



Birds



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, March 16, 2021, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

“25 Years of Condor Recovery in the Southwest; What have we learned and what’s next?” Tim Hauck, Condor Program Manager, The Peregrine Fund

The near extinction of North America’s largest flying land-bird and attempts to recover the California condor is known to many, but the details of the why and how are less known. The trials and tribulations of human history in endangered species management offer landscape-scale insights in an ever-changing arena of conservation. Should we succeed in recovering this species, it will stand as a testament of our abilities to observe, study, and respond accordingly to better manage preventable impacts to ecosystems and the species within. Lead poisoning remains the single greatest threat to recovery and implications for other less studied species is equally important. Science alone does not make conservation. How we proceed will have as much to do with success as the foundations of science we depend upon to detangle these complex issues.



Picture of Condor at Badger Point, Marble Canyon, overlooking the Colorado River, AZ, by Tim Hauck

Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

“Following Forest Owls: Community science-driven studies of tree hollows and the communities of small owls that adopt them.” Dave Oleyar, Ph.D, Director of Long-term Monitoring and Community Science at HawkWatch International

Small forest owls (including our focal species: Elf Owl, Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Whiskered Screech-owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Western Screech-owl) constitute a sub-guild of species that adopt tree hollows for roosting and nesting. Despite cultural popularity, many species of small owl, both in the western US and globally, remain understudied. *(continued on page 7)*

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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

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Treasurer: Kandy Richards

(Contact at 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.

Lisa Jasumback, Newsletter Editor

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. The Pelican is published six times a year. The submission deadline for the May/June issue is April 10, 2021.

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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 - MARCH/APRIL

By Leah Richardson, Secretary, GSLA

It is hard to believe that spring is coming and, along with it, breeding season and more opportunities for birding! With the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine, I am hopeful that we will be able to meet for field trips and other activities again. We definitely will keep you updated on any changes to GSLA activities and events.

Thanks to all the participants in the Christmas Bird Count this year. Despite unique restrictions, we had an excellent turn out and some interesting numbers. Please read the articles in this newsletter that highlight some of this year's findings.

In Board news, we are still trying to fill the Program Chair position and are looking for a volunteer. This is a great opportunity to get more involved and meet interesting people across various conservation and environmental backgrounds. I have loved organizing the Birds 'n Bites and the Fall Forum programs and have learned so much in the process. Please reach out to Heather Dove or myself if you are interested in this position.

If you are looking for more activities to engage in while staying safe and socially distant, I recommend looking at Tracy Aviary and the new Jordan River Nature Center's websites. Did you know the Nature Center now has a book club that you can attend virtually? They also plan on having some safe Earth Day Celebrations this spring.

Finally, we continue to work on keeping you informed about local and national environmental issues of concern and action. We want to thank our lobbyist, Steve Erickson, for his legislative updates this year and allowing us to have a voice on important issues affecting our population, environment, and of course our birds!



Summary of the Jordan River Christmas Bird Count

By Jeanne Le Ber, GSLA Board Member

A big thank you to the 29 Jordan River Christmas Bird Count participants who contributed to the data collection effort on January 1, 2021. This count circle was established by Joe Leigh in 1989, so there are 33 years of continuous data available for the area. The circle centers at Point of the Mountain on the Utah/Salt Lake County line and Interstate 15. Over the years, the amount of growth and development in this area has been extraordinary: interstate expansion, more people and housing developments, malls, new roads including Traverse Ridge Road and Suncrest Drive between Draper and Alpine and less open space. While bird species have shifted and numbers have spiked up and down, the birds are holding on for now.

Due to concerns with COVID-19 spread, we conducted the count in “bubble teams.” The 8 team leaders selected team members from their own cohort. A total of 102 species (an all-time high) and 43753 individual birds (also an all-time high) were counted. Species counts range from 58 (1990 & 1995) to 102; individuals range from 6239 (1992) to 43752.

This year, 11 species of birds were seen by all teams; 28 species of birds were seen by only one team (which points out the important contribution of each team); and we added two new species to the count circle: Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Since 1989 we have recorded 151 species in this count circle.

All data has been entered into the National Audubon Christmas Bird Count website. The following table summarizes the number of species and individual birds seen by each team:



Picture of Golden-crowned Sparrow seen at the Mehraban Wetland Park, Draper, copyright by Nicole Vawdrey.

Area	Team Leader	# Species	# Individuals
Saratoga	Max Malmquist	55	5896
Jordan River	Bob Walters	45	14528
Alpine	Vivan Schneggenburger	43	1406
Herriman	Ed Leite	48	1974
Draper	Ian Batterman	43	1722
Lehi	Rollie Westman	26	3811
Thanksgiving Point	Connie Misket	41	1392
Jordan River-Arrow	Bryant Olsen	66	4734
			8290 gull species
Totals		102	45753

We will do it again next year, so put January 1, 2022 on your calendar and plan to join us. With appreciation to all participants, Jeanne Le Ber, JR-CBC compiler.



**Calendar of Events and Field Trips
for March/April 2021**
GSLA: (385) 313-0608; Website: greatsaltlakeaudubon.org



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 January and February.

Utah's Hotspots for Birds in Early Spring

By Ian Batterman, Fieldtrip Coordinator

The transition between winter and spring tends to be an interesting time for birds. Many of the winter migrants start heading north, yet the mid-to-late spring migrants haven't shown up in full force. Fortunately, there are still birds to be found in Utah during these months. Early spring is a great time to see waterfowl, especially ducks in their breeding plumage. As waterways begin to thaw, we may see some early migrating shorebirds come through. Some songbird species also migrate early including flycatchers, gnatcatchers, and blackbirds. Occasionally, some winter migrants and vagrants may linger as well to surprise birders.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Where: East of Brigham City off of I-15 exit 363. Both the Bird Refuge Road leading up to the refuge and the Auto Tour loop are great areas for hundreds of bird species. It is certainly one of the greatest hotspots in the state.

What: Snow Geese, Tundra Swans, ducks, grebes, gulls, Bald Eagle, Red-tail Hawk, American Kestrel, shrikes, Short-eared Owls, sparrows, Marsh Wren, blackbirds, pelicans, cormorants.

Yellow Fork Canyon

Where: In Herriman off of Rosecrest Road. There are a few different hiking trails off of the main trail which might be a bit quieter as this is a great place for horseback riding and biking.

What: Common Raven, Cooper's Hawk, Juniper Titmouse, finches, woodpeckers, Wild Turkey, sparrows.

Antelope Island

Where: Antelope Island State Park, off Antelope Island Drive in Syracuse, UT (I-15 exit 332). There is a \$15 fee per vehicle to get onto the Island. The entire island is a bird paradise as well as a great place for other animals like Pronghorn, Coyote, and American Bison. The best areas for birds are the causeway and Fielding Garr Ranch.

What: Northern Shoveler, American Avocet, falcons, gulls, ducks, Eared Grebe, hawks, Great Horned Owl, Horned Lark, Northern Harrier, sparrows, Ring-necked Pheasant, shrike, Virginia Rail.

Henefer Lek

Where: This is one of the most famous lekking sites in Utah for the Greater Sage-Grouse. If you wish to visit to see the grouse, make sure you go EARLY (arrive before sunrise, around 6:30 AM) and follow proper car-blind etiquette (stay in your vehicle, stay quiet, turn engine and lights off, don't leave the area until the grouse are done displaying). After the grouse are finished, you can continue onward to East Canyon Reservoir to see Bald Eagle and Common Loon. Due to the sensitivity of the area, contact Ian Batterman if you would like directions; imbatterman@gmail.com

What: Greater Sage-Grouse, Golden Eagle, Western Meadowlark, Red-tailed Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Horned Lark.

Utah Lake

Where: Provo, UT, and surrounding areas. The wetlands on the outskirts of the lake as well as the state park are the best places to see birds.



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What: Ducks, gulls, grebes, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, plovers, shorebirds, pelican, sparrows, blackbirds, herons.

South Shore Great Salt Lake

Where: Along the frontage road of I-80 going along the southern shore of the Great Salt Lake (heading towards Great Salt Lake Marina State Park & Lee Creek).

What: Snowy Plover, shorebirds, gulls, hawks, ducks, blackbirds, sparrows, swallows.

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BIRDS ‘n BITES: “25 Years of Condor Recovery in the Southwest; What have we learned and what’s next?” Zoom Videoconferencing*

Speaker: Tim Hauck, Condor Program Manager, The Peregrine Fund. See page 1 for the presentation abstract.

Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

BIRDS ‘n BITES: “Following Forest Owls: Community science-driven studies of tree hollows and the communities of small owls that adopt them.” Zoom Videoconferencing*

Speaker: Dave Oleyar, Ph.D, Director of Long-term Monitoring and Community Science at HawkWatch International. See page 1 for the presentation abstract.

April 22-24, 2021

Red Cliffs Bird Festival at Greater Zion

Registration begins February 15, 9 a.m.

*Watch for an email message from Heather Dove with video-conference details for the presentation. Go to www.RedCliffsBirdFest.com for details and to register.

May 13-16, 2021

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival Registration begins March 15th at 9 am MT. Go to daviscountyutah.gov/greatsaltlakebirdfest.

*Watch for an email message from Heather Dove with video-conference details for the presentations.

Christmas Bird Count for Beginners

By Marina Astin, Tracy Aviary

In December, Tracy Aviary hosted its first Christmas Bird Count for Beginners. For the last eight years, the Aviary has organized the Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids), inviting kids and families to participate in a shorter Christmas Bird Count. Tracy Aviary educators provided tools like binoculars and trained participants to identify birds they were likely to see, so no prior birding experience was necessary. Families with young kids loved this tradition, but we also received a lot of interest from adults! So, this year we invited anyone to participate in our CBC for Beginners.

This CBC looked a little different than past years due to the pandemic. We kept group sizes small and shared all of our training information online. But, group leaders and participants had so much fun! We had a mix of young children and adults participate in the count, many of whom were excited to safely socialize with other beginning birders. As in previous years, our groups surveyed Liberty Park in Salt Lake City. In total, they counted 25 species and 737 individual birds. A couple of favorite species spotted were two Cooper’s Hawks and two Brown Creepers. We were unable to share our results over lunch like we usually do, but we sent participants home with hot chocolate and an invitation to join us again next year! Tracy Aviary staff and participants are looking forward to continuing this tradition!

A Different Story About Homelessness and the Jordan River

By Anne Terry

You may be familiar with the complex issue of unauthorized camping along the Jordan River. While that remains a topic that multiple entities are working to address, I want to share with you a new project in which people experiencing homelessness are enhancing the habitat of the Jordan River.

In 2020, Tracy Aviary and The Road Home moved into the same neighborhood in South Salt Lake. Tracy Aviary opened its new Jordan River Nature Center at 1125 W 3300 S, and The Road Home is operating the new Men's Resource Center at 3380 S 1000 W. The two organizations quickly formed a partnership. Tracy Aviary is dedicated to making the Nature Center a place that is for all of its neighbors, including guests of the Resource Center.

We initially considered bringing a nature-focused lecture series to the Resource Center, but when the pandemic hit, it became apparent that we should pursue the safer option of outdoor activities. At the same time, Tracy Aviary was planning habitat restoration efforts to support birds, butterflies, and bees. In spring of 2020, through funding from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Tracy Aviary staff planted five native plant gardens along the Jordan River Parkway south of the Nature Center.

When asked if the guests of the Resource Center might be interested in helping care for the plants, The Road Home staff thought it was worth a shot. We set up a weekly schedule in which anyone at the Resource Center that morning could join us.

Our expectations have been greatly exceeded! With consistent support from Resource Center guests, the plants are thriving – and they're not the only ones. The Road Home sends at least one housing-focused case manager along each week, and walking the trail together affords them an opportunity to have individual conversations with the guests, getting to know them better, making them aware of the resources available, and offering words



Picture by Anne Terry, Director of the Jordan River Nature Center



Picture by Anne Terry, Jordan River Nature Center

of encouragement. Many of the guests have said that these walks have provided moments of respite for them, and several have said that the experience was an important part of their transition back into more permanent housing.

Even in winter, our partnership has continued with new projects on the docket. One project has centered on native cottonwood trees that we aim to protect from beaver (encouraging beaver to chew instead on invasive species like Siberian Elm). Some cottonwoods were wrapped with wire mesh long enough ago that they are now outgrowing the wire. Volunteers from the Resource Center have been helping us remove that wire and replace it with roomier cages. No matter the project, the guests often offer to pick up trash along the way, another service that makes a big difference for the River.

This is just the beginning. Tracy Aviary is excited to continue our partnership with The Road Home and to build more com-

partnerships. The current Jordan River Nature Center is a transition campus; we have big plans to bring more amenities to this site. The transition campus allows us to get to know our neighbors and their dreams for the Nature Center.

We are grateful for those who made the transition campus possible, including Salt Lake County, Granite School District, the State of Utah, the Jordan River Commission, Dominion Energy, and the Walbridge Fund. If you know of a community group we should connect with, contact us through our website, www.jordanrivernaturecenter.org.

GSLA is now seeking a new Program Chair. This is perhaps one of the most creative positions in the organization. Of her time in this position, Leah says, “This is a great opportunity to get more involved and meet interesting people across various conservation and environmental backgrounds. I loved organizing these programs and learned so much in the process”.

The candidate will be responsible for programming and hosting of the monthly Birds ‘n Bites meeting, as well as programming for our annual Fall Forum. Candidates should be organized, timely, and have good oral and written communication skills. Familiarity with the operation of audio-visual equipment such as projectors and connections to other equipment is helpful, however Leah is willing to train the next person.

Leah has already scheduled much of the winter and spring 2021 meetings, so there will be time for her to train and assist the next person. (We anticipate the Jan-May series will be conducted virtually on Zoom). If you are interested to volunteer for this position, please contact Heather Dove at president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org.

Summary of the 2020 Salt Lake Christmas Bird Count

By Ian Butterman, Fieldtrip Coordinator

This year’s count was a bit different than normal in terms of counters. We made appropriate limitations on car-pooling and social distancing, with most areas having less than 10 people. Despite these issues, we still had 130 people counting this year (greatly in part due to 20+ feeder watchers!)

This year’s count was quite successful in terms of birds as well. we had 115 species with 46,833 individual birds (a record year since I have been Circle Coordinator). Some of the highlights included a large mixed flock of Black and Grey-crowned Rosy-finches, Evening Grosbeaks, Harris’s Sparrows, Blue Jays, two Northern Goshawks, five owl species, a record number of Cassin’s Finches, a large number of Mountain Chickadees (almost one in every area!), multiple Juniper Titmice, White-breasted hatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Western Bluebirds (potential count record), and Acorn Woodpeckers (new count area species!). We didn’t have too many species “missing” from the count, other than Sandhill Cranes, Wood Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, American Tree Sparrows, multiple grebes and gull species, and Clark’s Nutcrackers (2nd year in a row).

Special thanks to everyone who participated in this year’s count, and thanks for staying safe! To all who wished to participate but couldn’t due to Covid-19 limits, I hope to see you again for next year’s count on December 18th!!!

BIRDS ‘N BITES *(continued from page 1)*

The distribution and dynamics of tree hollows in different types of forest are equally understudied. Following Forest Owls (FFO), is a collaborative, community science driven research program where teams of community scientists recruited by the Earthwatch Institute join research staff in the field at one of two study sites: the Wasatch Mountains in Northern Utah or the Chiricahua Mountains in southeast Arizona. Here we study the ecology of six small owl species and the tree hollows they adopt.



Picture of Whiskered Screech Owl in Sycamore Cavity by Marina Ferrucci



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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:

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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

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