no,
SMASHED –
the 100 species barrier.
This year's CBC tallied 103
species!! Global Weirding
may well be upon us, as
December was relatively
warm, with little snow and
mild temperatures leading
right up into Count Day.
Record species are included in the table on
page 6.

Species with unusually high counts (generally one standard deviation above the mean over the last 15 years) included: mallard, cooper's hawk, American kestrel, sandhill crane, possible least sandpiper, short-eared owl, northern saw-whet owl, stellar's jay, brown creeper, bohemian

waxwing, cedar waxwing, white-crowned sparrow, gray-crowned rosy finch, pine grosbeak, and house finch.

We were surprised to miss seeing both pied-billed grebe (last missed 1992) and chukar (last missed 1998). Other low counts (generally one standard deviation below the mean over the last 15 years) included: wood duck, ring-necked pheasant, Virginia rail, hairy woodpecker, American dipper, ruby-crowned kinglet, yellow-rumped warbler, and pine siskin.

Analysis by Group

Most ducks were either average or above average in numbers with few patterns among dabblers or divers. The single wood duck has continued a steady decline since the mid-1990s, likely due to increased development around the wetlands in southwest Logan where we used to find them in abundance.

Most hawk numbers were higher than in recent years. This was the 4th best year for northern harriers, both of the smaller accipiters were high, and two of the falcons – American kestrel and peregrine falcon – were unusually high.

Wading and shorebirds posted some real surprises. We had been watching a single great egret hanging out around the Logan Fish Hatchery and were delighted to find he had the company of a second one on Count Day. Also at the hatchery were a short-billed dowitcher and a greater yellowlegs – and the day after the count we found a lesser yellowlegs! In addition, a small sandpi-

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2nd Annual Sunflower Seed Sale

Bridgerland Audubon Society is very proud to announce the 2nd annual Black-oil Sunflower Seed sale. Allen Christensen will be braving the temperatures to provide the seed on Saturday, January 12th, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. He will be located on the corner of 200 North and 1500 West (that's the entrance road to the landfill) near the silo. You can simply drive up, load up, and go home!

Why would you want to buy this seed? This high quality seed is provided by a local grower and is guaranteed to be cleaner than other seed. It is also a great buy when you consider the 50 pound bags are only \$18! If you cannot pick up the seed, Allen is willing to deliver the bags for \$20. However, this one day sale is specifically for BAS members at a 10% discount. So, get out and go buy your Winter supply while supporting a local grower! Hope to see you there.

Audubon Calendar

January 2008

Two-hundred Club Birding Is it possible to see 200 species of birds in Cache County in the calendar year (January-December)? Yes, it is not only possible but several local birders do it every year. This trip will be led by local birding expert Reinhard Jockel, who is not only good with visual birding, but who is also a gifted birding by ear expert. Anyone is welcome to attend the field trip, especially those who want to set a New Year resolution to get out of the house to see 200 of the great, natural beauties in Cache Valley. Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Bring something to munch on, because the trip will run into the early afternoon. For more info call Buck Russell at (435) 512-9641.

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

General Meeting Join us at our same great location, the Cache Valley Learning Center (75 S. 400 West), as Bridget Olson will be presenting on the Shorebirds of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Bridget works as a wildlife biologist at the refuge. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend and refreshments will be provided by Crumb Brothers and Caffe Ibis. Enter through the building's west doors. We hope to see you there.

St. George Bird Festival Field Trips, presentations, live display, workshops, fun for beginners and experienced birders, Friday evening banquet with Dr. Jerry Harris on the "Origins of Birds", and a Saturday evening banquet with Dr. Jim Parris of Division of Wildlife Resources. This fifth annual St. George Bird Festival is presented by the Red Cliffs Chapter of the Audubon Society. For additional information contact Red Cliffs Audubon Society (www.xmission.com/cldavis/), the City of St. George (www.sgcity.org/birdfestival), Utah Birds (www.utahbirds.org), or Marilyn Davis at (435) 673-0996. Find more information on page 3.

February 2008

It is Eagle Day in Utah. Join us and watch the magnificent Bald Eagles that winter at Farmington Bay. Bring the family; a bird walk is a wonderful way to introduce children to the world of nature. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. In past years, more than 300 eagles were seen during the trip and we had access to areas normally closed to the public. We will leave at 8:30 a.m. from the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Carpooling will be available; beginning birders are welcome. The Nature/Bird Walk cost is enthusiasm. Typically the walk lasts two hours. For more information call Buck Russell at (435) 512-9641.



5th Annual St. George Winter Bird Festival

January 25-27, 2008

s in the past, Red Cliffs Audubon Society presents the annual Winter Bird Festival as our "Community Outreach Program". It is a wonderful opportunity for all ages to attend and learn from the numerous presenters and leaders. The 5th Annual St. George Winter Bird Festival kicks off with Education Day on Thursday, January 24th especially designed for Washing County Students. The festival events for the general public will take place January 25-27, 2008. All activities are free, except for the Banquet. New this year, is a fun bird photography contest prior to the event.

Headquarters for the festival are centered at the Tonaquint Park & Nature Center–1851 S. Dixie Drive. There will be 2 days of Exhibits, Sales, Presentations, and Kid's Workshops. Outstanding and unique daytime activities include: Introduction to Bird Watching, Bio-Diversity & You, Birds of Washington County, Southern Utah's Sensitive Avian Species, Landscaping for Birds, Bird Photography, Talk about Birding, Fantastic Bird Photos, Peregrine Falcons Nesting in SLC, Unique Environments of Washington County, Plants/Flowers & Birds Tour, California Condors, Birding for Kids, and Building Bird Houses & Feeders.

There will be 3 days of field trips featuring: Lytle Ranch, Washington Fields & Springs Park, Quail Creek Reservoir/Hurricane Fields, St. George Local Ponds, Toquerville/ Grafton & Springdale, Rio Virgin Estates Area, Western Reservoirs, Virgin River Trail, Cedar Valley-Cedar City, Cedar Pockets-Virgin River Gorge, Enterprise, Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, and weather permitting, Vermilion Cliffs in Arizona. During the winter months many waterfowl migrate through and stop over in our lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. Our Southwest Utah habitats can attract over 350 species of birds during the year. In January, see wintering raptors, waterfowl, sparrows, woodpeckers, and many more species. All field trips are free and open to the public and will depart from the Tonaquint Park parking lot. Carpooling encouraged.

Thursday evening at the BLM, Tracy Aviary from SLC will present a fun and educational bird program with their live birds! On Friday evening the featured guest speaker is Dr. Jerry Harris at the Dunford Auditorium at Dixie College presenting the "Origins of Birds". See fossil evidence and learn about his research in China.

Attend the Saturday evening banquet that features keynote speaker Dr. Jim Parrish, UDWR Avian Program Coordinator and his topic is the Avian Program: Past, Present & Future. Great food and door prizes! The banquet will be held at Best Western Abbey Inn in St. George. Cost is \$20, and pre-registration by January 18th is required through the St. George Recreation Center: 435-634-4560 or go to www.activityreg.com under programs/nature center. Lytle Ranch trips, Birding for Kids registration only (no fee) is also on this site.

For further information contact Festival Chairman, Marilyn Davis 435-673-0996 or mkdavis028@msn.com. To view and print a brochure, schedule of events, banquet registration and photo contest forms go to www.sgcity.org/birdfestival or www.redcliffsaudubon.org. You don't want to miss this exciting event! Make your plans today to join us for a wonderful 3-day event in sunny St. George!



Local Bird Spotlight

By Bill Masslich

t seems like an appropriate time of year to consider the Wild Turkey (Meleagris gallopavo). From the standpoint of the purest birder, turkeys are often considered with some degree of disdain.' I guess I can understand this. They have been introduced and reintroduced around North America, like pheasants and partridge, to satisfy an amazingly rabid group of hunters that immerse themselves in the pursuit of these large, sly and yes, tasty creatures. In fact, as a culture, we have developed such and appetite for these birds that they have been domesticated and manipulated into a burgeoning part of our

diet, traditions tur and economy.
They can, at times, seem incredibly goofy of and produced as Banar his three seems in the seems in th

undignified. Wild turkeys tolerate rural areas well. but more and more are managing to fit into suburban habitats where habituation to humans leads to weird encounters like large flocks milling around a house, farms or along the roadside, acting more like livestock than the sly and elusive quarry of myth and legend. They have even taken to attacking cars and bicyclists! Talk about embarrassing. What self respecting birder would consider this species much more than, say a chicken?

With that, I ask my purest birding friends to be tolerant with me and with the Wild Turkey. There is, after all, much to consider when it comes to Wild Turkey and turkeys in general. We all have heard of the various roles of the turkey in the founding of our country the first Thanksgiving and of Benjamin Franklin proposing the Wild Turkey as an alternative to the Bald Eagle as our national symbol. This history and lore resonates through our culture and gives the turkey a unique distinction

among birds.
Wild Turkeys are
native and
endemic to North
American, and

have also been recognized for their role in the culture of aboriginal peoples of our continent. It is believed that the Aztec were the first to domesticate turkeys. There is evidence that turkeys were penned up and used for food and feathers by Anasazi and Fremont cultures of the southwestern U.S. over a thousand years ago. Feathers were used to insulate blankets and leggings, and also used to decorate head dresses and clothes as well as to stabilize arrow shafts. The utilitarian aspect of the turkey seems to have no bounds.

Early European explorers like Columbus and Cortez brought turkeys back with them from their exploration and conquest of the New World in the 1500's. They were so successfully domesticated in Europe that they were brought back to the east coast of the U.S. as livestock by English colonists in 1620. It is possible to distinguish domestic turkeys from their wild counter parts in most of North America by the presence of white tips on the tail feathers, a characteristic retained from the Mexican subspecies that was the

source of domesticated turkeys originally brought to Europe. Wild turkeys have chestnut colored tips on their tail feathers. Loss of habitat

and over hunting dramatically reduced populations of Wild Turkey in North America during the late 1800s and early 1900s. eliminating them from 18 of 32 states where they originally occurred and nearly driving the species to extinction. Attempts to reintroduce Wild Turkey back into its historic range have become increasingly successful since 1950. Populations have rebounded to numbers estimated between 2 to 6.4 million today. Through reintroduction efforts of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Wild Turkey is currently thriving in Utah and Cache Valley. Two subspecies of Wild Turkey live in Utah. The Merriam's Race is most common in higher elevation forest habitats while the Rio Grande race prefers lower elevation forests and river bottomlands. The Rio Grande race was first introduced into Utah in 1984 and is the one doing so well in our valley. The population in our valley has been

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estimated at about 3000. They were first observed during the BAS Christmas Bird Count in 1997 (1 individual) and their numbers have steadily increased. The highest BAS CBC counts have occurred in the last 5 years, which includes a record number seen during the most recent count (December 15, 2007) of 231 individuals. As their numbers increase, so do the jokes about turkeys by the Cache Valley Birding elite (you know who you are).

In all fairness to my hardcore birding buddies, it is not really known if the Wild Turkey historically occupied Cache Valley. If not, they really are just another introduced game species and example of man's manipulation of our environment to suit a need or want. On the other hand. I do not see too much harm in this particular transgression. From an ecological standpoint, it is widely accepted that introducing new species must have consequences, usually negative. However, given the heavy handed nature on our environment, much of the damage has already been done. So throwing Wild Turkey into the mix has probably not had a huge effect on our local ecosystem. If they did occur here historically welcome back.

In some important ways, having Wild Turkey

in Cache Valley is cool. They are a game species and do motivate hunters to become more aware of habitat needs of wildlife. Conservation groups such as the National Wild Turkey Federation have large memberships and contribute much to natural resource conservation and education. As a teacher. I have come to appreciate our new avian neighbor. Wild turkeys are big and visible. When trying to get my students or any young person excited about wildlife and conservation, big is good.

During the recent 2007 Christmas Bird Count, nine students in grades 5 through 8 braved the cold and Val Grant's jokes to come out with us and count birds in our area west of Smithfield. Just before lunch, we stopped at a house we check out every year. The place is located next to the Bear River on a bluff above its confluence of Summit Creek. The folks living there have been feeding birds for as long as I can remember and we always see lots of birds at their feeders. This year, to the student's absolute delight, a flock of 10 turkeys greeted our arrival (a first for our

area). It was fun to watch the kids pour out of the van and mix with the turkeys, chirping, clucking and gobbling. During the encounter, we managed to get four of the birds separated from the rest of the flock that had started bailing into the cottonwood forest along the river below. These four nervous turkeys finally freaked out, jumped up and flew right over the kids' heads on their way to join the flock. The kids' eyes about popped out of their heads as they laughed and yelled. One student learned, during that moment, that turkeys can fly.

So, as the Wild Turkey becomes a more prominent part of our avian community, learn to appreciate them. If you

are a birder with kids, seek out places frequented by these feathered fascinations. Keep your eyes peeled for flocks of Wild Turkey near river courses. They are commonly seen in the lower reaches of Logan Canyon, Smithfield Canyon and along the Blacksmith Fork River in. Nibley and Millville where drivers often pull over to enjoy their antics. There is also a large flock that moves between Mendon and the Maple Bench area above the town. It really looks like Wild Turkey are in Cache Valley to stay so - gobble, gobble.



Bill Masslich is the BAS Vice President Continued-From Page 1

per – thought perhaps to be a least sandpiper – was seen in the north Benson area.

Grouse numbers were mixed. We struck out on chukars, perhaps because the south-facing slopes in Green and Logan Dry Canyons were snowy and in the clouds rather than dry and sunny on Count Day. Ringnecked pheasants were also low. On the other hand, sharp-tailed grouse posted a record high, and we continue to find increasing numbers of wild turkeys invading our valley.

We had been watching an injured sandhill crane in the days before the count. He couldn't be found on the critical day, but the consolation prize was four apparently healthy cranes wandering around Jim Watterson's fields!

The lack of snow probably allowed many of our **gulls** to hang around, and both herring and Thayer's gulls continued their regular vigilance at the landfill.

It's been particularly interesting to note the expansion of Eurasian Collared-Doves in our valley, having dramatically expanded their range from southeast United States over the last decade. The first two were reported in Wellsville just a few years ago, and a single bird made it into our CBC in 2004. This year, their numbers grew to 57! Rock pigeons also posted record numbers.

Species	2007 Count	Previous High	Year of Previous Record
Canvasback	16	15	1999
Peregrine Falcon	2	1	One bird in several past few years
Sharp-tailed Grouse	35	30	2004
Wild Tur- key	231	134	2005
Greater Yellowlegs	1		
Short-billed Dowitcher	1		
Rock Pi- geon	1,507	1,174	2003
Eurasian Collared- Dove	57	30	2006
Horned Lark	645	545	1996

Owl numbers were about average except we've started missing them along the Logan River through town, almost certainly due to the infill development – good because it reduces sprawl, but bad because it's decimating remaining small pockets of wildlife habitat.

Woodpeckers were about average. Horned larks, however, posted a record high. Corvids seem to be holding their own so far, despite high mortality rates from west Nile virus (which seems to affect corvids in particular) as close as southwest Idaho. The micro birds (chickadees, nuthatches, wrens, etc.) were about average, though we found fewer than normal American dippers and rubycrowned kinglets.

Thrush numbers were about normal – and we found a traditional single hermit thrush (hard to find because they're so secretive).

Waxwings were outstanding. Both cedar and bohemian were abundant in several places, sporting their spectacular plumage and issuing those surreal high call notes.

Our only winter warbler – the yellow-rumped – was almost entirely absent. A single bird was found at feeders.

Sparrows and blackbirds were also generally about average in number.

Two irruptive species made their appearance this year, exciting those who saw

them: gray-crowned rosy finches were found on the benches east of Smithfield and our mountain hikers found their just reward in more pine grosbeaks than we've had since 1983 and 1984!

Pine siskins were very scarce, prompting some concern about their particular sensitivity to diseases spread at feeders.

This year we found a total of 29,935 individual birds, comprised of 103 species, 14 of which were represented by only one individual, including two species that were firsts for our count circle.

The potluck was grand, as usual, and hosted by Alice Lindahl and Jim Haefner. The hum of stories and yarns (and not a few yawns from the owlers) kept the house noisy until dinner was announced.

The CBC is THE longest running citizen science effort in the world. This was the 108th year for the CBC program (started in 1900), and our 48th. Our data will be submitted to the national database where researchers and the pubic can access them online at http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html

Our local CBC results go back to 1956 and are available electronically (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) or by hard copy (\$1.00 to cover postage and printing). Contact Bryan Dixon at 10 Heritage Cove, Logan, UT 84321 or bdixon@xmission.com. Continued-From Page 6

Participants

Thanks to this year's 71 participants (another record: 40 "regulars", 22 new faces, and 9 feeder watchers!): Judy Archibald, Keith Archibald, Robert Atwood, Dennis Austin, Kristin Bakkegard, John Barnes, Terry Barnes, Eric Bingham, Talon Bird, Beth Booton, Dick Broun, Jim Cane, Curtis Canning, Mary Cheney, Scott Cheney, Allen Christensen, Stephanie Cobbold, Maureen Correll, Peter Daniels, Bryan Dixon, Dorothy Eagan, John Ellerbeck, Barbara Farris, Craig Fosdick, John Gallagher, Val Grant, Jack Greene, Jim Haefner, Frank Howe, Jeff Huffman, Joanne Hughes, Richard Hurren, Reinhard Jockel, Linda Kervin, Ben Kim, Dennis Kim, Jim Kingsland, Caitlin Laughlin, Dean Lester, Alice Lindahl, Sher Lisonbee, Jean Lown, Connie MacManus, John Martin, Bill

Masslich, Jake Masslich, Gary Meunier, Christa Morris, Leslie Morris, Ron Munger, Bill Oblock, Ryan O'Donnell, Ian Pendery, Stephen Peterson, Jan Peterson, Will Pitkin, Thomas Rizzo, Buck Russell, Eric Sargent, Kate Sargent, Laura Sargent, Steve Sargent, Anne Shifrer, Frank Smith, Brandon Spencer, Helen Taylor, Robert Taylor, Steve Walker, Dennis Welker, Martin Welker, Dan Zamecnik

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 Keith Archibald

Dear Bridgerland Audubon Society Members,

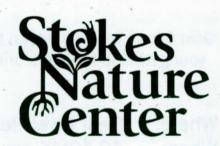
he Stokes Nature Center staff is once again participating in Project Feeder Watch, an annual survey of winter feeder birds run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada and the Canadian Nature Federation. The objective of our participation in Project Feeder Watch is to engage and educate students and teachers, volunteers, visitors and community members in identifying local feeder birds and observing bird behavior. Ultimately, long-term monitoring of the Stokes Nature Center bird feeders will give visitors and participants a better understanding and appreciation of

the dynamics of our local bird populations as well as allowing them to actively participate in the collection and sharing of scientific data. Our counts will be added to the database of North American feeder bird populations, designed to help researchers determine population fluctuations of North American birds. Anyone with internet access can visit the Feeder Watch website and see how data is incorporated into the larger maps and databases.

We are currently working to get this project up and running, the only thing missing is bird watchers.

Anyone with an interest in birds can

volunteer! If you or anyone you know might be interested in monitoring feeders at Stokes Nature Center, please contact Sadie Enright at smenright@logannature.org or 435-755-3239. We have a comfortable couch in front of a big window that looks out onto the feeders!





On Saturday, December 1st, Buck Russell led a field trip to the Hoggan Homing Pigeon Racing Lofts here in the valley. Owner Brad Hoggan, one of America's top breeders, gave us a tour of his facility as well as a hands-on introduction to the handling and breeding of Homing Pigeons. Although Pigeon Racing is somewhat obscure in this country, it is very popular in much of the world and gives us yet another way to work with and enjoy birds. A special thanks goes to Mr. Hoggan for his willingness to have us and his generosity.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Hosts Wetland Wings and Other Wild Things



Join Susan Snyder, Ogden Nature Center Naturalist, as she introduces pre-school aged youngsters to the life stories of Refuge Wildlife through storybooks, puppetry, wetland walks, and other activities.

Where: Bear River Refuge Wildlife Education Center

When: 10-10:45 am Wednesdays

What: Wildlife Program for ages 3-6, accompanied by parent or

teacher - FREE!

Topics include: Swans (November — December), Eagles (January), Animal Tracks (February), Owls (March), Canada Goose (April), and Bird Babies (May)

YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER FOR THIS CLASS AS SPACE IS LIMITED! PLEASE CALL KATHI STOPHER TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION (435) 734-6438

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Renewing Members

Mr. Charlie Brothersen-Lori-Robert Jenkins Pat Harman Ms. Star Coulbrooke Ms. Sandra Lawrence Mr. Robert Schmidt Ms. Jennifer Sinor Mr. John Gallagher Ms. Maureen Correll Mr. Craig Riger C. D. Cheney

Mr. Carl Brothersen Dr. R. J. Shaw Jim Cane & Linda Kervin

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

Trustees

2005-2008 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-4935; Dick Hurren, 720-7074; Richard Mueller, 752-5637

2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; David Liddell, 797-1261; Bret Selman, 257-5260

2007-2010 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

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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 birdnerdut@gmail.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____

City_____State___ZIP__



Address

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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Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3501

Logan, Utah 84323-3501 Email: birdnerdut@gmail.com

Visit our website: http: www.bridgerlandaudubon.org

BAS 2004 E	Ballot BAS 2004 Election of Officers
Officers (Two-Year Term)	Board of Trustees (Three-Year Term)
President	Vote for Four:
□ needed	☐ Jim Cane
	☐ William Masslich
Vice President Jason Peitrzak	☐ Richard Mueller
	☐ Brandon Spencer
Secretary	
☐ Lyle Bingham	Only BAS members may vote and each membership is
Treasurer	entitled to one vote. To vote, clip this ballot and mail to Bridgerland Audubon Society.
☐ Jennifer Hoffmann	P.O. Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501. Alternately, you
	may vote at the banquet, Thursday, April 17 or 24. All ballots must be received by
	April 22, 2008.