



The Stilt

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January 2009

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

Heat Leakage and Citizen Science

I start my days eating breakfast while watching our feeders, waiting for the birds to wake up and seek out their breakfast on my patio. We get a nice mix of finches, chickadees, juncos, and siskins and they fly back and forth between our feeders and the bushes at the back of the yard.

One recent morning, a particularly cold one, a lone House Finch was eating at our feeder just as the heat came on. The heat vent in the kitchen is located right next to the patio sliding door, and just seconds after the hot air began blowing, the finch flew down to the door and landed inches from the vent. He puffed out his feathers, tucked his head down under his wing, and seemed to go to sleep. Anne and I were excited to see this strange behavior but we began to wonder if

something might be wrong. — was it sick? After a couple minutes of blowing, the heat kicked off and the Finch immediately woke up and flew back to the feeder to eat.

As a citizen-scientist, I was instantly convinced that I had observed something unique! I put out a couple of emails, seeking advice from better birders. Was it possible that this finch knew our heat would come on and could gather enough warmth from it to make a difference on this cold morning?

Well, maybe; maybe not. Several birders suggested that it would probably require a significant heat leak for the finch to be able to get more benefit than simply eating seed and making its own heat. David Sibley

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Calling all Utah Birders

More eyes needed to tally state birds

Bird watchers in Utah are seeing big changes, and they don't even need to leave home to notice new species in their yards. The Eurasian Collared-Dove, a large tan bird with a black ring or "collar" on the neck, is rapidly colonizing North America, and Utah is on the front lines of this invasion. Scientists are asking Utah's bird watchers to help track these and other changes at their feeders by participating in Project FeederWatch.

"FeederWatch is fun and easy," says project leader David Bonter from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "While you're enjoying the birds, take a few minutes to count and record them."

Last winter, 13% of FeederWatch participants in Utah recorded the invasive Eurasian Collared-Dove at their feeders. The species was rarely detected as recently as five years ago. "We need to hear from more bird watchers in Utah to get an accurate picture of what's happening with bird populations from year to year," says Bonter.

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch is underway and runs through April 3. Participants can sign up at any time. FeederWatchers track the numbers

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Audubon Calendar

January 2009

1 Two-hundred Club Birding Is it possible to see 200 species of birds in Cache County in the calendar year? 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 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 and 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.

8 General Meeting Join us at our same great location, the Cache Valley Learning Center (75 S. 400 West), when Robert Schmidt will be presenting on Sea Turtles. 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.

15 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.

17 Raptors and Larks Local birding expert Reinhard Jockel will lead a trip to the Amalga Barrens in search of raptors and the their tracks. There will also be a good chance of seeing Horned Larks and perhaps a few buntings and uncommon finches thrown into the flocks. Anyone is welcome to attend. Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Dress warmly and bring something to warm to drink. The trip will most likely be finished by 2 p.m.



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pointed out that it was probably just coincidence but that birds do take advantage of heat-leakage from humans.

I did some research into heat-leakage and found some interesting stuff. Did you know that urban and suburban areas are warmer than nearby rural areas? Dark streets and rooftops trap more heat from the sun than forests and fields. Add to this the cumulative heat that leaks from buildings, cars, and almost everything we do. The result is that some birds can now survive winter farther north than their ancestors could have. Not only is it warmer, but the insects and plants that give them food and shelter can provide those benefits later and later in the winter. As a result, some

species of birds have expanded their territory in recent years even while other species of birds have suffered.

So my observation of the House Finch might not amount to much more than an interesting anecdote, but there is value from all of us citizen-scientists. Ornithology is a field in which amateurs outnumber professionals by a wide margin and those observations we make can lead the professionals to things they might not have otherwise discovered. So watch your birds closely, share your observations with others, and let me know if you notice anything interesting about your House Finches!

— by Jason Pietrzak
pietrzak@gmail.com

Local Bird(er) Spotlight — update

As many of you read in last month's Stilt, Ryan O'Donnell not only had a big year, but a giant year! Well, it only got giant...er! Ryan ended the year with a grand total of 242 species; a record that will most likely stand for decades. Several people have asked about the species Ryan saw. The following is the complete big year list. You can also read about several of Ryan's adventures on his blog found at <http://200birds.blogspot.com/>

Once again, congratulations Ryan!

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 242. Long-tailed Duck | 192. Black-chinned Hummingbird | 142. Northern Rough-winged Swallow |
| 241. Winter Wren | 191. Cordilleran Flycatcher | 141. Least Sandpiper |
| 240. Ferruginous Hawk | 190. Black-throated Gray Warbler | 140. Sanderling |
| 239. Lesser Black-backed Gull | 189. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | 139. Semipalmated Sandpiper |
| 238. Iceland Gull | 188. Swainson's Thrush | 138. Western Sandpiper |
| 237. Northern Saw-whet Owl | 187. Hammond's Flycatcher | 137. Wilson's Phalarope |
| 236. American Golden-Plover | 186. Fox Sparrow | 136. Bonaparte's Gull |
| 235. White-winged Crossbill | 185. Gray Catbird | 135. Vesper Sparrow |
| 234. Dunlin | 184. Wilson's Warbler | 134. White-faced Ibis |
| 233. Thayer's Gull | 183. Dusky Flycatcher | 133. Snowy Egret |
| 232. Evening Grosbeak | 182. MacGillivray's Warbler | 132. Lincoln's Sparrow |
| 231. Broad-winged Hawk | 181. Broad-tailed Hummingbird | 131. Barn Swallow |
| 230. American Three-toed Woodpecker | 180. Townsend's Warbler | 130. Long-billed Curlew |
| 229. Dusky Grouse | 179. Bobolink | 129. Swainson's Hawk |
| 228. Cassin's Vireo | 178. Red-necked Phalarope | 128. Osprey |
| 227. Black-bellied Plover | 177. Common Yellowthroat | 127. Tree Swallow |
| 226. Pectoral Sandpiper | 176. Whimbrel | 126. Black-crowned Night-Heron |
| 225. Virginia's Warbler | 175. Stilt Sandpiper | 125. Marsh Wren |
| 224. Gray Flycatcher | 174. Sora | 124. Eurasian Wigeon |
| 223. Nashville Warbler | 173. Spotted Sandpiper | 123. Great-tailed Grackle |
| 222. Rufous Hummingbird | 172. Violet-green Swallow | 122. Willet |
| 221. Solitary Sandpiper | 171. House Wren | 121. Caspian Tern |
| 220. Baird's Sandpiper | 170. Calliope Hummingbird | 120. Eared Grebe |
| 219. Black Tern | 169. Forster's Tern | 119. Mountain Bluebird |
| 218. Golden-crowned Kinglet | 168. Black-headed Grosbeak | 118. Common Loon |
| 217. Purple Martin | 167. Brown-headed Cowbird | 117. California Quail |
| 216. Steller's Jay | 166. Mississippi Kite | 116. Western Grebe |
| 215. Band-tailed Pigeon | 165. Northern Waterthrush | 115. Red-breasted Merganser |
| 214. Blue Grosbeak | 164. Bullock's Oriole | 114. Lesser Yellowlegs |
| 213. Glossy Ibis | 163. Plumbeous Vireo | 113. Horned Grebe |
| 212. Red-naped Sapsucker | 162. Western Tanager | 112. Common Redpoll |
| 211. Clark's Nutcracker | 161. Warbling Vireo | 111. Black-necked Stilt |
| 210. Williamson's Sapsucker | 160. Common Grackle | 110. Yellow-headed Blackbird |
| 209. Northern Goshawk | 159. Long-billed Dowitcher | 109. Ruddy Duck |
| 208. Rock Wren | 158. Lazuli Bunting | 108. Trumpeter Swan |
| 207. Flammulated Owl | 157. Yellow Warbler | 107. Clark's Grebe |
| 206. Whip-poor-will | 156. Orange-crowned Warbler | 106. Double-crested Cormorant |
| 205. Common Poorwill | 155. Long-eared Owl | 105. Savannah Sparrow |
| 204. Willow Flycatcher | 154. Western Kingbird | 104. Franklin's Gull |
| 203. Common Nighthawk | 153. Canyon Wren | 103. Hooded Merganser |
| 202. Hairy Woodpecker | 152. White-throated Swift | 102. American Avocet |
| 201. Eastern Kingbird | 151. Cattle Egret | 101. American White Pelican |
| 200. Western Wood-Pewee | 150. Brewer's Sparrow | 100. Turkey Vulture |
| 199. Grasshopper Sparrow | 149. Bank Swallow | 99. Virginia Rail |
| 198. Olive-sided Flycatcher | 148. Marbled Godwit | 98. Lesser Goldfinch |
| 197. Lark Sparrow | 147. Blue-winged Teal | 97. Red Crossbill |
| 196. Yellow-breasted Chat | 146. Chipping Sparrow | 96. Cackling Goose |
| 195. Lark Bunting | 145. Harris's Sparrow | 95. Greater White-fronted Goose |
| 194. Ruffed Grouse | 144. Green-tailed Towhee | 94. Ross's Goose |
| 193. Hermit Thrush | 143. Cliff Swallow | 93. Snow Goose |

Freedom and Jeff

Freedom and I have been together ten years. She came in as a baby in 1998 with two broken wings. Her left wing was broken in four places. She could not stand. She was emaciated and covered in lice. We made the decision to give her a chance at life, so I took her to the vet's office. From that point, I was always around her.

We had her in a huge dog carrier with the top off loaded with shredded newspaper for her bedding. I used to sit and talk to her, urging her to live; to fight. She would lie there looking at me with those big brown eyes. We had to tube feed her for weeks.

This went on for more than a month. She still couldn't stand. It came to a point that we had to make a decision. We decided we had to euthanize her if she couldn't stand in a week. We didn't want to cross that line between torture and rehab, and it looked like death was winning. She was going to be put down on Friday. I was to come in on Thursday afternoon. I didn't want to go to the center because I couldn't bear the thought of her being euthanized. Reluctantly, I went. When I walked in, everyone was grinning from ear to ear. I immediately went to her cage. There she was, standing on her own, a big beautiful eagle. She was ready to live. I was in tears. That was a very good day.

We knew she could never fly, so the director asked me to glove train her. I got her used to the glove and we started doing education programs for schools in western Washington. We wound up in the newspapers, radio, and some TV. Miracle Pets even did a show about us.

In the spring of 2000, I was diagnosed with non-hodgkins lymphoma; stage 3 — one major organ



plus everywhere else. I wound up doing 8 months of chemo. I missed a lot of work. When I felt good enough, I would go to Sarvey and take Freedom out for walks. Freedom would also come to me in my dreams and help me fight the cancer. This happened time and time again.

Fast forward to November 2000, the day after Thanksgiving, I went in for my last checkup. I was told that if the cancer was not all gone after 8 rounds of chemo, my last option was a stem cell transplant.

They did the tests and I had to come back Monday for the results. When I went in, I was told that all the cancer was gone.

The first thing I did was to go up to Sarvey. I took the big girl out for a walk. It was misty and cold. We went out front to the top of the hill. I hadn't said a word to Freedom, but somehow she knew. She looked at me and wrapped both her wings

around me to the point that I could feel them pressing in on my back (I was engulfed in eagle wings). She touched my nose with her beak and stared into my eyes. We stood there like that for I don't know how long. It was a magic moment. We have been soul mates ever since she came in. This is a very special bird.

On a side note, I have had people who were sick come up to us while we are out. Freedom has some kind of

hold on them. I once let a guy who was terminal hold her. His knees just about buckled and he swore he could feel her power coarse through his body. I have so many stories like that.

I never forget the honor I have of being so close to such a magnificent spirit as Freedom's.

Hope you enjoy this.

Jeff Guidry
Sarvey Wildlife Center
Everett, Washington

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and kinds of birds seen at feeders each week and then send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The information they provide helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations.

"Scientists learn something new from the project each year," says Bonter, "whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely seen species. Will the Eurasian Collared-Dove have an impact on populations of native doves? Scientists need information from throughout the state to help answer the question, and anyone who sees birds at feeders can help."

FeederWatchers across North America submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges — information scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, a bird-identification poster, a calendar, instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights, summarizing the season's findings.

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

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- 2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; David Liddell, 797-1261; Bret Selman, 257-5260
- 2007-2010 Chris Cokinos, 245-7769; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041
- 2008-2011 Jim Cane, 713-4668; William Masslich, 753-1759; Richard Mueller, 752-5637; Brandon Spencer, 753-2790

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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 _____

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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- 92. Sandhill Crane
- 91. Wild Turkey
- 90. Glaucous Gull
- 89. Northern Pygmy-Owl
- 88. Red-breasted Nuthatch
- 87. Barn Owl
- 86. Peregrine Falcon
- 85. Chukar
- 84. Mourning Dove
- 83. Mew Gull
- 82. Herring Gull
- 81. Wood Duck
- 80. Snow Bunting
- 79. Gray-crowned Rosy-finch
- 78. Ring-billed Gull
- 77. Prairie Falcon
- 76. Northern Shrike
- 75. Pine Siskin
- 74. Eurasian Collared-dove
- 73. Golden Eagle
- 72. Lapland Longspur
- 71. Tundra Swan
- 70. Mountain Chickadee
- 69. Spotted Towhee
- 68. Yellow-rumped Warbler
- 67. Cedar Waxwing
- 66. Sharp-tailed Grouse
- 65. Short-eared Owl
- 64. Cooper's Hawk
- 63. Short-billed Dowitcher

- 62. Redhead
- 61. Brewer's Blackbird
- 60. Downy Woodpecker
- 59. Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- 58. Great Egret
- 57. Merlin
- 56. American Tree Sparrow
- 55. Red-winged Blackbird
- 54. Rough-legged Hawk
- 53. House Sparrow
- 52. Greater Yellowlegs
- 51. Horned Lark
- 50. California Gull
- 49. Wilson's Snipe
- 48. Killdeer
- 47. American Pipit
- 46. Ring-necked Pheasant
- 45. Great Horned Owl
- 44. Sharp-shinned Hawk
- 43. Bald Eagle
- 42. Common Raven
- 41. White-crowned Sparrow
- 40. Western Meadowlark
- 39. Belted Kingfisher
- 38. Great Blue Heron
- 37. Pied-billed Grebe
- 36. Bufflehead
- 35. Northern Harrier
- 34. Green-winged Teal
- 33. Canvasback
- 32. Common Merganser

- 31. Ring-necked Duck
- 30. Lesser Scaup
- 29. Gadwall
- 28. Northern Pintail
- 27. Cinnamon Teal
- 26. Northern Shoveler
- 25. American Wigeon
- 24. Canada Goose
- 23. Rock Pigeon
- 22. Song Sparrow
- 21. American Dipper
- 20. American Coot
- 19. American Kestrel
- 18. Townsends Solitaire
- 17. Western Screech-owl
- 16. American Goldfinch
- 15. Black-billed Magpie
- 14. Cassin's Finch
- 13. House Finch
- 12. Bohemian Waxwing
- 11. American Robin
- 10. Northern Flicker
- 9. Dark-eyed Junco
- 8. European Starling
- 7. Brown Creeper
- 6. Black-capped Chickadee
- 5. American Crow
- 4. Red-tailed Hawk
- 3. Mallard
- 2. Barrow's Goldeneye
- 1. Common Goldeneye