

# THE PELICAN

Newsletter

May-June 2021



The Birds 'n Bites program is a monthly gathering (January to May and September-November) that offers informative and entertaining content for the bird enthusiast. Programs are free and open to all.



Great Salt Lake  
AUDUBON

Due to COVID-19, all  
Birds 'n Bites programs  
are being held via  
videoconferencing until  
further notice.

**Tuesday, May 18—7:00-8:30 P.M.**

## Birds 'n Bites: Dark Skies and Artificial Light

Please join us via Zoom for an in-depth discussion on the Dark Skies Initiative and light pollution. Our two presenters are Heidi M. Hoven and Vellachi Ganesan.

**Heidi Hoven**, Gillmor Sanctuary Assistant Manager for National Audubon Society, IDA Utah board member and co-chair Lighting Ordinance Committee, presents *Artificial Light, Humans, and Birds: Towards Supporting a Bird-friendly Relationship*. This presentation explores the intersection of human population growth and a globally important stop-over site along a migratory flyway. Some of the known effects of artificial light at night on humans, birds, and other wildlife are presented, and city and county level solutions to reduce light pollution along this important migratory pathway are discussed.

**Vellachi Ganesan**, Lighting Designer for Spectrum Engineers, Associate Instructor at the University of Utah, and IDA Utah board member, presents *Vibrant Cities, Dark Skies: Mitigating Lighting Conflicts*. The national consumption of artificial light has increased multi-fold since the 1950s. This increase has become a critical sustainability concern. There is growing research that points to the unintended consequences of light pollution—from bird fatalities, to ecological disruptions, to human health effects, and more. How can we design and regulate artificial lighting to serve and protect all species in the environment?

## GSLA Grants Awarded

by Kandy Richards

The GSLA Board and Grants Committee is excited to announce our spring grant awards of \$1,000 each to the following organizations:

- Farmington High School Ornithology program—for field guides and scopes
- Wonderbloom Nature Preschool—for binoculars, books, puppets, and other supplies
- Utah Open Lands—supplies for Hidden Hollow riparian area restoration
- Friends of Great Salt Lake—to assist the International Coastal Cleanup on the Great Salt Lake

Two of these projects support the education of our youth, hopefully nurturing a lifelong love of nature. The other two further habitat conservation and restoration, providing a home for our beautiful birds. This brings the total number of grants awarded since 2017 to 24.

Much thanks to the Grants Committee for their work:

- Arlene Hamburg
- Karin Kirchhoff
- Jeff Orth
- Kandy Richards

The next round of grants happens in late summer. Watch for the call for proposals in August, with submissions due September 1, 2021. For more information see <https://greatsaltlakeaudubon.org/grant-program>

Board Directory / Board Highlights	page 2
American Robin / Lights Out	page 3
Calendar of Events / Field Trips	pages 4- 5
Nature Journaling/ Program Chair	page 5
Micah Schow Joins Board / Bird Name	page 6
Bird Safe Windows / Migratory Bird Day	page 7



# 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:** <https://greatsaltlakeaudubon.org/>  
**Mail:** P.O. Box 520867, Salt Lake City, UT 84152  
**Office:** 152 W Burton, Suite J, Salt Lake City, UT 84115  
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#### OFFICERS

President: Heather Dove  
Vice President: Ray Smith  
Secretary: Leah Richardson  
Treasurer: Kandy Richards

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Please visit 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.

**Newsletter Editor:** Jeanne Le Ber

#### 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 6 times a year. The submission deadline for the July-August issue is June 10, 2021.  
Printed on recycled paper.

#### AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**Local:** GSLA chapter-only membership is \$30 a year. Local membership is 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

It is hard to believe that the GSLA Board has been meeting virtually for over a year now. As I look back, I realize how resilient all of us are and how adapting to difficult circumstances has allowed us to be more innovative. It turns out birds have adapted to this pandemic as well. As society and traffic calmed, bird songs quieted and adjusted to the decrease in societal ambient noise. Nature is amazing and we have so much more to learn from it.

In Board news, I am excited to announce that we have a new Board member, Micah Schow. Micah comes to the Board with some excellent experience in website development and digital technology. We are excited to have him join us. In other news, Jeanne Le Ber will be taking over as the Newsletter Editor. Jeanne's editorial and linguistic skills lend themselves perfectly to her taking on this position.

Hopefully, everyone has tuned up their binoculars and is ready for spring migration birding!! The Great Salt Lake Bird Festival is happening in May and GSLA field trips are resuming in May. Check out our calendar to see what we have scheduled so far. Things are getting warmer, birds are building nests, and GSLA members continue to be resilient, ready to take on new challenges this spring.

#### From the Editor

Dear Reader,

This is my first issue of *The Pelican* as the newly installed editor. If you are a long-time GSLA member, you may remember that I was the newsletter editor back in the mid-1980s when we were using an IBM Selectric typewriter. At that time, the newsletter was pasted up on boards with graphics added in true cut and paste manner using spray adhesive. Volunteer labor folded, labeled, and mailed the approximately 1000 print copies. The collating "party" was held in my living room. Good times!

These days most copies of the newsletter are read online as a PDF. This saves paper and provides a convenient way to archive past issues.

As the editor, I invite you to consider contributing to our newsletter. Articles should be original, not published elsewhere and should not exceed 500 words. Shorter articles are welcomed. If you have questions, concerns, suggestions, or contributions, contact me at [newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org).

Enjoy the read.

All the best,  
Jeanne



## The American Robin Returns

by Jeanne Le Ber, GSLA Board

It is spring and the American Robin has returned. Or did the robins ever leave? Good question.

According to Christmas Bird Count data, while robins migrate, they are seen year-round in Utah. The Christmas Bird Count data for Utah for 2009 to 2019 recorded a high of 15,238 robins in 2016 and a low of 2,747 in 2015, averaging 8,557 individual robins over ten years (mid-December).

The answer is that robins don't leave Utah in winter, though they do move around.

One of our more recognizable species, the American Robin, deserves a closer look. Many novice birders do not notice the broken white eye-ring or the lovely black and white streaking on the chin. The male robin is darker overall than the female but they both have a robust rusty-orange chest and belly. The under-tail covert area is white, while the head is dark, and the bill is yellow. Juvenile robins are similar to their parents but display a spotted chest and back with a darker bill. In general, western robins are paler than eastern birds.

Robins are most active in the early morning, and during breeding season start singing at 4:00 A.M. I am hearing them now from my downtown condo bedroom window; a gentle wake-up alarm. The robin's song can be heard as *cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up*. Robins repeat this about ten times in a row and then take a break before starting again. The robin's calls are varied and include various *cucks* or *tuks*, with *yeeps* or *peeks* when alarmed. After their young hatch in late spring, I often hear their high-pitched *seep* call.

Watch a robin feeding on your lawn. They run, pause



American Robin - *Turdus migratorius*

Photo by Bryant Olsen ©

and cock their head, then run, pause and cock their head as they move around the yard. Are they seeing or hearing the worms? Both methods have been evaluated and scientists believe that robins see the worms they pull from the earth.

Take care when using pesticides on your lawn as robins can be negatively affected by these toxic chemicals. In addition, these chemicals can kill bugs and worms, potentially resulting in less food for the robins.

Encourage robins to nest in your yard by providing native plants, food, water, and shelter. The female builds her cup-shaped nest using grass, twigs, moss, and mud. She lays 3-5 blue eggs that are incubated for 12-14 days. Another 13 days of care and the young fledgling leaves the nest.

Enjoy robins year-round. But especially enjoy their song in the spring and welcome their young into your yard.

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## Lights Out Salt Lake

by Cooper Farr, Conservation Director, Tracy Aviary

The Western Tanager—a colorful bird with a tropical yellow belly and bright red face—will soon be making the long journey from his wintering grounds in Mexico to his breeding grounds in the western U.S. Like the majority of his fellow migratory birds, he does this journey at night.

If our tanager flies over Salt Lake City, he will see a blindingly bright landscape below him. Nighttime lights will draw him down into the urban environment. Many birds in his situation collide with windows before they can find their way back out of the city. It is estimated that up to 988 million birds die from crashing into windows in the U.S. every year. Window collisions happen for a variety of reasons—not just when light pollution draws birds off course—and it is a huge problem for birds world-wide.

Luckily, there are ways to make our cities safer for birds. After documenting this issue through a window collision study (Salt Lake Avian Collision Survey—SLACS), Tracy Aviary partnered with IDA-UT (International Dark-Sky Association) to create the Lights Out Salt Lake initiative. Joining many Lights Out initiatives around the world, this program encourages residents, businesses, and building managers to turn out lights from 11:00 P.M.-6:00 A.M. during peak migration (March-May and August-October).

By turning out lights, we help birds like the Western Tanager navigate cities safely. Doing so, we make our environment safer, healthier, and darker, for all of us.

Pick up a free *Lights Out* yard signs at the Tracy Aviary any day of the week from 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M. or at the Jordan River Nature Center Thursday-Saturday from 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. To learn more visit  
<https://www.tracyaviaryconservation.org/lightsoutsaltlake>



## Calendar of Events and Field Trips

### for May-June 2021

GSLA: 385.313.0608; Website: [greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](http://greatsaltlakeaudubon.org)



## GSLA Field Trips are BACK!

We are excited to announce that after a long year without field trips we will be resuming guided bird outings this coming May! However, in order to stay safe (and not get ahead of ourselves while there are still COVID cases out there), we will be following these safety guidelines:

- no more than 10 participants per trip (call trip leader to reserve your spot)
- masks must be worn at all times
- participants stay 6 feet apart
- carpool only with people in your household or bubble
- no sharing of binoculars or scopes

We request that you stay home if you are experiencing the following symptoms:

- coughing
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- sudden change/loss of taste or smell
- fever or chills

If you have any questions about these guidelines, contact the leader of the field trip or GSLA Field Trip Coordinator Ian Batterman. Happy Birding!!!

### Saturday, May 1—7:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

Antelope Island—EASY

**Leader:** Ian Batterman—920.360.0805 (text)

**Email:** [imbatterman@gmail.com](mailto:imbatterman@gmail.com)

Antelope Island is always a great place to see birds, but the best birding is during the spring shorebird migration in early May. Over 15 species of shorebird can grace the Causeway in record numbers. Many songbirds visit Garr Ranch on their migration. We can also see nesting owls, singing sparrows, and other resident birds all over the island. Meet at the large parking lot before the toll gate at 7:00 A.M. and get ready for an amazing day of birding. Contact Ian Batterman (text or email preferred) to let him know you are coming.

### May 13-16, 2021

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival

Pre-registration required. Visit the festival website for more information:

<https://www.daviscountyutah.gov/greatsaltlakebirdfest>

### Tuesday, May 18—7:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.

*Birds 'n Bites: Dark Skies and Artificial Light*

**Via Zoom only**

Join us for our monthly program from the convenience of your own home! See page 1 for details.

### Saturday, May 29—7:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M.

Random Rarity Search—EASY/MODERATE

**Leader:** Ian Batterman—920.360.0805 (text)

**Email:** [imbatterman@gmail.com](mailto:imbatterman@gmail.com)

Part of the fun of bird watching is searching for rare species. Thanks to today's technology like texting, social media, and eBird, it is easier to stay connected with other birders to help locate rare species faster. On this field trip, we will be looking specifically for rare birds seen in the area (no more than 50 miles from Salt Lake City) within the past few days. Meet at the southeast corner of the parking lot of Walmart on 11400 South at 7:00 A.M. and we will decide as a group what bird(s) to look for. Contact Ian Batterman (email or text preferred) to let him know you are coming.

### Saturday, June 5—9:15 A.M.-1:00 P.M.

Bluebird Boxes in Strawberry Valley—EASY/MODERATE

**Leader:** Jeanne Le Ber—801.230.4373 (text)

**Email:** [jeanne.leber@utah.edu](mailto:jeanne.leber@utah.edu)

Please join us for this annual event. Plan to arrive at 9:15 A.M. at the Strawberry Valley Visitor Center. Drive through Heber City and take U.S. 40 east to Daniel's Summit. From there travel about 6 miles to the Visitor Center which is on the right. The morning will be spent checking the boxes and recording the species using each box and if there are eggs or young birds. Call Jeanne if you have questions or to let her know you are coming.

### Saturday, June 19—7:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

Yellow Fork Canyon—MODERATE

**Leader:** Ian Batterman—920.360.0805 (text)

**Email:** [imbatterman@gmail.com](mailto:imbatterman@gmail.com)

Yellow Fork Canyon is a jewel in Salt Lake County, home to great walking trails and many scrub-oak loving birds that are more common in southern Utah. This area is home to vireos, warblers, jays, Juniper Titmouse, Lazuli Buntings, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and more! The hike is moderate and it may be muddy, so wear appropriate footwear. (continued p. 5)

We will meet at the main parking lot at the base of the trail on Rose Canyon Road at 7:30 A.M. (from 13400 South in Herriman going west, turn left on 6400 West, turn right at the stop sign onto Rose Canyon Road and then head all the way to the end). Contact Ian if you are interested.

## Nature Journaling with Watercolors

A new Osher course for your consideration

GSLA Board member Amanda Sharette-Kay is teaching a summer course for Osher Lifelong Learning focused on nature journaling. Consider taking *Nature Journaling with Watercolors* in place of Basin & Range (which is canceled for this summer). Here are the details.

This course combines two skills—nature journaling and watercolor painting—with the purpose of quickly and effectively capturing how you see the natural world around you. The wonderful thing about nature journaling AND painting is the experience and results are entirely unique to you. Resist the urge to compare your work to others and remember why you're doing it—to have fun and expand your observation and understanding of your local environment. Painting and journaling are both relaxing, interesting, and enlightening. Embrace the opportunity to learn something every time you go out!

The course is scheduled from May 25-June 29 and meets Tuesday mornings from 9:30-11:00 A.M. This is a hybrid course—the first four classes meet via Zoom, and the final two classes meet outside to practice nature journaling in the field. Location of those final classes TBD.

Osher is a program for those who are 50 years old and better. The course requires an Osher membership and course fee. Registration opens May 14 at 9:00 A.M. See the Osher website at <https://continue.utah.edu/oshier> and click on upcoming classes.

## Nature Journaling for Children

by Amanda Sharette-Kay, GSLA Board

Nature journaling isn't just for adults. Children can benefit from nature journaling in several ways!

- it gets children out in nature and away from screens
- it teaches them to be mindful and present, focusing on what their senses discover
- it encourages a scientific mind, guiding children to make observations, ask questions, and draw comparisons
- it promotes curiosity and compassion

It's easy to get your kids into nature journaling! All you need is something to write with and something to write on. If your child is more of a writer, a dollar store notebook and mechanical pencil works perfectly. If your child is more of a drawer, a sketchbook or a stack of blank paper on a clipboard might work better.

Take the activity one step further by encouraging children to gather found materials (with your supervision) to tape or glue into their journals.

The most important part of nature journaling is making observations and asking questions, so be sure to discuss your child's findings to encourage curiosity.

Contact Amanda for more tips on engaging your child's curiosity with nature.

Email: [education@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:education@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org)

## Opportunity Awaits!

GSLA is Seeking a Program Chair

GSLA is seeking a Program Chair. Please consider applying for this creative position in our organization. Of her time in this position, Leah Richardson 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.

Leah has already scheduled the spring 2021 meetings, so there will be time for her to train and assist the next person. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Heather Dove at [president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:president@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org).





## Mitigating Windows for Bird Safety

by Jeanne Le Ber, GSLA Board

After habitat loss and cats, the most significant threat to birds is collisions with windows. According to a 2014 research study by Scott Loss and colleagues, the median death-rate for window-related bird deaths in the United States is 599 million birds. Think about it! That is almost 2 birds for each U.S. citizen.

The good news is that this is a problem with multiple solutions. The American Bird Conservancy is a leader in evaluating and rating window mitigation products. Visit their website to learn more.

(<https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/resources/>)

Solutions for the homeowner include the Acopian Curtain, BirdTape, CollidEscape, tempera paint and oil-based Sharpie pens. Architects, builders, and window companies are developing glass that is more visible to birds, addressing the issue during initial construction.

GSLA member Stephanie Weems has had many bird-window strikes at her picture windows and decided to take action with oil-based Sharpie pens. With patience and the right supplies, this DIY project can make a difference for the birds. The goal is to draw vertical lines that are not more than 4 inches apart with the Sharpie pen. Use a ruler to draw straight lines. The pen works best if it is at least 60° F outside.

Mistakes are easy to erase and correct using a wet rag and a straight edge utility razor blade. Stephanie provides additional details about this process on the GSLA Bird Safe Windows web page under Personal Stories. And Stephanie is elated to report that the birds have stopped hitting her windows. Oil-based sharpie pens work!

The GSLA Bird-window Collision Working Group is available to consult with homeowners who are looking for solutions for their windows. Let us know if you have questions and would like suggestions. Email us at [info@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org](mailto:info@greatsaltlakeaudubon.org) and we will get back to you.



Supplies for mitigating windows using oil-based Sharpie pen.  
Photos by Stephanie Weems ©

## World Migratory Bird Day

Sing, Fly, Soar—Like a Bird

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day virtually this year. Online events are available from May 2-8, 2021. Visit <https://www.birddaylive.com/> to participate in a series of programs and educational events. Speakers include Mary Reynolds, Dr. Christine Bishop, Holly Merker, Richard Crossley, Dr. Lisa Sorenson, Ike Scott, Tatiana Sanchez, Stinky the Cat (he's bird-friendly), and more. If you want to stump the experts, send your bird question in a short video and receive a posted response.



Western Tanager  
Photo by Linda Johnson ©

## Consider this . . . Duck Stamp

The American Birding Association (ABA) offers a way for birdwatchers to support the lease or purchase of habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. By ordering a Duck Stamp through the ABA, birders can make their voices heard. The ABA ensures that your purchase is recognized as a non-consumptive use.

Since 1934 over 6 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat has been protected through the Duck Stamp program. Your \$25 purchase is a great way to show your support for the birds and 98% of your donation goes to habitat. The 2021-2022 Duck Stamp will be available for purchase in early June. See <https://www.abag.org/product-category/duck-stamp/>



Migratory Bird Hunting  
and Conservation  
Stamp—2017  
Trumpeter Swans



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**GREAT SALT LAKE AUDUBON  
Local 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**

4. Or go to GSLA website to join online; click *Membership* at the bottom of the page.

Membership Form

Name _____		
Street _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip _____
Email _____	Date _____	

**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.