

# Utah County Birders Newsletter

July 2014

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## JULY MEETING:

**Thursday, July 10th, 2014**

**Evening Field Trip - Inlet Park, Jordan River Parkway.**

In place of our Meeting this month we will go birding! Meet at Inlet Park in Saratoga Springs (314 South Saratoga Road) at 7:00 pm. Instead of a meeting we will do a short bird walk along the trails by Inlet park and bird the marsh along Utah Lake and the Jordan River. Park in the parking area on the east side of the road (follow the sign for Inlet Park). Bring bug spray. Here is a link to a map with a marker on the meeting spot - <https://maps.google.com/?q=40.35932+-111.89942>

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## FIELD TRIPS:

**5 July, 2014 (Saturday): Carbon & Emery Counties** - leader: Bryan Shirley - Meet at the Little Acorn Restaurant & Chevron at the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon at 7 AM. We will make a loop birding Scofield & Huntington Canyon and possibly a few other locations in Emery County as time allows. We will try to be back mid afternoon. Bring a lunch.

**10 July, 2014 (Thursday): Evening Field Trip - Inlet Park, Jordan River Parkway** – See July Meeting Above.

**12 July, 2014 (Saturday): Millard & Sevier Counties** - leader: Keeli Marvel - 7am - late afternoon. Meet on the west side of the Sam's Club parking lot in Provo East Bay. We will drive down to Millard County first, and if time permits, continue east to try for species in Sevier County.

**2 August, 2014 (Saturday): Box Elder County** - leader: Bryan Shirley - Meet at the Orem Center Street Park and Ride at 6:30. We can swing by Pioneer xing Parking also necessary (let Bryan know if you want us to stop). Shorebirds should be moving back through the state by now. We will do the auto loop at Bear River Bird Refuge, then if there have been any other good birds reported we will chase them. We will be back in the late afternoon.

We are actively recruiting people to lead local half-day field trips, any time, any place. If you would like to lead a field trip or if you have any ideas for this year's field trips, please contact Bryan Shirley at - [bt\\_shirley@hotmail.com](mailto:bt_shirley@hotmail.com)

## Captain's Log July 2014

by Keeli Marvel

Another month has passed! First of all I wanted to say congratulations to Flora and Esther Duncan. A little bird told me they've already completed the 2014 birding challenge. I know quite a few of you are also getting close, and a few others may have completed the challenge and I say - well done to all of you! Plans are in the works for prizes for those completing the different levels of the challenge, so stay tuned! Your efforts will be rewarded!

As I've worked toward completing the challenge this year I've gotten to spend some extended time birding with a few of you and I've really enjoyed getting to know a few of you and a lot of our state a bit better. Here are some highlights from the last month or so:

In May I spent a whirlwind day driving down to Capitol Reef and back with Doug Mead, Ned Bixler, Alton Thygerson. Ned did all of the driving, for which I commend him, because it was quite a lot indeed. We got to drive over my all-time favorite road between Boulder and Escalante and saw quite a few great birds along the way through so many counties I lost count. Thanks guys for a fantastic day trip! If I remember correctly we completed Piute, Wayne and Garfield counties that trip, and we saw some good birds and some great scenery.

At the end of May Karen and Alvin Green and I spent the day birding Sanpete and Sevier Counties. Wales Reservoir outside Moroni turned out to be our best stop in Sanpete County with several species of shorebirds and waterfowl. Sevier County ended up being a little tougher as it got warm and open water was scarce. One of the stranger things we saw was a pair of American White Pelicans tucked down in a tiny little creek hidden by overhanging trees. We also saw a pretty cool cliff swallow colony nesting under a bridge at the intersection of Seegmiller Road and 1200 E in the outskirts of Richfield.

At the beginning of June I observed and photographed a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Dugway. What a great sighting! Never thought I'd see one of those hanging around my neck of the woods. I was a little bummed I couldn't invite the entire club out to see it.

The first weekend in June Kathy Knauss, Alvin and Karen Green, Amanda Kobelin, Mabelle Johnson and I spent a day birding Duchesne and Uintah Counties. Some surprising spots turned out to be particularly birdy (like the spot with an active Red-tailed Hawk nest that we stopped at along the road to Starvation State Park). Other spots turned out to be pretty dead (Starvation Reservoir itself, aside from the Osprey nest platforms with nestling Osprey). The Duchesne water treatment ponds out the east end of Duchesne turned out to be particularly helpful as well. In Uintah County, Pelican Lake and Ouray NWR both turned out to be fairly birdy even into the afternoon, and after a slow start on the auto tour loop at Ouray we were rewarded with great looks at an American Bittern (only the second I've ever actually seen).

A week later I was back out on the road with Yvonne Carter, Deloy Pack, and Kathleen Blanchard. We worked hard that first day to finish Grand County, but we finally got our 29 species toward the end of the day. Matheson Preserve was our best birding stop in Grand County, and it was fun exploring the bits of Moab I'd never been to before. After a night at the KOA in Moab, we had much better luck completing San Juan County before noon the next day with our best spots being Ken's Lake just outside Moab (where we saw the Blue Grosbeak!), and the Devil's Canyon Campground outside Monticello. The scenery down there was breathtaking and well worth the drive!

A couple of interesting things I've learned on our trips this month - In our midst we have a spouse of a retired MI6 agent (Bond...James Bond), a retired motorhome-er who has driven all over the country dozens of times, an ex-music store owner, a concert pianist who plays with acclaimed musicians in the SLC Conference Center, a retired Hebrew teacher, a microbiologist who cultures and tests germs at the hospital, oh, and a former Canadian volleyball player (I hope I'm remembering that right!) and her husband who are newcomers to our group. The one thing all these folks have in common is the passion they share about birding. I leave it up to you to guess who they are, and I hope to get to know more of you as the year progresses!

Happy Birding!

Keeli Marvel

## **Bird of the Month**

### **Atlantic Puffin**

*Fratercula arctica*

by Alvin Green

Being fairly new to the birding world, every bird fascinates me. So trying to figure out which one to write about was quite a challenge. However, on a recent trip to WINCO I discovered a cereal called Puffins, named after the Atlantic Puffin. That cereal is the inspiration for this article. While the Puffin is a familiar bird, for most of my life I thought the Atlantic Puffin was called the Arctic Puffin (thanks to the movie Elf). Now I am informed and am nonetheless still intrigued by the Atlantic Puffin.



**photo by Kendall Brown**

**Description:** The Atlantic Puffin is a short stocky bird about 12” tall. It is a black and white bird with a very conspicuous bill. The bill is a triangle shape with a bright red and yellow color. However, during the fall the outer covering falls off leaving a dull remanence of its famous bill. The birds nest either in soft soil or rock cavities, and always in colonies.

Sometimes called the “clown of the sea” it is often seen waddling around. Puffins hunt small fish, shellfish and shrimp in the coastal waters. While the puffin are able to fly, they are also excellent swimmers and divers.

Although I have never seen an Atlantic Puffin, I hope to one day change that. Captive breeding programs have enabled this bird to now be well established south into Maine. Thus, after countless years of over hunting, there is finally a major conservation effort to keep this bird around for many generations to come.

**Reference:** Audubon Birds Pro APP

If you would like to write an article for the Bird of the Month, please contact Machele - [machele13johnson@yahoo.com](mailto:machele13johnson@yahoo.com)

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## **Field Trip Report**

### **Grand and San Juan Counties - 13-14 June 2014**

by Keeli Marvel

Four UCBers made the trip down to Grand and San Juan counties last weekend for our 2014 birding challenge. Friday was a tough sell with warm temps and gusty winds. We started by picking up a couple of species at the rest stop just before Crescent Junction. Then we made a quick trip into Arches NP where we picked up two juvenile black-throated sparrows. We birded briefly along the Colorado River where the hwy crosses it coming into town and picked up a couple more species. From there we went to the Matheson Preserve and birded both north and south sides of the preserve, picking up several more species including Ash-throated Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Plumbeous Vireo, and Blue-gray gnatcatcher. We spent the late afternoon on the east side of Moab, picking up species one by one. There were Wood Ducks and domestic ducks and geese at the Old City Park pond. In the neighborhoods around the golf course on the east side we found a Scrub Jay and some White-throated Swifts, and then we finished up with a flyover Great Blue Heron while eating dinner.

On Saturday, we started the morning off at Ken's Lake just southeast of Moab in San Juan County. On the way in to the lake we picked up Lark Sparrows and Horned Larks. There weren't any waterfowl on the lake, but the trees in the little inlet on the south end held tons of birds. Highlights included Ash-throated Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, and another Yellow-breasted Chat. From there we headed south to Monticello, and the Devil's Canyon Campground. We picked up the rest of our 29 species (and then some) with a bunch of species including Steller's Jay, Western Bluebirds, Western Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch, Green-tailed Towhee, Spotted Towhee, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher as well as a few others. We were not able to locate any Pygmy Nuthatches or Acorn Woodpeckers, but the area was quite birdy.

Saturday made up for the warm weather and slow birding on Friday and we had a great trip. Thanks to those who came out!

## Backyard Bird of the Month

June 2014

Lyle Bingham - Cedar City

**Eastern Kingbird** - We have several Eastern Kingbirds here amongst the starlings, ravens and EC doves on the SUU farm west of Cedar City. It is lots of fun watching them catch insects.

Yvonne Carter - American Fork

The **hummingbirds** are busy at the feeder, and now getting getting a **Black-headed Grosbeak** singing away plus the usual Chickadees, American Goldfinches, House Finches, etc.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

It's been good to have **Western Kingbirds** nesting in the neighborhood. That means I get to see them flying back and forth around my yard as they collect food for their little ones. I enjoy their activities this time of the year.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

**Warbling Vireo** - Singing outside my bedroom window for several mornings in a row.

Keeli Marvel - Saratoga Springs

My bird of the month was a **Great Blue Heron** that flew over while I was out working on my yard in Saratoga Springs.

Milt Moody - Provo

A male **Cassin's Finch** came back in June looking for the female Cassin's Finch that had come back in May -- I hope they're now together up in the mountains.

Leena Rogers - Provo

We've enjoyed a family of a **Black-headed Grosbeaks** at our feeders.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

Here in Utah my favorite June yard bird was a **Tom Wild Turkey** ( he thinks it's much safer in town). On Shemya Island, Western Aleutians, Alaska, where I spent most of the month, my favorite "yard" bird was the **Common Cuckoo**, a dynamite ABA bird.

Alton Thygerson - Provo

**Mourning Dove** - Two are regular visitors.

Report your favorite backyard bird each month to Eric Huish at 801-360-8777 or [erichuish@gmail.com](mailto:erichuish@gmail.com)

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### The Utah County Birders Newsletter is now online only/mostly.

We've decided to stop the regular paper mail version of the UCB Newsletter. This will save our club on Printing, Postage and Paper. If you would like an email notice each month when the Newsletter is posted online please send an email to Eric Huish at [erichuish@gmail.com](mailto:erichuish@gmail.com).

We are willing to print the online version of the newsletter and mail it out to anyone who still wants a paper copy or who doesn't have internet access. If you know of anyone who enjoys the UCB Newsletter but doesn't have internet access please let Eric Huish or Keeli Marvel know and we will make sure they get a copy.