



The BIRDS 'n BITES program is a monthly gathering (except for June through August plus December) that offers informative and entertaining content for the bird enthusiast. These programs are free and open to all. Each begins at 6:30 pm for socializing with snacks and drinks prior to a relevant presentation at 7:00 pm.

Due to covid-19, all Birds 'n Bites programs will be held via videoconferencing until further notice

**Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 7:00 - 8:30 pm**

*“Secret Lives of Predators Revealed Through Trail Cameras” Mark Jasumback, Science Teacher, Skyline High School*

Many people interested in viewing wildlife occasionally see red tail foxes and coyotes at a distance during daylight hours. They seldom observe the secretive and solitary cougar or bobcat, and viewing black bears is always nice at a distance. Come and share my experience observing the behaviors of predators in the wild: cougars using scent to mark their realm, a bobcat in search of prey, a coyote taking down small prey, and a male black bear communicating its presence to a female black bear.



Mountain Lion,  
Photography by M. Jasumback



Bobcat,  
Photography by M. Jasumback

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# THE PELICAN

## NEWSLETTER

### GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON MISSION

*Great Salt Lake Audubon is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat for wild birds, animals, and plants and to maintaining healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the state.*

### CONTACT GSLA

Website: [greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](http://greatsaltlakeaudubon.org)

Mail: P.O. Box 520867, SLC, UT 84152

Office: 152 W Burton, Suite J, SLC, UT 84115

Phone: (385) 313-0608

### OFFICERS

President: Heather Dove

Vice President: Ray Smith

Secretary: Leah Richardson

Treasurer: Kandy Richards

(Contact at [info@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:info@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org))

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Please see the website for a listing of positions and responsibilities. If you desire a printout of a current listing, call the office number to request one by mail.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR THE PELICAN

Original articles and photos are welcomed. The editor reserves the right to choose and edit as needed. Email articles to [newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org). The *Pelican* is published six times a year. The submission deadline for the JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021 issue is December 10, 2020.

*Printed on recycled paper.*

### AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

*Local:* GSLA chapter-only membership is \$30 a year. Local membership is very important as GSLA is primarily self-supporting. Join on the website or use the form found on page 8 of this issue of THE PELICAN.

*National:* To join the National Audubon Society (NAS), use the link on page 8. The NAS website details the benefits of national membership. In addition, you will receive a courtesy subscription to our newsletter, The Pelican, for one year.

*Both:* You may join both GSLA and NAS if you wish to support both local and national activities.

## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS - SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

*By Leah Richardson, Secretary, GSLA*

The Board is wishing everyone health and wellness at this time. It certainly has been a difficult year for all of us. Our lives have changed, and we do our best to adapt and just keep going. GSLA has been taking advantage of virtual platforms to reach out to our members. With field trips cancelled, we decided to hold additional Birds n' Bites this summer. Many of you joined us for those presentations, and we hope you enjoyed them.

In addition, we held our first VIRTUAL Fall Forum in October. We had over 130 live participants and many more that viewed the recorded presentation. New York Times best-selling author, Jennifer Ackerman presented a beautiful program on her book THE BIRD WAY: A NEW LOOK AT HOW BIRDS TALK, WORK, PLAY, PARENT, AND THINK. She shared examples of bird intelligence that break down many long-standing beliefs on the subject. Did you know that many female birds sing? That Greater Anis communally raise their young? That birds use tools to find food and chickadee warning calls are different depending on the level of threat? We hope that you all loved this event as much as we did.

In other news, we held another successful seed sale. Thanks to so many of you who participated. The birds will be provided for again this winter. We are so happy to have partnered with Kelli Frame of Wild Birds Unlimited to make this event happen.

Make sure to read the articles for the upcoming Salt Lake and Jordan River Christmas Bird Counts. We are doing our best to make these happen but things will be a bit different this year. Hang in there everyone—we will get through this.

*(continued on page 5)*



# KNOW WHAT YOU BREATHE

*By Georgie Corkery, Member, Board of Directors, GSLA*

Air pollution is one of the many environmental issues we face, and is well interwoven into the larger climate crisis. It can literally affect us on a cellular level and, also, give us dreary, uninspired days. Unfortunately, we are all too familiar with this because the Salt Lake Valley is notorious for its poor air quality. We know it has a negative impact on our mental and physical health, but we don't often think about the impact this has on wildlife. Both animals and plants, from crops to trees, can be just as affected as we are. In other words, air pollution affects the ecosystem as a whole.

There are several types of air pollution that impact the Salt Lake Valley ecosystem and community, the most well-known pollutant being PM2.5 or particulate matter that is 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter. PM2.5 comes from vehicles, refineries, homes, wood burning, and wildfire. Dust from the dried lake bed of Great Salt Lake and open mine pits, such as the Rio Tinto Kennecott Copper Mine, are other sources of pollution, measured at PM2.5 to PM10. A lesser known pollutant is ozone. Ozone is less known likely because it can't be seen, smelled, or tasted.

Over the past month we have experienced extraordinary levels of smoke from California and local fires, and some of us have the options to retreat into our home with air purifiers. Sadly, a large portion of the community cannot - including our flora and fauna that make this place beautiful.

Unfortunately, the health consequences for all types of pollution are equally devastating, affecting pregnancies, birth outcomes, and vital organs such as the lungs, heart, and brain, and a host of miscellaneous health consequences. Despite knowing the health consequences of air pollution, studies have found that federal and state standards for air pollution levels don't reflect actual safe levels of air pollution.

All this information can leave one frustrated, but there are actions you can take. Being aware of the current air quality is the first step, and [PurpleAir.com](http://PurpleAir.com) is a great resource to do this. Second, if you are able to, invest in an air purifier for your home, and turn it on when the air is bad. Indoor air pollution can be just as bad as outdoor without one. Lastly, take steps to reduce air pollution, whether that be adopting a more sustainable lifestyle output or participating in policy making by contacting your representative. Together, we can protect the air we breathe.

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# SANDHILL CRANE PAINT NIGHT

*By Amanda Sharette-Kay, Chair, Education Committee, GSLA*

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Sandhill Crane Virtual Paint Night! We had a lovely intro by Ian Batterman and learned all about the Sandhill Cranes before moving on to the painting instruction. Everyone participating, young and old, came up with their own unique tributes to these magnificent creatures. Here are some of the pieces completed by the painters.



Paintings by Participants, Shared by A. Sharette-Kay



**Calendar of Events and Field Trips  
for November/December 2020**  
GSLA: (385) 313-0608; Website: [greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](http://greatsaltlakeaudubon.org)



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Unfortunately, our group field trips have been suspended until further notice because of the need for social distancing due to covid-19. Until it is safe to return to these field trips, Ian Batterman, our Field Trip Coordinator, has suggestions for places to bird on your own for November and December.

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## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER HOTSPOTS FOR BIRDS

*By Ian Batterman, Field Trip Coordinator, GSLA*

Though the weather is starting to cool and many birds have left for warmer areas, Utah is still filled with many bird species. Winter migrants are beginning to come in at this time as well as wandering alpine species and many types of waterfowl. Overall, the best places for winter birding are any forested areas with berry trees for fruit-eating birds or any open water source for ducks and other waterfowl.

Here is a list of some Northern Utah Hotspots to see plenty of birds in the months of November and December:

### **Antelope Island:**

Antelope Island is a great place to see wintering ducks and raptors and a few other interesting species. For the past few Novembers, all three North American scoter species were seen along the causeway. Also, during November, thousands of Eared Grebes are replaced by thousands of Northern Shovelers and other dabbling ducks. Remember that the Island is a State Park and has an entry fee/park pass to enter.

### **Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge:**

Near Brigham City lies one of the greatest wetland birdwatching sites in the State of Utah. Every season has something unique, and in November and December, the Tundra Swans come back to spend the winter around Great Salt Lake. There are also dozens of other species like owls, Rough-legged Hawks, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Shrike, and thousands of ducks.

### **Jordan River (esp. around 2100-2500 S):**

Anywhere along the Jordan River Trail is a great place for birds any time of year. Although there may be fewer ducks than the larger wetlands and ponds, the riparian habitat allows for more encounters with songbirds like robins, kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and various sparrow species. The area of the Jordan River between 2100 S and 2500 S in West Valley is especially good in late November as a decent number of Barrow's Goldeneye frequent that area of the river.

### **Wasatch Reservoirs (Deer Creek, East Canyon, Rockport, Jordanelle, and Echo):**

The man-made reservoirs in the Wasatch Mountain area are wonderful hotspots for birds in late fall since the roads and the reservoirs have yet to freeze up. Each reservoir has the likelihood to be home to many different species of birds from gulls and ducks to Bald Eagles, hawks, and some alpine bird species. These reservoirs are also the best places to see loons including Common, Pacific, and the rare sightings of Yellow-billed and Red-throated.



**Calendar of Events and Field Trips  
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**Lee Kay Ponds:**

Near the Salt Lake County Landfill lies a “diamond in the rough” wetland filled with many interesting species from scaups, Canvasback, and mergansers to Bald Eagles, cormorants, and various sparrow species. Because of the landfill, this is also a great place to see many species of gulls. The winter is the best time to see upwards of eight, different gull species.

**Farmington Bay:**

Though the hunting season is ending, Farmington Bay is a great place to see wetland birds including Bald Eagles, Wilson’s Snipe, grebes, coots, various ducks, Tundra Swans, and different species of raptors.

**Big Cottonwood Park:**

Big Cottonwood Park in Murray (along 4800 S) is a fun place to see many neighborhood bird species including woodpeckers, sparrows, finches, robins, and different hawks and falcons. With all of the Russian Olive trees there is usually a sighting of Evening Grosbeaks in this Park in winter.

**Tuesday, November 17, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**  
**BIRDS ‘n BITES: Secret Lives of Predators Revealed Through Trail Cameras**  
**Zoom Videoconferencing**

**Speaker:** Mark Jasumback, Science Teacher, Skyline High School

See page 1 for the presentation abstract. Also, watch for an email message from Heather Dove with video-conference details for the presentation.

**Saturday, December 19, All day**  
**2020 Salt Lake Christmas Bird Count**

**Coordinator:** Ian Batterman — 920-360-0805 (text preferred), [imbatterman@gmail.com](mailto:imbatterman@gmail.com)

See page 7 for more details. Start time will be determined

by the Team Leader (TBA). Contact Ian if interested in participating.

**Friday, January 1, 2021, All day**  
**2020 Jordan River Christmas Bird Count**

**Coordinator:** Jeanne Le Ber, 801-532-7384 or 801-230-4373 (talk & text), [jeanne.leber@utah.edu](mailto:jeanne.leber@utah.edu)

See page 7 for more details. Start time will be determined by the Team Leader (TBA). Contact Jeanne if interested in participating.

**BOARD HIGHLIGHTS - SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER** *(continued from page 2)*

*By Leah Richardson, Secretary, GSLA*

We are excited to announce that Lisa Jasumback has joined the Board of Directors. Lisa brings a wealth of relevant experience. She will be taking over the Newsletter Editor position starting January 2021, when Arlene Hamburg rotates off the Board. GSLA would like to thank Arlene for her excellent work and contributions to the Board.

# 2020 BLUEBIRD BOX USE REPORT

By Jeanne Le Ber, Member, Board of Directors, GSLA

Each fall Great Salt Lake Audubon volunteers gather in Strawberry Valley to assess the Bluebird Box trail. The goal of the fall visit is to remove used nests, replace and repair damaged boxes, and record data about the birds using the 100 boxes. Our volunteers met on Saturday, September 12, at the Visitor Center. With covid-19 in mind, we had five “bubble” teams of two people who were assigned twenty boxes each. Many thanks to Heather Dove, Joy Emory, Cooper Farr, Jeanne Le Ber, Sterling Moody, Melissa Nisonger, Leah Richardson, Ray Smith, Patrick Watson, and Stephanie Weems for their dedication and hard work. Next spring the birds will have a clean box in which to raise their young.

While we call this a bluebird box trail, in fact, mostly Tree Swallows are using the boxes. This year saw a significant increase in the number of House Wrens taking up residence; the wrens are hyper-frenetic and fill the box with twigs making it even more essential to clean the box out. A small percentage of the boxes were used by Mountain Bluebirds and about a quarter of the boxes remained empty.

<u>Sep 2020</u>	<u>Box User</u>	<u>Jun 2020</u>
4	Mountain Bluebird	3
49	Tree Swallow	47
22	House Wren	18
25	Empty	31

The accompanying chart compares the spring and fall use of the boxes. One positive result was that six of the empty boxes from June were eventually occupied and one more bluebird nest was added.

During the fall clean-up, we counted 26 unhatched eggs, mostly in boxes used by Tree Swallows. Perhaps these were failed second nesting attempts. There were six dead adult swallows in six boxes, a not uncommon occurrence.

Next year we plan to address the competition issues among the bluebirds, swallows, and wrens, and hopefully devise a strategy to increase the bluebird numbers. While we value all our cavity nesters, it would be great to see more bluebirds in Strawberry Valley.



Tree Swallow Nest with Three Unhatched Eggs,  
Photography by J. Le Ber



Dead Mountain Bluebird,  
Photography by H. Dove

## 2020 SALT LAKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Ian Batterman, Field Trip Coordinator, GSLA

Due to the current situation with public events during the coronavirus pandemic, this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is going to be run a little differently. We will still have the Salt Lake count on Saturday, December 19, and we will still maintain the different count sectors. However, we will not have the large groups common in previous years and we will observe proper social distancing to help keep our counters safe.

The number of people per count sector will be determined by the sector leader, so if you are a regular to the Salt Lake CBC, contact your leader to see how he or she is going to split up the count sector. Remember to bring masks and be prepared to count a specific area alone or with only a few other people.

If you are at all uncomfortable with counting in-person, and if you live within the count circle area, you may always count the birds in your yard on count day.

We will not have an in-person potluck this year. If you are a participant, keep an eye on your email for a recap of the count day. There could be a Zoom recap if people are interested.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in this year's Salt Lake CBC, email the Field Trip Coordinator, Ian Batterman, at [imbatterman@gmail.com](mailto:imbatterman@gmail.com).

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## JORDAN RIVER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2021

By Jeanne Le Ber, Member, Board of Directors, GSLA

Due to concerns with covid-19 transmission, this year's Jordan River Christmas Bird Count (JR-CBC), scheduled for Friday, January 1, 2021, will be conducted in "bubble" teams. The count circle, which centers at the Utah-Salt Lake County line on I-15, is divided into nine teams; the designated team leader will select the one to four members for her or his team with whom he or she feels "safe" birding.

The team leaders will be responsible for establishing the time and place their teams meet and start birding. I will supply the team leaders with the needed count materials ahead of the count. Team leaders can report their bird sightings to me via email or eBird list. Sometimes, there are surprises. On January 1, 2019, during the JR-CBC, the Saratoga team spotted an Orange-crowned Warbler!

In December, I plan to contact JR-CBC 2019 Team Leaders, listed in the table below, to ask for their participation. If you would like to lead a team or volunteer, please contact me.

Count Area	2019 Team Leader	Count Area	2019 Team Leader
Saratoga	Max Malmquist	Lehi	Rollie Westman
Jordan River	Bob Walters	Thanksgiving Point	Connie Misket
Alpine	Vivian Schneggenburger	Jordan River-Arrow	Bryant Olsen
Herriman	Ed Leite	Camp Williams	Chris Frauenhofer
Draper	Ian Batterman		

Thank you ahead of time for your continued support. Please direct questions to Jeanne Le Ber, JR-CBC Compiler, at [jeanne.leber@utah.edu](mailto:jeanne.leber@utah.edu), 801-532-7384 or 801-230-4373 (talk & text).



**THE PELICAN**  
**Great Salt Lake Audubon**  
**P.O. Box 520867**  
**Salt Lake City UT 84152-0867**

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**GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON**  
*(Local Membership)*  
**Membership Form**

Local membership is \$30 annually. This fee includes a 1-year, electronic subscription (6 issues) to the GSLA newsletter, *THE PELICAN*.

1. Complete the local-membership form below.
2. Prepare a check in the amount of the membership fee (\$30) plus any desired donation amount.
3. Mail both to:

GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON  
 P.O. Box 520867  
 Salt Lake City UT 84152-0867

**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
*(National Membership)*

**Online Membership Form Only**

Go to the following website to join and pay National Audubon Society dues.

<https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/DH8fxTkoC0qHjXF9fZCtRw2>

By using this special webpage to join, you will also give the Great Salt Lake Audubon chapter a small monetary credit.

**Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_